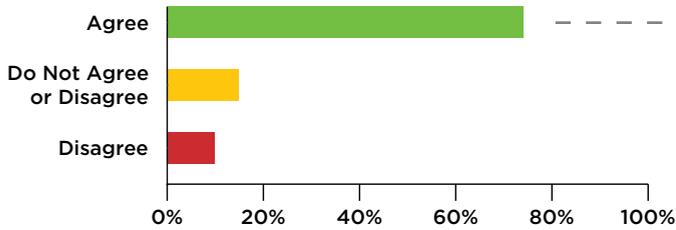
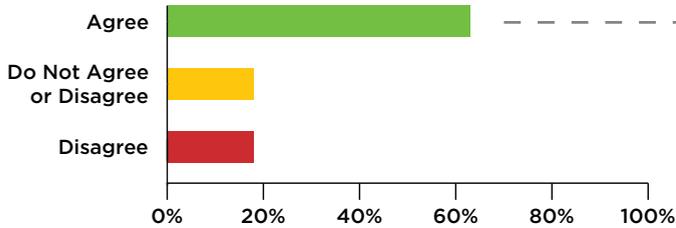


Surveying the Environmental Protection Agency

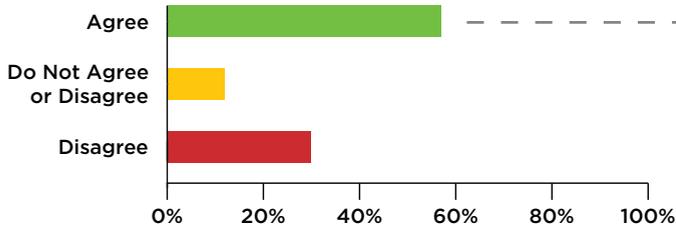
Scientist Voices under President Biden



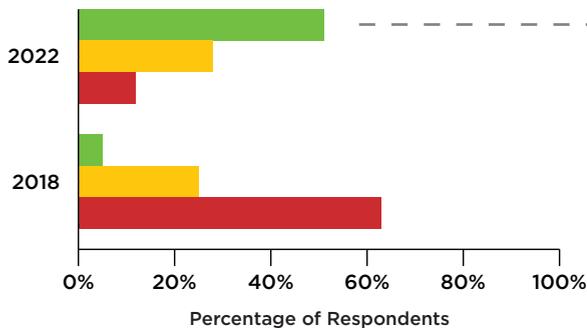
200 out of 270 EPA scientists agreed: the agency adhered to its scientific integrity policy.



181 out of 288 EPA scientists felt they can openly express concerns about the mission-driven work of the agency without fear of retaliation.



156 out of 274 EPA scientists experienced burnout in the last two years (e.g., overwhelming stress and exhaustion).



150 out of 294 EPA scientists reported an increase in the effectiveness of the office/division they worked in, up substantially from under the Trump administration (22 out of 449).

Green: Increased
Yellow: Stayed the same
Red: Decreased

See reverse for more information on this survey. For the purposes of this fact sheet, "Agree" includes both "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" response categories, and "Disagree" includes both "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." For detailed breakdowns of responses and exact survey questions, please visit www.ucsusa.org/resources/scientists-survey-2022.

Our nation relies on government science and scientists to protect public health, public safety, and the environment. To that end, scientific integrity safeguards are necessary for ensuring that political, ideological, and financial interests do not undermine the use of science in federal decisionmaking, harming the public good in the process.

EPA Scientists Speak Out

Anonymous EPA survey respondents provided their views on scientific integrity, environmental justice efforts, and evidence-based decisionmaking.

“The transition from the Trump to the Biden administration has been remarkable. I feel the difference every day in my work and am beyond grateful to have [a] President that believes in science, climate change and the EPA.”

“EPA/ORD [Office of Research and Development] is limited by the size of its workforce, which has diminished substantially from previous decades.”

“OCSP [Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention] constantly hires staff who are not qualified to do toxicology or even basic science, then fails to train them. Over the years, that has resulted in drastically decreased quality of scientific reviews.”

“I have seen improvement and movement since Trump. I have zero confidence that this will continue and will leave the agency if there is another change in administration.”

In September and October of 2022, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the University of New Hampshire Survey Center administered a survey to over 46,000 federal scientists across six government agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). UCS received survey responses from 296 EPA scientists and experts, for a total response rate of 3.58 percent. The results shed light on how EPA scientists and experts perceive their current working environment and the agency’s ability for science to inform decisionmaking without political interference.

Codifying Scientific Integrity Principles

The EPA’s science-informed decisions affect all our lives—for example, setting safe levels for clean air and water and cleaning up land polluted by hazardous waste or chemical disasters. So it is welcome news to find that EPA scientists felt the agency adhered to its strong scientific integrity policy, enabling them to be effective at their jobs. However, EPA scientists also felt burned out and reported a difficult time fulfilling their jobs due to limited staff capacity.

Congress should pass the Scientific Integrity Act to strengthen its scientific integrity protections. Agency leadership should remind management and staff of the definition of political interference and continue to train staff on processes for bringing forward scientific integrity allegations. The agency should strengthen its scientific integrity policy in accordance with guidance from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and its Scientific Integrity Taskforce.

Jacob Carter is the research director in the Center for Science and Democracy at UCS. Anita Desikan is the senior analyst in the Center for Science and Democracy at UCS.

HEADQUARTERS

Two Brattle Square
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-547-5552

WASHINGTON, DC

1825 K St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
202-223-6133

WEST COAST

500 12th St., Suite 340
Oakland, CA 94607
510-843-1872

MIDWEST

One N. LaSalle St., Suite 1904
Chicago, IL 60602
312-578-1750

ONLINE

 @ucsusa
 @unionofconcernedscientists
 @unionofconcernedscientists