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**Subject:** Morning Energy: Pruitt's approach to EPA panned by former chiefs — Zinke nears decision on Bears Ears — Carper floats separating consideration of NRC picks  
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By Anthony Adragna | 06/09/2017 05:42 AM EDT

*With help from Eric Wolff, Sara Stefanini and Alex Guillén*

**WANT THAT OLD THING BACK?** EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has pressed the idea of taking the agency "back to basics," returning to its roots of cleaning up toxic waste sites under the Superfund program and providing safe drinking water, while rejecting the Obama administration's initiatives on issues like climate change. But as Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#), previous EPA administrators from both parties say the agency's mission is far broader than the cramped version Pruitt's promoting. "I don't think it has to be an either-or, nor should it be," said Christine Todd Whitman, George W. Bush's first EPA administrator. "Superfund is not the only issue for human health. Water pollution is a huge issue and very important and you need to work on it, but it's not the only issue. Air is an issue too. Even if you don't want to believe in climate change, you've got to believe that carbon and mercury are not good for you."

**It's not just old administrators though.** Thomas Jorling, who co-authored the Clean Air Act in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972 as a Senate Republican staffer, said that Pruitt's philosophy of "EPA originalism" is wrong. Continuing to stick to a limited set of cherry-picked priorities Pruitt has chosen to champion is "just disingenuous," he added. "It's all basically a smokescreen to their real intention, which is kind of a moral and ethical corruption, to ... restore the dependence of the United States energy system on fossil fuels." The agency did not make Pruitt available for an interview.

**ME EXTRA — HISTORY LESSON:** Lee Thomas, Reagan's second-term EPA administrator, said Pruitt's budget-slashing, anti-regulatory agenda has certain parallels to one of his predecessors: Anne Gorsuch Burford, Reagan's first EPA chief and the mother of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. Burford, who died in 2004, had no previous relationship with agency staff, reduced EPA's budget by 22 percent and once boasted about cutting a book of water regulations from six inches thick to just half an inch. She ultimately resigned in 1983 after being cited for contempt of Congress in a management scandal regarding Superfund, at that time a new program. More than a dozen other agency officials quit in the surrounding months amid a turbulent atmosphere at the agency.

Thomas, at that time deputy director at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, came on as a top official to help right EPA, and two years later returned as administrator after Bill Ruckelshaus had stabilized the agency. "I've seen it go bad. And I've seen what it takes to go back on track," Thomas said. "The public does not want EPA to go through that kind of crisis."

**G-7'S (TOTALLY AWKWARD) ENVIRONMENT MEETING:** G-7 environment ministers meet in Bologna on Sunday and Monday, just 10 days after Trump announced he was ditching the Paris climate agreement (unless the rest of the world agrees to better terms, of course). Pruitt will be there as the American representative. The biggest battle to watch for: Will the other six ministers and Pruitt come to any agreement on a communiqué that supports

efforts to tackle climate change? (ME bets no.) Disagreements over climate already scuppered a joint statement at the G-7 energy ministers meeting, and Trump refused to back commitments made at the leaders summit last month.

**Benvenuti!** Pruitt [tweeted](#) a picture Thursday from Italy after "mtg w/ U.S. companies doing business in Europe." The agency told ME representatives from Whirlpool, DuPont, Chemours, First Solar and 3M attended, as well as a few Italian companies, but declined to provide any further details on Pruitt's schedule while in Europe.

**TGIF MY FRIENDS!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Hunton & Williams' Joe Stanko was first to identify Sen. Lamar Alexander as the former Cabinet member (Education Secretary under President George H.W. Bush) now in the Senate. Your end-of-the-week fun: The spouse of which U.S. senator co-owns the legendary Strand Bookstore? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning\\_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

**ROUND, ROUND, GET AROUND:** He's apparently still in discussions with the White House ahead of a final recommendation about whether to rescind or tweak the designation of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, but Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is planning to keep chugging on his national tour. Zinke plans to visit Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts during a four-day swing kicking off June 13. That trip will include a tour of the hotly contested Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, another of the more than two dozen monument designations under the Antiquities Act currently under review by the Trump administration.

