

**HIGHLIGHTS**

*Throughout its first two years, the Trump administration has sidelined science in its handling of critical public health and environmental decisionmaking. Now, the 116th Congress can add an urgently needed check on administration actions. Congress can join with scientists and their supporters to stop the Trump administration's anti-science actions. Today's attacks on science can and will have substantial consequences for public health and the environment for decades to follow. We must continue to push back when science is sidelined. The current and future health and safety of our families our communities, and our nation depend on it.*

# Scientific Integrity Losses and Lessons for the 116th Congress

## *Sideline Science in Air Pollution Protections*

The Trump administration's anti-science actions diminish the health and safety of people daily, and the damage will persist for years to come. The lack of consideration for science in decisions that affect the amount of pollutants in the air we breathe could lead to severe respiratory and cardiovascular problems for millions of people in this country.

### Examples

In its first two years, the Trump administration has repeatedly sidelined science in key decisions on protecting Americans from air pollution:

#### **SIDELINED FEDERAL SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disbanded the particulate matter air review panel.
- The EPA announced it would not convene an ozone review panel.
- The EPA replaced independent scientists on the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) with mostly state and local regulators.
- Dr. Tony Cox was appointed to chair CASAC. Dr. Cox has strong ties to regulated industry and holds views on the link between air pollution exposure and human health that are far outside of the mainstream scientific community.

#### **PROMOTED POLICIES THAT GOES AGAINST THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE**

- The EPA eliminated the "once in, always in" policy designed to reduce 187 hazardous air pollutants across the nation. This policy required major polluters to use Maximum Achievable Control Technologies (MACT) to reduce toxic pollutants emitted into nearby communities.
- The EPA's Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) review of ten common and dangerous chemicals failed to consider indirect harms from air emissions, drinking water, and hazardous waste sources.

#### **RESTRICTED AIR POLLUTION SCIENCE FROM THE PUBLIC AND POLICYMAKERS**

- The EPA's proposed Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science rule, which restricts the best available science from being considered in policy. This restriction would apply to epidemiological studies that often inform clean air standards responsible for reducing respiratory and cardiovascular disease such as asthma.
- Top officials at the EPA appear to be suppressing an important report on the risk of cancer from contact with formaldehyde.

## Recommendations

Federal science is crucial to protecting our nation's health and is especially important as we face critical challenges stemming from air pollution. Congress should use the range of oversight tactics at its disposal to investigate the public health, safety, and environmental harms caused by the administration's actions sidelining science and make the case for proactive policy solutions to strengthen the role of science in decisions affecting the air we breathe. To push back against sidelining science in air pollution protections, Congress should take the following actions:

- Investigate the public health, safety, and environmental harms caused by recent actions that sidelined science. These harms include:
  - threats to clean air caused by changes in implementing the Clean Air Act, changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and particulate matter, and the weakening of MACT for toxic pollutants;
  - the public health impacts of the EPA's declining enforcement of federal laws on air quality, water quality, and solid waste;
- and unsafe chemicals such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), formaldehyde, and other cancer-causing agents in our homes and environment due to the suppression of information, lack of regulatory action, and an unscientific approach to implementing the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act.
- Strengthen the Clean Air Act by codifying the use of pollutant review panels in updates to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, in order to push back against the Trump administration's elimination of the EPA's particulate matter and ozone review panels.
- Use the range of oversight tactics at its disposal to investigate threats to federal scientists and to the process and functioning of federal agencies. Such threats include:
  - dwindling agency science advice through changes at science advisory committee, including the dismissal of independent committee members, freezes and delays in committee activity, and the dismantling of committees and panels; and
  - the EPA's proposal to restrict the science that agency decisionmaking can use.

*The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future.*

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