



COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**  
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

## **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas**

### **Full Committee Hearing**

#### *Science and Technology at the Environmental Protection Agency*

September 19, 2019

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Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson, and thank you Administrator Wheeler for being here today to discuss the EPA's fiscal year 2020 budget request.

The EPA is charged with the broad and vital mission of protecting our nation's air, land, and water. From hazardous waste clean-up to protecting human health to setting clean air and water standards, the EPA's work affects every American.

While much of the EPA's regulatory mission falls under the jurisdiction of other Congressional Committees, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology oversees the EPA's work on environmental research and development. This R&D is critical to providing the sound science needed for the EPA to effectively carry out their mission to protect our environment.

I'm looking forward to a discussion about the role science and technology play in the agency's mission, and I'd like to encourage my colleagues to focus on this important jurisdiction when questioning the Administrator.

In my years on both the Agriculture and Science Committees, every discussion of the EPA included talk of overregulation. In the past, it seemed like instead of protecting the environment, the EPA was more focused on pursuing a political agenda that led to expansive, and might I add expensive, regulatory burdens.

Fortunately, that is no longer the case. Under the leadership of Administrator Wheeler, the EPA has shifted from top-down, one-size-fits-all regulations, to a flexible, technology-driven approach that works with local communities to protect our environment and maintain economic growth.

I'm confident that under the leadership of Administrator Wheeler, America will remain the gold standard of environmental protection around the world. And by leveraging new technologies, we can protect our environment without imposing sweeping government mandates.

As the Ranking Member of the Science Committee, I may be biased – but I believe that technology should be the cornerstone of our efforts to reduce global emissions and address our environmental challenges. American industry is already making great strides by investing in technologies like carbon capture, advanced nuclear, and energy storage.

EPA should encourage the adoption of innovative ways to monitor and reduce emissions, while allowing us to use all of our natural resources safely and effectively.

That is the kind of approach that has helped significantly improve air quality in the United States. According to the EPA's most recent air trends report, the number of unhealthy air days, along with the emissions of key air pollutants, have declined since 2000. Our fine particulate matter levels are five times lower than the global average. And we've made that progress while growing our economy.

Under the Trump Administration, I've been pleased to see the EPA focus on using sound, transparent science to develop environmental solutions that bring all the stakeholders to the table. If we want our policies to be successful, they need to be based on the best available science – and also be achievable without damaging our economy. I believe this Administration is working hard to do both.

I also want to take a moment and applaud Administrator Wheeler for finalizing the first step to repeal the Obama Administration's WOTUS rule this week. This rule was exactly the wrong way to protect the environment – a federal government power grab that made it harder for farmers, ranchers, and landowners to do business.

By returning to limited regulatory authority established under the Clean Water Act, the EPA has taken a balanced approach that supports both our environment and the economy.

But don't let anyone fool you. Rolling back this regulation had nothing to do with ignoring the science, and it won't lead to more pollution in our waterways. In fact, the Trump Administration has prioritized efforts to improve water quality by investing in water infrastructure.

Through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan program and State Revolving Funds program, the EPA has helped local communities modernize outdated infrastructure and improve water quality. This investment will improve the health and safety of our nations' waterways and create jobs.

I'm sure that we will hear criticisms of the EPA today. I hope that instead of falsely attacking the Agency as anti-science, or focusing on Administrator Wheeler's predecessor, we can make this a productive hearing where we honestly assess the work being done to protect our environment. I believe the EPA is on the right track, and is working to find a science-based, collaborative approach to ensure all Americans and future generations can enjoy a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment.

I want to thank Administrator Wheeler again for his hard work, along with all the staff at the EPA, and look forward to hearing his testimony this morning.