



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

For Immediate Release
February 07, 2017

Media Contact: Kristina Baum
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Making EPA Great Again

Chairman Smith: Today we will examine how the Environmental Protection Agency evaluates and uses science in its regulatory decision making process.

Sound science should be at the core of the EPA's mission. Legitimate science should underlie all actions at the agency, from research to regulations, and be an integral part of justifying their actions.

Unfortunately, over the last eight years, the EPA has pursued a political agenda, not a scientific one.

Time and again, we saw the EPA under the Obama administration propose regulations that would have no significant impact on the environment.

For example, the so-called Clean Power Plan, proposed by the EPA last June, set impossible targets for carbon emissions.

Yet even EPA data shows that this regulation would only eliminate a miniscule amount of global carbon emissions and would reduce sea level rise by only 1/100th of an inch.

In fact, the EPA has proposed some of the most expensive and expansive and ineffective regulations in history.

The rules proposed and finalized by the EPA placed heavy burdens on American families. Often, huge costs were shouldered by the taxpayer with little to show for it. The previous EPA's regulations were all pain and no gain.

And the EPA routinely relied on questionable science based on nonpublic information that could not be reproduced, a basic requirement of the scientific method.

Americans deserve to see the science for themselves. If the EPA has nothing to hide, why not make the scientific data it uses for its regulations publically available? What was the EPA hiding?

This Committee conducted oversight of EPA's use of suspect science to justify its claims. Our hearings culminated in legislation that required the EPA to make its data publicly available.

This year we will pursue similar legislative remedies and hold the EPA accountable to the American people.

With the transition to a new administration, there is now an opportunity to right the ship at the EPA and steer the agency in the right direction.

The EPA should be open and accountable to the American people and use legit science.

Though ignored by the previous administration, the EPA does have internal processes to ensure this accountability. The internal review process at the EPA should be restored and strengthened.

The Science Advisory Board (SAB) provides critical feedback to the EPA on its proposals. But in recent years SAB experts have become nothing more than rubberstamps who approve all of the EPA's regulations.

The EPA routinely stacks this board with friendly scientists who receive millions of dollars in grants from the federal government. The conflict of interest here is clear.

Fortunately, the EPA can once again become an agency that is credible and respected. Simple changes, such as eliminating conflicts of interests, adding more balanced perspectives and being more transparent can go a long way to restoring the agency's credibility.

In recent years, the EPA has sought to regulate every facet of Americans' way of life. Instead, we should invest in research and development and let technology lead the way.

Far too often the EPA has deliberately used its regulatory power to undercut American industries and advance a misguided political agenda that has minimal environmental benefits.

The new administration has the opportunity to let technology and innovation protect our environment without government mandates that impose costly and unnecessary regulations on the American people.

The EPA should not pick winners and losers by regulating entire sectors of our economy. Instead, the EPA should focus on environmental policies that can be justified and are based on good science. Americans deserve nothing less.

Lastly, recent news stories report that another agency, NOAA, has deceived the American people by falsifying data to justify a partisan agenda.

A senior scientist at NOAA has questioned the scientific integrity of a study written by Tom Karl while at NOAA that claimed that there was no stop in global warming from 1998-2013.

This official has provided evidence that Karl “had his thumb on the scale” throughout the entire process. The Karl study was published in *Science*, the journal overseen by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), an organization run by Rush Holt.

In light of this new information, it seems to me that AAAS and *Science* should retract the Karl study. The Committee will continue our investigation of NOAA’s refusal to provide the Committee with responsive documents on this subject.

It is clear that the Committee’s investigation into this matter was justified. While NOAA, AAAS, and others attempted to block the Committee’s efforts – our goal remains to ensure that the scientific process funded by the American taxpayer is open and honest.

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