



COMMITTEE ON

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Ranking Member Ralph Norman
Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Hearing Opening Statement
“Scientific Integrity in Federal Agencies”
July 17, 2019

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens and Chairwoman Sherrill, for convening today’s hearing.

We are here to discuss the importance of scientific integrity policies within federal agencies. The value of integrity and transparency in federal science enterprise cannot be understated.

Scientific findings are often relied upon by policymakers to make important decisions that affect the lives of millions of Americans.

But to maintain the public’s trust, there must be a high degree of integrity and transparency in the scientific process.

Under the direction of Congress and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), in 2010, Federal science agencies were directed to develop policies that ensure a culture of scientific integrity; strengthen the credibility of government research; facilitate the flow of scientific and technological information; and to establish principles for conveying scientific and technological information to the public.

According to GAO, 24 federal departments and agencies have developed scientific integrity policies in response to the 2010 OSTP guidance.

In April 2019, GAO published a report evaluating these policies and their implementation across nine federal agencies that conduct scientific research.

I look forward to hearing more today about this report and GAO’s work on this important topic. Thank you, Mr. Neumann, for being here.

During today’s discussion, however, we cannot lose sight of the distinction between science and policy. Science is used to answer questions relevant to policy. But policy is a decision or a commitment to a specified course of action, which is ultimately a political question.

We must ensure integrity in both scientific and political processes. I believe this means we should refrain from weaponizing science to score political points.

Unfortunately, it seems that my Democratic colleagues are intent on politicizing scientific integrity, and the way this hearing was orchestrated is a perfect example.

I am disappointed in the way this entire process has been managed. Committee staff were first notified about this hearing when they were copied on a witness invitation.

There was no phone call. There was no email. There was no conversation. There was no deliberation, at least no “bipartisan” deliberation.

This invitation was to an official from the EPA, an agency that received not one single recommendation for action in GAO’s report. In fact, of the 10 recommendations made by GAO, four were directed to the Department of Energy, two were directed to NIST, and NASA and NOAA received one recommendation each.

But none of these agencies were invited to testify about their scientific integrity policies.

Instead, the Majority sought to invite the EPA, presumably to haul them in for a partisan pummeling.

The EPA even agreed to provide a senior official to testify, a respected scientist who oversees scientific integrity policies. But the Majority rejected that witness.

And it doesn’t stop there. The legislation we are here to discuss has 188 cosponsors, all of which are Democrats. Perhaps that’s because my colleagues across the aisle had no interest in gaining bipartisan support.

Fortunately, there is ample room for improving communication and deliberation moving forward.

Since the Majority failed to invite a single PhD scientist, we invited a scientific expert to provide constructive feedback on the legislation. I look forward to hearing Dr. Pielke’s thoughtful recommendations.

I am hopeful that the tone of the remainder of today’s hearing will be civil, and that we can have a constructive dialogue on how we can reaffirm our commitment to integrity and transparency within the federal science enterprise.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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