



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

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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Expanding the Role of States in EPA Rulemaking

Chairman Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to our witnesses for being here today.

The United States Constitution asserts that state governments retain power when not directly superseded by the federal government. This is explicitly stated in the 10th Amendment.

Unfortunately, during the previous Administration, the relationship between the Environmental Protection Agency and state governments eroded to the point that states were micro-managed by the federal government at every turn, often times at great detriment to their local economies.

The EPA sought complete control over state interests and routinely downplayed state concerns in order to enforce a costly partisan agenda that did little to better the environment.

For instance, when EPA regulations mandated that states create plans to meet environmental standards, the EPA routinely usurped these plans and created far stricter plans for states with little or no negotiation. This isn't the relationship our founding fathers envisioned when they created the Bill of Rights. This is the implementation of a unilateral environmental agenda.

What's more troubling is that the regulations EPA proposed, finalized, and forced onto states during the previous Administration were routinely shown to be based on suspect science. The EPA often cherry-picked what science to utilize, and amazingly didn't even possess some of the data they supposedly used for regulations.

Not surprisingly, the EPA has been broken for years. It isn't just limited to senior management officials making the calls; it is evident throughout the agency. That's why the Committee approved two important pieces of legislation this year: the HONEST Act, and the Science Advisory Board Reform Act. These bills, passed by the House and sent to the Senate, will promote scientific integrity and assure that scientific advice and counsel is no longer lopsided.

I am encouraged that President Trump and Administrator Pruitt are working hard to return the EPA to its rightful place as an honest agency that isn't plagued with a one-sided agenda.

Unfortunately, this is a big task. Even now, staff at the agency is working to undermine the President's authority by continuing to work closely with environmental allies of the past Administration who want to impose costly, job-killing regulations on American taxpayers.

Recently, science integrity officers at the EPA have scheduled a stakeholder meeting to discuss the agency's scientific integrity practices. The stakeholders invited to this closed, invitation-only meeting reads like a "who's who" of environmental activists with little diversity among viewpoints.

It is clear that certain employees at the EPA continue to undermine the current Administration, and are doing so in near-secret meetings. A meeting like this should not take place without balanced representation for all stakeholders. Or even better, the meeting should be open to all who wish to attend.

Under the previous Administration, science advisory panels and boards at the EPA were packed with "experts" of one mindset, acting as a rubberstamp to the agency's agenda. These same "experts" were also found to be double-dipping. They are routinely funded by EPA grant money, but then are tasked to advise the agency on the same issues they were funded to examine. This is a clear conflict of interest, and I am disappointed that some employees are continuing to push a secret, one-sided agenda instead of working with the Administration.

This Administration is returning EPA to its rightful agenda of relying on good science, not cherry-picked or non-existent science. I applaud the work of Administrator Pruitt, and look forward to working with him to make sure regulations are providing the most benefit to our states and their citizens.

With that, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and yield back the balance of my time.

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