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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

RICHARD M. RUSSELL, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
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May 9, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

I write to request information about the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) recent dismissal<sup>1</sup> of 12 scientists from its Board of Scientific Counselors, which provides advice and recommendations to EPA's Office of Research and Development<sup>2</sup>. According to reports, the Board of Scientific Counselors is comprised largely of academic scientists with a mission of advising EPA about technical and management issues associated with its research programs, but EPA's spokesperson J.P. Freire has indicated that it may replace them with industry officials, stating that "the administrator believes we should have people on this board who understand the impact of regulations on the regulated community<sup>3</sup>."

I am concerned that with these planned actions, along with previous steps you have taken to remove mention of climate change from EPA's website<sup>4</sup>, censor the analysis of EPA's career staff<sup>5</sup> and deny the consensus scientific views about the cause of climate change<sup>6</sup>, you are engaging in a broad approach of denying the science that forms the basis of sound environmental regulation. While this approach may satisfy those in industry who wish to avoid or delay taking steps to curb levels of dangerous air, water and environmental pollutants, your aggressive denial and dismissal of scientific principles and advisors will not prevent the seas and temperatures from rising, will not cause toxic chemicals to suddenly become safe and will not lead to cleaner air or water. Rather, your approach is certain to endanger human health and the environment – the precise opposite of EPA's stated mission.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/07/us/politics/epa-dismisses-members-of-major-scientific-review-board.html?ref=politics&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/07/us/politics/epa-dismisses-members-of-major-scientific-review-board.html?ref=politics&_r=0)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/bosc>

<sup>3</sup> <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/332321-epa-dismisses-five-scientists-from-major-review-board-report>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2017/04/29/politics/epa-climate-change-website/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.carper.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/4/carper-blasts-pruitt-on-deliberate-attempt-to-suppress-analysis-of-epa-career-staff?p=requestaflag>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cNBC.com/2017/03/09/epa-chief-scott-pruitt.html>

Reports indicate that 12 of the 18-member Board of Scientific Counselors were recently informed that their terms would not be renewed, contrary to information they had received just weeks earlier. According to one dismissed scientist, "The role that science has played in the agency in the past, this step is a significant step in a different direction... Anecdotally, based on what we know about the administrator, I think it will be science that will appear to be friendlier to industry, the fossil fuel industry, the chemical industry, and I think it will be science that marginalizes climate change science<sup>7</sup>."

So that I can understand the EPA's plans for this and its other advisory boards and panels, I ask that you provide me with responses to the following questions and requests for information no later than close of business on June 9, 2017:

1. Please list the names and affiliations of the Board of Scientific Counselors members whose terms were not renewed, along with the reason why EPA chose not to renew them. If any members of other EPA's advisory boards and panels have also been told their terms will not be renewed, please also provide their names, affiliations and board or panel that they were members of, and reasons why their terms were not renewed.
2. Please provide me with a copy of all documents (including but not limited to emails, legal and other memoranda, white papers, scientific references, letters, telephone logs, meeting minutes and calendars, slides and presentations) sent or received by EPA (including documents sent or received by members of EPA's beach-head and transition teams) that are related to EPA's decision not to renew the terms of the BOSC members.
3. Please provide me with a copy of all documents (including but not limited to emails, legal and other memoranda, white papers, scientific references, letters, telephone logs, meeting minutes and calendars, slides and presentations) sent or received by EPA (including documents sent or received by members of EPA's beach-head and transition teams) that are related to any EPA plans or consideration of plans not to renew the terms of any members of any of EPA's other boards or panels.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Tom Carper  
Ranking Member

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/05/epa-fires-members-science-advisory-board>