**TRUMP HAILS NEW COAL MINE'S OPENING:** Trump hailed the opening Thursday of Corsa Coal Corp. in Pennsylvania, a new mine digging coal used to make steel, as proof deregulation is helping bring jobs to the industry, ABC News [reports](#). "We have withdrawn the United States from the horrendous Paris climate accord, something that would have put our country back decades and decades, we would have never allowed ourselves to be great again," the president said in a video message. About 200 miners, business leaders, and politicians celebrated its opening under a tent amid mining headgear labeled "Make Coal Great Again."

**RIDIN' SOLO?** Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top EPW Democrat, has asked Republicans to split off the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki to the NRC from other two Republican nominees in order to fast track the process, Pro's Darius Dixon [reports](#). "One of the things I've suggested to Chairman [\[John\] Barrasso](#) is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

**FOR YOUR WEEKEND RADAR:** Activists will gather Saturday at city halls and statehouses [across the country](#) to protest Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord. "Our communities cannot and will not allow these reckless policies and decisions to wreck our future," organizers, who include 350.org, the Sierra Club, The Climate Reality Project and many more, said in a statement.

**Now here's a far away hearing:** Senate Energy and Natural Resources plans to hold a [field hearing](#) at 10 a.m. local time Saturday in Cordova, Alaska — accessible only by boat or plane (book you tickets for [Mudhole Smith Airport](#)). Representatives from Sandia National

Laboratory, Alaska Center for Energy and Power, Alaska Village Electric Cooperative and Alaskan Brewing Company will be examining microgrids and hybrid energy systems. Both [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Maria Cantwell](#), the top Republican and Democrat on the committee, are slated to participate.

**WHITEHOUSE: CCS CREDITS BILL READY TO FOR REPRISE:** A bill to expand tax credits for carbon capture projects should be ready for introduction soon, Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) told ME. "It's close enough that we're having conversations about when and final steps," he said. The bill, which will be co-sponsored with Sen. [Heidi Heitkamp](#), would attempt to revive is one a trio of "orphaned" tax credits, along with credits for geothermal and for advanced nuclear plants — that were left out of the 2015 omnibus bill that extended solar and wind tax incentives.

**Warns 'raiding party' has hit EPA:** Republican "heads would be exploding" if a Democratic administration simply ignored requests for information as Pruitt's EPA has done to Democrats, Whitehouse told ME. "Basically, the fossil fuel industry has sent a raiding party into EPA and taken it over," the Rhode Island Democrat said. "I think he feels a kind of immunity from any kind of accountability because the fossil fuel industry so owns the Republican Party and so owns him."

**JUDGE, IRKED BY DOJ, LETS KIDS CLIMATE CASE GO TO TRIAL:** A federal judge on Thursday [slammed](#) the Justice Department for trying to force her hand on a legal matter in the lawsuit brought by children seeking to compel sweeping federal action on greenhouse gas emissions. The Trump administration had asked Judge Ann Aiken of the U.S. District Court in Oregon to let them appeal her decision not to dismiss the lawsuit before moving into the discovery phase. In a short order, Aiken criticized DOJ for threatening to go to the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit anyway by today if she hadn't already ruled on the request, noting that the suit is already on an expedited schedule. She said the government's arguments were too weak to secure even faster consideration, and panned DOJ because it asked for a rapid decision after waiting four months to make its initial request. Aiken also gave the green light to move closer to the trial phase. The Trump administration could still try to get the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit involved, but the appellate court is unlikely to intervene in an ongoing case.

**BIPARTISAN BILL PASSES SENATE:** Senators passed Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act ([S. 826](#)) by voice vote Thursday. The legislation, co-sponsored by Chairman [John Barrasso](#) and Carper, would reauthorize funding for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in which the Interior partnerships with private landowners in fighting invasive species and offer rewards for innovative technologies to stop invasive species. The bill cleared committee in April.

**TROLL SO HARD:** French President Emmanuel Macron poked Trump again Thursday by launching a website urging anyone concerned with climate change to move to France, POLITICO Europe's Nicholas Vinocur [reports](#). The website — [www.MakeOurPlanetGreatAgain.fr](#) — plays on Trump's campaign slogan and invites researchers, entrepreneurs and NGO workers from around the world to state their interest in climate change and their specialist field, then apply for positions and immigration documents to come to France.

