

COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**  
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)  
Hearing on Ensuring Open Science at EPA**

**Chairman Smith:** “The Secret Science Reform Act of 2014 is the result of more than two years of investigative work on the part of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. This work was initiated when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) failed to live up to its public commitment to make the data that supports its most costly air regulations available to the public.

In September 2011, then-Assistant Administrator Gina McCarthy committed to provide this Committee with the data EPA relied upon to justify its claims about air quality and health effects. In 2012, the President’s Science Advisor, John Holdren, testified that, “Absolutely, the data on which regulatory decisions...are based should be made available to the Committee and should be made public.”

The Committee sought this data for a simple reason: to see whether the science supports EPA’s rules. An open and transparent government requires its disclosure. Through this process, we learned that much of the data either no longer exists or was never in the agency’s possession. Not only are EPA’s claims not independently verifiable, the agency cannot provide evidence to justify them.

As a result, the American people have no way of knowing the truth. EPA’s mission is to protect public health and the environment. But the agency’s regulations impact all aspects of our economy.

Sound public policy requires precise decision-making that properly balances competing needs. While the agency is charged with setting standards that are “requisite to protect public health,” those standards should be no more restrictive than necessary.

Transparency and independent verification are basic tenants of science and must inform sound environmental policy. When the EPA does not follow these basic steps, it fails in its obligation to the American people and raises suspicions about whether its regulations can be justified.

It’s unfortunate that our nation’s environmental policy has become one of the most contentious issues in Washington. But a discussion about the merits of any particular regulation is meaningless if the public cannot trust the underlying science. And that’s impossible if the information isn’t even available.

Everyone agrees that we need to protect the environment. But it should be done in a way that is transparent and honest. This bill encourages those principles.

The Secret Science Reform Act of 2014 has two basic elements:

- 1) It prohibits EPA from issuing regulations unless all scientific and technical information relied upon is specifically identified; and,

2) It requires that information to be publicly available in a manner that is sufficient for independent analysis and reproduction of research results.

Americans impacted by EPA regulations have a right to see the data and determine for themselves if the agency's actions are based on sound science or a partisan agenda. This bill ensures transparency and accountability.

It's hard to imagine a single reason why anyone would oppose this basic principle that is consistent with the Administration's policies on transparency.

James Madison may have explained this best when he said that, "A popular Government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy—or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives."

Given the EPA's aggressive agenda and its willingness to play fast and loose with the law, the agency should be forced to live up to the claims of transparency it so readily espouses. The American people deserve the facts. And so does good policy.

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