

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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www.science.house.gov

July 21, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C., 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

We are concerned about recent reports that you will be engaging in a “red team-blue team” exercise at the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the scientific consensus on human-caused climate change. On July 17, 2017, *Reuters* reported that,

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is in the early stages of launching a debate about climate change that could air on television – challenging scientists to prove the widespread view that global warming is a serious threat, the head of the agency said.”¹

In defending the idea of engaging in this odd choice of a format for a supposedly serious scientific debate, you stated that, “There are lots of questions that have not been asked and answered (about climate change).”² This vague justification for a wholesale litigation of the current scientific consensus regarding climate change is deeply concerning. Given your well known and long-standing personal beliefs on climate change³ that run counter to the mainstream scientific community, it is hard not to view this proposed initiative with some skepticism.

¹ Valerie Volcovici, *EPA chief wants scientists to debate climate on TV*, Reuters, July 17, 2017.

² Id.

³ Tom DiChristopher, *EPA chief Scott Pruitt says carbon dioxide is not the primary contributor to global warming*, CNBC, March 9, 2017.

The scientific community has spoken clearly and forcefully on the issue of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has repeatedly convened thousands of the world's foremost scientists to assess and report on the state of the art in climate science. Their assessments have included a good number of so-called out-of-the-mainstream climate researchers, and in addition, have evaluated these researchers' claims in the IPCC process. The IPCC has, with ever increasing confidence, affirmed the scientific consensus of human-caused climate change.⁴ Moreover, the national academies of sciences in virtually every major country on earth have all affirmed the scientific underpinnings of human-caused climate change.⁵ This includes our own prestigious National Academy of Sciences here in the United States. In addition, many of our country's top scientific societies have also affirmed the basic understanding of human-caused climate change.⁶

In the face of this overwhelming agreement on the basic fact of human-caused climate change by the world's scientists, your efforts seem to be divorced from reality and reason. This only reinforces our skepticism of your motives in engaging in a clearly unnecessary, and quite possibly unscientific, red team-blue team exercise to review climate science.

Despite our deep skepticism about the legitimacy of your planned efforts, it is not possible to evaluate such a review based solely on your vague public statements. To assist us in better understanding your proposed review, please provide us with the following information:

- Description of the format and procedure of your climate science review;
- Timetable for any such review;
- Purpose for conducting such a review of climate science;
- Description of the selection criteria and process to select members of the intended review teams;
- Description of what type of end-product you expect from such a review: and,
- Description of how you intend to use the products of the review.

⁴ Found at: <http://ipcc.ch/>

⁵ In fact, a joint statement to this effect was released as far back as 2005. It included the academies of Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Found at: <http://nationalacademies.org/onpi/06072005.pdf>

⁶ For instance, a number of societies wrote to Congress in 2016 to remind us of the scientific consensus on human-caused climate change, including: American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Chemical Society, American Geophysical Union, American Institute of Biological Sciences, American Meteorological Society, American Statistical Association, and the Geological Society of America, among others. Found at: <https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/06282016.pdf>

Please provide this information no later than August 11, 2017. If you have any questions about this request, please feel free to contact Priyanka Hooghan, Subcommittee on the Environment at (202)225-6375.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member
Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology



Don Beyer
Vice Ranking Member
Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology



Suzanne Bonamici
Ranking Member
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