**ANOTHER BOLD PROMISE:** Did everyone remember it's the White House's Infrastructure Week? Well, Vice President Mike Pence certainly did, and told a working luncheon Thursday

that Trump intended to speed up the approval of new projects. "We'll revolutionize federal permitting and review with the goal of reducing wait times from 10 years to two years," he said.

**ENERGY PRIORITIES OUTLINED FOR NAFTA:** A bipartisan group of eight senators has outlined specific "principles" that the Trump administration should consider when it renegotiates NAFTA, Pro Trade's Adam Behsudi [reports](#). "NAFTA has played a key role in all North American energy markets including electricity, renewable, oil, and natural gas, as each market is highly integrated with and remains dependent on vital energy infrastructure and trade crossings that border the United States, Canada, and Mexico," they wrote in a [letter](#) organized by Sen. [John Cornyn](#).

**EPA UNION DEMANDS GUVS FIGHT FOR GREAT LAKES:** The union representing some 1,000 EPA employees has asked to meet with six Midwest governors — Mark Dayton of Minnesota, Eric Holcomb of Indiana, John Kasich of Ohio, Bruce Rauner of Illinois, Rick Snyder of Michigan and Scott Walker of Wisconsin — to strongly oppose proposed budget cuts to the agency that they warn would severely impact the Great Lakes. "Aside from the long term health and safety of the public in the Great Lakes region, the economic threats to the region must be recognized," Michael Mikulka, president of Local 704 of the American Federation of Government Employees, said in a statement.

**THEY'RE FIRED UP:** Green groups are burning up over the Forest Service's [proposal](#) this week to expand two coal leases inside Colorado national forests. Local and national green groups are bristling at the plan to bulldoze wilderness for several new miles of roads and build new drilling pads for methane vents in an area home to black bears, elk and lynx. "Giving away our western public lands to the coal industry isn't energy independence, it's a scheme to make executives and shareholders rich at our expense," said Shannon Hughes of WildEarth Guardians. A 45-day public comment period ends July 24; if approved, the next step is a second approval from the Bureau of Land Management.

**SOMETHING SYMBOLIC HERE:** California Gov. Jerry Brown and Energy Secretary (and former Texas governor) Rick Perry shaking hands while going opposite directions on an escalator during a trip to China. [Pic](#).

**REPORT: EPA DIDN'T UPDATE POLICIES AS REQUIRED:** The GAO released a report Thursday finding EPA failed to update the agency's policy statement for the Science Advisory Board as required under a congressional spending bill, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). "EPA did not update its policies or requirements for the SAB as directed by the explanatory statement," it said.

**REPORT: CLEAN ENERGY'S DIRTY SECRET:** America Rising Squared is out with a [new white paper](#) arguing there are "great human and environmental costs" behind the production of clean energy technologies like solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles and EV batteries. "The inconvenient truth is that these 'clean' sources of energy are produced under the worst of labor and environmental rights violations," it says.

**DEMOCRATIC REPORT: ENERGY EFFICIENCY EFFICIENTLY CREATES JOBS:** Democrats on the Joint Economic Committee, a congressional economic advisory committee formed in 1946, are out with a [report](#) today arguing for the job-creating capacity of energy efficiency measures. The report notes that EE jobs bounced up to 2.2 million in 2016, 7 percent increase from the previous year. The report calls on Congress to fully fund the Energy

Star program, scheduled to be eliminated under Trump's budget, and in additional research.

**AD WATCH: 15 PERCENT ETHANOL ALERT:** Growth energy is launching a seven-figure [TV](#) and digital ad buy in D.C. and other markets to promote Sen. [Deb Fischer](#)'s bill to allow year-round sale of 15 percent ethanol fuel. The bill is set to get a hearing at EPW next week.

**MOVER, SHAKER!** Former House Speaker John Boehner has joined Arizona Mining Inc.'s board of directors (h/t POLITICO Influence).

