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U.S. SENATE CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE

United States Senate

August 9, 2017

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President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As your administration reviews the Draft U.S. Global Research Program Climate Science Special Report, I urge you to ensure that there is no interference with any science or any scientific conclusions included in the report as it is finalized. It is imperative that policymakers and the American people are able to receive this science-based assessment on climate change and its impacts without fear of politically-motivated interference. Any such interference could have a chilling effect on scientific research going forward.

Pursuant to the Global Change Research Act of 1990, which was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush, the Office of Science and Technology Policy must prepare a scientific assessment of the effects of climate change on the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, social systems, and biological diversity. The assessment must include a projection of climate change trends over the next 25 to 100 years, and this report must be prepared and submitted to Congress no less frequently than every four years.

There have already been troubling instances in your transition and administration of potential scientific interference or suppression. In December, your transition team requested that the Department of Energy provide a list of employees or contractors who helped develop various energy and climate policies pursued by the previous administration. This request smacked of a political witch hunt, and it was right that it was ultimately abandoned. Your budget proposes to cut the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) overall scientific research budget by nearly half and slash funding for the agency's Science Advisory Board by 84 percent. Your administration has dismissed dozens of scientists from the EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors and reassigned scientists in the Interior Department who expressed concern about climate change. Taken together, these actions raise serious questions about your administration's commitment to scientific integrity that is in the best interests of the American people.

It is critical that we understand the impacts of climate change that are already occurring in the United States and around the globe as well as those that we will experience in the future. We must ensure that our federal agencies do not stifle the science of climate change or the scientists who are working on it. I urge you to ensure that there is no interference or suppression of science as your administration finalizes this Congressionally-mandated report on climate change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "M".

Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator