

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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June 7, 2018

The Honorable Ralph Abraham
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Abraham:

When senior government officials suggest intentionally ignoring science to push a certain political agenda, there is a serious problem. Last year, the White House did just that. On May 23rd, the *Washington Post* reported that a document prepared for senior White House and federal agency officials by Mr. Michael Catanzaro, Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Energy and Environmental Policy, suggested several options regarding the Trump Administration's approach to climate change. One option was simply to "ignore" climate studies prepared by government scientists.¹

This should be especially concerning to members of the Committee on Science, Space & Technology. While we may disagree on the political approaches to important scientific issues, we hope that we can all agree that as members of the Science Committee we have an obligation to use the science we have to help inform public policy on critical issues such as those related to the health, safety, and security of the public.

Mr. Catanzaro's suggestion to "ignore" science does not come as a surprise, but it is still deeply disturbing. Mr. Catanzaro was a lobbyist at the CGCN Group for the oil and gas industry until 2017 when he began working for the Trump Administration.² Mr. Catanzaro returned to CGCN in April 2018, but the implications of his 'ignore science' memo still warrant a thorough review

¹ Chris Mooney and Juliet Eilperin, "In an internal memo, the White House considered whether to simply 'ignore' federal climate research," *The Washington Post*, May 23, 2018, accessed here:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2018/05/23/in-an-internal-memo-the-white-house-considered-whether-to-simply-ignore-federal-climate-research/?utm_term=.3d2694d27a65

² From 2015 to 2017, as a partner at CGCN, Michael Catanzaro personally lobbied for America's Natural Gas Alliance, the American Chemistry Council, American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, Devon Energy Corporation, Encana Oil and Gas, Inc., Hess Corporation, Koch Companies Public Sector, LLC, and Noble Energy, Inc. among other firms.

and appropriate oversight from the Science Committee – it speaks volumes as to how this Administration handles scientific evidence.

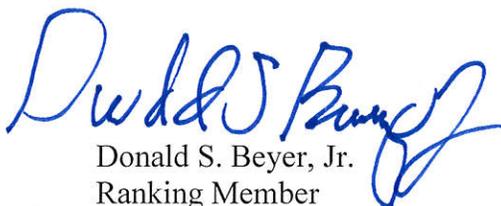
Perhaps this memo would not have been circulated if President Trump had a qualified scientist in the White House heading the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and advising him on all science issues.³ However, seventeen months into his Administration, President Trump has not even named a nominee.

We have asked Chairman Smith to hold the Executive Branch responsible for their actions in the past – such as holding a hearing with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Scott Pruitt, who is shrouded in scandal and has numerous ongoing investigations into his corrupt actions. However, the Science Committee has unfortunately shown no interest in conducting basic oversight and holding federal officials, like Administrator Pruitt, accountable for their actions.

We are now asking you to hold a hearing regarding Mr. Catanzaro’s ‘ignore science’ memorandum. Ignoring science and pushing political agendas that may be welcomed by industry, but harmful to the health, safety and security of all Americans should never be acceptable to the Science Committee or its members regardless of their political party. Please help us hold these officials responsible to the public.

We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight



Jerry McNerney
Subcommittee on Oversight



Ed Perlmutter
Subcommittee on Oversight

³ Scott Waldman, “Trump’s Science Advisor, Age 31, Has a Political Science Degree,” *E&E News*, February 14, 2018, accessed here: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/trump-s-s-science-advisor-age-31-has-a-political-science-degree/>