## QUICK HITS

- Digging the Graveyard of Oil's Past. [New York Times](#).
- Merkel in Argentina talks Trump, trade and climate change. [AP](#).
- Canada invites Chinese investment in oil sands: minister. [Reuters](#).
- As Oil Plumbs New Depths, Someone Sees \$80 a Barrel by December. [Bloomberg](#).
- As Trump's EPA delays smog rules, California vows to forge ahead. [Los Angeles Times](#).
- Qatar Gulf row roils LNG market, Shell tanker diverted. [Reuters](#).

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

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<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/pruitts-approach-to-epa-panned-by-former-chiefs-023224>

## Stories from POLITICO Pro

### Pruitt's predecessors pan EPA 'originalism' philosophy [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/09/2017 05:00 AM EDT

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is sounding one theme as he pushes to erase the agency's regulations and shrink its workforce: EPA is returning to its roots.

To Pruitt, that means helping states and cities clean up their toxic waste sites and provide safe drinking water — while rejecting the Obama administration's expansion into issues like climate change. He calls it a "[Back to Basics](#)" agenda, aimed at bringing EPA "back to the core of what we do as an agency."

But Pruitt's brand of "EPA originalism" has one big problem: His predecessors say he's got it wrong.

Past EPA administrators from both parties, as well as the GOP author of EPA's landmark environmental laws, say the agency's mission is far broader than the cramped version he's promoting, and has been designed by Congress to take new environmental issues into account.

"I don't personally think you can say, 'I'm somehow going back to what the basic

responsibilities of EPA are," said Lee Thomas, who led the agency during Ronald Reagan's second term. "That's not what EPA is, that's not where the laws are and that's not where the risk is."

That mission began with a 1970 [order](#) from President Richard Nixon, calling for the creation of a single federal agency that would help keep the planet "a place both habitable by and hospitable to man."

Christine Todd Whitman, George W. Bush's first EPA administrator, said Pruitt appears to have jettisoned the agency's responsibility as a protector of human health when regulations impose costs on businesses. She also disputes his decision to focus on a limited set of EPA programs, such as the toxic-waste programs it carries out under the 1980 Superfund law.

"I don't think it has to be an either-or, nor should it be," Whitman said, adding: "Superfund is not the only issue for human health. Water pollution is a huge issue and very important and you need to work on it, but it's not the only issue. Air is an issue too. Even if you don't want to believe in climate change, you've got to believe that carbon and mercury are not good for you."

The tension highlights the dispute over EPA's role, particularly as environmental threats evolve beyond the mid-20th century crises of burning rivers and smog-choked cities into the long-term global menace of climate change. Admirers say Pruitt's approach makes him an "EPA originalist," in the words of Wall Street Journal columnist [Kimberley Strassel](#) — much like some conservative judges who argue for hewing to the Founders' original intent when interpreting the Constitution.

So far, Pruitt has launched rollbacks of former President Barack Obama's greenhouse gas rules for power plants, delayed deadlines for polluters and slowed agency work on new regulations, and most recently helped persuade President Donald Trump to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement.

EPA did not make Pruitt available for an interview, but he told Strassel that his aim is for EPA to achieve "tangible" results through "a restoration of its priorities," such as cleaning up the nation's 1,300 Superfund sites.

"These are issues that go directly to the health of our citizens that should be the absolute focus of this agency," Pruitt told the Journal. "This president is a fixer, he's an action-oriented leader, and a refocused EPA is in a great position to get results."

Trump has endorsed that vision as well. "We're going to have clean, beautiful air — clean, beautiful, crystal water," he said in a speech Wednesday in Cincinnati, Ohio, about his infrastructure priorities. "But you're going to have your jobs also."

On the other hand, Trump's proposed 2018 budget, which seeks to chop EPA's spending by 31 percent, has also called for slashing the same toxic-waste and clean-water programs that Pruitt has put at the center of the agency's mission.

The EPA administrator can have huge influence over the direction of the agency, but its scope and responsibilities are set out by Congress in laws like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.



