

Opening Statement
The Honorable John M. Shimkus
Republican Leader, Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
Hearing on EPA Budget Proposal for FY2020
April 9, 2019
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join you in welcoming Administrator Wheeler before our committee today to discuss the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2020 for the Environmental Protection Agency. We appreciate you being here today, Administrator, and look forward to our discussion.

Mr. Chairman, this Congress is not the first time that I have been the Lead Republican on this subcommittee or some version of it. Some of you may know this, but I was also the Lead Republican on this subcommittee in the 110th Congress. That Congress followed twelve years of Republican control of the House, and the new Democrat Majority was eager to bring in the Republican-run EPA to criticize their budget proposal because it wasn't as robust as the Majority felt was necessary.

I left that hearing that day with a couple of thoughts in mind.

First, the Constitution gives Congress sole authority to raise and spend revenue. So when Congress examines Administration budget requests, as we are today, we cannot divorce ourselves and our decisions from that discussion. Speaker Pelosi often says "show me your budget, show me your values," and I think that's true. I'm glad we have a budget

proposal from EPA to warrant today's hearing, as I understand that it's unlikely the House will have an opportunity to vote on a budget proposal of our own this year.

My second thought from that 2010 hearing is that we need to know that we are getting a good return on our investment in environmental protection for the billions we are giving the Environmental Protection Agency to spend. There are lots of worthy ideas and programs that EPA could address, but does it make the most sense to have EPA be the one to do it every time? We should not advocate for more funding if all it is buying us is bureaucracy, regulatory confusion with other agencies, or "woke" sounding programs that don't really improve public health or the environment.

Finally, and to tie both points together, money is not the end all be all when it comes to an agency's success. More money does not necessarily make a person care about their environment. There are other considerations, including fidelity to the laws Americans ask us to pass, stewardship of the Agency to ensure it is doing the best it can with what it has, concrete metrics that can demonstrate progress is being made, and responsiveness to the environmental and public health concerns of the American people.

Before I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman, I do want to thank Administrator Wheeler for some of his recent comments regarding safe drinking water. As our colleagues on this subcommittee know, improvements to and reauthorization of the Safe Drinking Water Act was a bipartisan priority and success last Congress. I applaud you, Administrator, for

recognizing that access to safe drinking water is the most imminent environmental threat we face globally.

Again, welcome, Administrator Wheeler, and I look forward to asking you questions later this morning.

I thank the Chairman for yielding me this time and for holding this important hearing.