

June 24, 2014

Honorable Lamar Smith, Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4012, the Secret Science Reform Act of 2014. This legislation would effectively amend numerous environmental statutes and make it much more difficult for EPA to protect the public.

Specifically, the bill 1) Prevents the EPA from using the best available science when developing new standards, by limiting EPA only to research, including data and models, that are publically available; and 2) Creates enormous administrative burden and costs for both EPA and the scientific community.

While this legislation's stated goal is "transparency" between the EPA and the public, the legislation in fact favors industry interests and undermines the EPA's scientifically rigorous and comprehensive decision-making process. This bill, put simply, is an attempt to tie the hands of EPA, and nothing more. H.R. 4012 would prevent EPA from functioning efficiently and would block the agency from using the best available scientific information.

This bill restricts the agency's access to vital and relevant studies that are essential in maintaining the scientific integrity of EPA's decision-making process. Under this legislation, the EPA would be unable to use a majority of health studies, including confidential patient health records, which are usually not publically available because they are protected by institutional review boards. As many of EPA's rules address the health and safety of the public, restricted access to this information would diminish the ability of the EPA to issue standards using the best science available.

We strongly urge the Committee to reject H.R. 4012.

Sincerely,

Clean Water Action

Earthjustice

Environment America

Environmental Defense Fund

Friends of the Earth

League of Conservation Voters

Natural Resources Defense Council

Sierra Club