Pruitt has prioritized a different focus for EPA: economic concerns, which he has cited in rolling back regulations on climate change, air pollution and clean water, even in cases where the Supreme Court has said costs cannot factor into the regulation.

Thomas Jorling, the Senate Republican staffer who co-authored the Clean Air Act in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972, said that Pruitt's philosophy of "EPA originalism" is just wrong.

Pruitt cannot be a "tinhorn dictator" who decides which laws to avoid "in favor of economic development," said Jorling, who filed a court brief last year defending the Obama EPA's landmark climate regulation. Continuing to stick to a limited set of cherry-picked priorities Pruitt has chosen to champion is "just disingenuous," he added.

"It's all basically a smokescreen to their real intention, which is kind of a moral and ethical corruption, to ... restore the dependence of the United States energy system on fossil fuels," he said.

Pruitt maintains that his Obama-era predecessors, such as Gina McCarthy, vastly overstepped EPA's authority by issuing regulations such as the carbon dioxide limits in its climate regulations for power plants. Pruitt previously made that argument while waging legal fights against the agency's regulations when he was Oklahoma attorney general.

Pruitt said last month that he has [not yet decided](#) whether to craft new climate rules after repealing the Obama versions.

But his Republicans critics say it's wrong to reject climate change as an EPA priority, even if there's room for debate on the details of Obama's actions. The Supreme Court has ruled that EPA must regulate greenhouse gases if they threaten human health and welfare, and the agency has concluded they do.

States say Superfund sites are big issues in their communities, said Thomas, but the risks of climate change are "significantly higher."

"There's a lot more uncertainty around [global warming], but that doesn't mean you don't deal with it," he said.

Meanwhile, the rollbacks under Pruitt's "EPA originalism" campaign go well beyond climate change. Pruitt has ordered a rewrite of the Obama-era Waters of the U.S. rule, a sweeping regulation that sought to define which waterways and wetlands fall under the federal government's purview. And he remains critical of the Obama administration's efforts to tighten smog standards when much of the country have yet to meet previous limits — even though the Clean Air Act says EPA is supposed to base those decisions solely on the latest health science.

In addition, Pruitt has said his philosophy will involve fewer instances of the federal government overriding state cleanup plans it deems insufficient. And he says EPA will use fewer consent decrees — settlements negotiated with companies that have violated regulations — a practice Republicans have long criticized as "regulation by litigation."

Instead, Pruitt aims to focus on the Superfund program, cleanups of polluted "brownfields" and drinking water infrastructure, all of which involve economic development. He has also placed an emphasis on implementing last year's bipartisan chemical safety reforms, especially the process that approves new chemicals for use in products.

Myron Ebell, a longtime critic of climate change science and the Trump administration's transition leader for EPA, supports Pruitt's originalism mission because it dials back the agency's reach.

"It seems to me EPA has fairly clear statutory responsibilities under a number of statutes, and those statutory responsibilities should come first," said Ebell, director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and the Environment.

"But over time and particularly in the Obama administration, they have taken on a whole lot of things which are entirely discretionary, that they don't have to do, they're not required by law to do it, but they decided to do it anyway," Ebell added.

Jorling said he and Leon Billings, his late Democratic counterpart in writing the laws, believed that the environmental statutes they wrote were not static, despite what critics like Ebell contend. Instead, they were designed to adapt to new situations.

"It's a complete misreading of those statutes and it really denigrates the senators and members of Congress that I worked for and with at the time," he said. "They were very concerned that you don't just write a statute for the past, you write a statute for the future."

Georgetown environmental law professor William Buzbee agreed that the legislative history of environmental laws shows they were "not written to be frozen in time, but to give EPA important protective roles that will evolve in light of improved science and understanding of emerging risks."

For example, the Clean Air Act included a catch-all provision, Section 111, that allowed the agency to address newly discovered pollutants not covered elsewhere in the law. EPA used that provision just five times over the decades, mostly on obscure pollutants, before the Obama administration wielded it to target carbon dioxide from power plants.

McCarthy, Pruitt's immediate predecessor, said it's "crazy" to believe EPA's role was not intended to evolve to include new problems like climate change.

