

**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Oversight Hearing**  
**1324 Longworth House Office Building**  
**March 27, 2019**  
**10:00 am**

Hearing on “*Examining the Department of the Interior’s Spending Priorities and the President’s Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Proposal*”

**Questions from Rep. Tonko** for Scott Cameron, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy, Management, and Budget, U. S. Department of the Interior

This past December, the Union of Concerned Scientists—a 50-year-old national nonprofit originally founded by scientists and students at MIT—released a [report](#) outlining all the ways that the Trump administration at Interior has attacked science during its first two years. In that report, they outlined four broad categories of abuse:

- 1) Systematically suppressing science by blocking politically inconvenient research or requiring political review of research grants.
- 2) Failing to acknowledge or act on climate science by striking climate change from Interior’s strategic vision or by rolling back measures like methane and fracking rules.
- 3) Silencing and intimidating agency scientists and staff by restricting access to professional conferences and reassigning senior scientific leaders, and
- 4) Attacking the science-based laws that help protect America’s wildlife and habitats like the Endangered Species Act.

Given the Union of Concerned Scientists’ findings, do you believe this administration at Interior has been doing all it can to protect its scientists? How can they improve as a Department?

I firmly believe that our federal agencies, including Interior, employ some of the brightest and most innovative minds in the scientific community. That is why I think it is so important that we keep their work free from improper influence. A few weeks ago, I introduced H.R. 1709, the Scientific Integrity Act along with Senator Schatz. This bill would help keep our federal agency scientists free from political or industry influence by strengthening scientific integrity policies and protections.

Mr. Cameron, do you agree that federal science should be free from political or industry influence?

One of the report’s recommendations was to require that climate change be included in Interior’s planning and policies.

Mr. Cameron, would you agree with this recommendation?