"I know that a lot of this language about 'EPA originalism' is really just an excuse ... for disempowering the agency, particularly as it relates to climate change," she said.

"Is EPA supposed to respond and say, 'We're really busy cleaning up Superfund sites from the '60s. We really can't address the problems that you're facing today?'" McCarthy added. "Is that what they're really suggesting? And as long as we catch up with the damage that was in place when these laws came in, that we'll have done our job? That doesn't make any sense."

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**Carper has asked Barrasso to reconfirm Svinicki solo** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/08/2017 03:31 PM EDT

A Senate Democrat said today that he's asked Republicans to split up the confirmations of



Nuclear Regulatory Commission nominees in order to fast track the reappointment of Kristine Svinicki.

Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, told reporters that he supports Svinicki's renomination and pitched to EPW Chairman [John Barrasso](#) that she get confirmed while the panel reviews the other two Republican nominees.

"She's been through several times, so it shouldn't be too heavy a lift," the Delaware Democrat said.

Carper said the other nominees, Annie Caputo and David Wright, could be packaged with a renomination of NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran, a Democrat whose term runs out next summer.

"One of the things I've suggested to Chairman Barrasso is to find a way to pair those two maybe with one Democrat, and there's a Democrat on the NRC whose term expires ... next year," Carper said. "The idea of going ahead and moving his renomination along with a couple of Republicans would be of interest to me."

Repackaging the two new GOP nominees with Baran would mean "we wouldn't have to do them, like, next week," Carper said.

Svinicki, who has been an NRC commissioner for nine years, was elevated to the agency's chairmanship by Trump in January. But she's facing a time crunch and would have to step down, even temporarily, if the Senate fails to confirm her for another five-year term by June 30.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has scheduled a nomination hearing to review all three GOP NRC nominees on June 13.

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## **Bipartisan group of senators outlines energy priorities for NAFTA [Back](#)**

By Adam Behsudi | 06/08/2017 05:46 PM EDT

A bipartisan group of senators with major energy interests in their states have submitted a list of specific "principles" that the Trump administration should consider when it renegotiates NAFTA.

"NAFTA has played a key role in all North American energy markets including electricity, renewable, oil, and natural gas, as each market is highly integrated with and remains dependent on vital energy infrastructure and trade crossings that border the United States, Canada, and Mexico," eight lawmakers wrote in a [letter](#) organized by Sen. [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas).

The senators, in their letter to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, set out eight points that should be considered "to protect American energy consumers and producers and

enhance U.S. energy security."

First on the list is a demand that any revised deal allow for the free flow of electricity, oil, natural gas, refined products, petrochemicals and other energy-intensive manufactured goods. Among other things, the lawmakers also want zero tariffs on all energy products; competitive and transparent bidding for licenses; investor protections; and product-specific rules to allow the use of diluent, a lubricant added to crude oil for pipeline transit of oil.

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## **GAO says EPA falls short on advisory board policy** [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/08/2017 03:40 PM EDT

EPA fell short on recent orders from Congress to update the agency's policy statement for the Science Advisory Board, according to a report issued today by the Government Accountability Office.

A spending bill passed in 2015 directed EPA to ensure its SAB policy included a way to evaluate bias if the administrator wants "financial-related metrics" to "identify conflicts of interest or bias." EPA critics have long complained that SAB and other advisory panels are weighted toward researchers who receive research grants from the federal government.

The spending bill also directed EPA to study ways of increasing state membership and methods for considering public comment.

However, GAO says EPA fell short on all counts. "EPA did not update its policies or requirements for the SAB as directed by the explanatory statement," the report said.

A draft document did not delve into the financial metrics because agency staff use the "existing legal and policy framework," including Office of Government Ethics rules. The other directives also came up short, and the agency has yet to finalize the document, GAO said.

While the report made no recommendations before the guidance is finalized, GAO said EPA should keep the criticisms in mind.

Administrator Scott Pruitt made waves last month when he [declined to re-appoint](#) nine members of the Board of Scientific Counselors, a separate entity from SAB that advises EPA on research issues. Observers also say EPA is behind on finding a [new chair](#) for the seven-member Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee.

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Somewhat



Neutral



Not really



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