

Message

From: Todd Parfitt [todd.parfitt@wyo.gov]
Sent: 7/6/2017 9:56:47 PM
To: Wagner, Kenneth [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=048236ab99bc4d5ea16c139b1b67719c-Wagner, Ken]
Subject: Fwd: Inside EPA: Parfitt threatens to return EPA programs over FY18 cuts

FYI as we discussed.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Alexandra Dapolito Dunn <adunn@ecos.org>
Date: Thu, Jul 6, 2017 at 7:18 AM
Subject: Inside EPA: Parfitt threatens to return EPA programs over FY18 cuts
To: Todd Parfitt <todd.parfitt@wyo.gov>

THE DAILY FEED

Ewire: Wyoming threatens to return EPA programs over FY18 cuts

July 05, 2017

The top environmental official in Wyoming, a state that has long sought more control over its regulatory programs, may be one of the first to publicly threaten to return delegated programs to EPA if federal policymakers do not provide states with adequate funds, though few expect Congress will cut as deeply as what the Trump administration is proposing.

"If you cut too deep and prevent the ability of states to implement these programs. . . then you might see some states turning these programs back," Todd Parfitt, director of the state's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), told state lawmakers late last week, according to the *Casper Star-Tribune*.

"There is a tipping point in there somewhere. And they need to be very cognizant of that."

Parfitt appears to be one of the first state officials to warn publicly that his state might return federal programs to EPA if Congress implements the Trump administration's proposed budget in fiscal year 2018, which includes a proposed 40 percent cut to state grants. As *Inside EPA* reported earlier this year, Alex Dunn, executive director of the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) said earlier this year that some states might consider returning delegated EPA programs back to the agency due to the Trump administration's proposed cuts to state grants -- though she did not name any states.

"I have heard some states mention that they would think seriously about returning a [delegated] program to the federal government if funding becomes insufficient. I don't think it's anyone's first choice," but some state environment directors have talked "openly" about the idea, she said.

While lawmakers have not yet indicated exactly how they plan to respond to the Trump administration's proposed budget cuts, they have generally indicated the agency will not get as significant a cut as what the White House floated. For example, at a recent House appropriations hearing, several GOP lawmakers indicated that any cuts for EPA would not be as deep as what the administration is seeking.

"I can assure you, you are going to be the first EPA administrator that has come before this committee in eight years that actually gets more money than they asked for," Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK), a GOP appropriator, told Pruitt. "It doesn't mean you'll get as much as you had but you'll do better than you asked for," he added.

And many state officials are hopeful that -- based on Pruitt's "muted" responses to appropriators -- that the administrator will support restoring funds for state grants. "It is challenging to square the rhetoric with the action of the budget proposal. . . . But we've seen some encouraging signs, or heard some encouraging signs, with Pruitt's testimony lately -- he says he's willing to work with Congress, and he still supports the regional programs, but this was the budget that was proposed," one source told *Inside EPA's* David LaRoss last week.

The Cowboy state's DEQ accepted 27 percent of its budget from EPA in 2017. But the state gets a sizable boost from an Abandoned Mine Lands fund, where the federal government pays industry-producing states. When those funds are included in the total, Wyoming relies on EPA and federal funds for 68 percent of DEQ's budget for both 2017 and 2018.

Wyoming's Parfitt says he is concerned that if Congress were to cut EPA's budget by as much as the administration is proposing, it would threaten grants like the \$1 million grant EPA recently gave the state to clean up streams and lakes, which would be zeroed out by the administration's proposal.

And even Republicans in the state's legislature acknowledge a "flip side" to that state's desire to "control as much of the regulatory process as possible," the paper notes, in that if there were no EPA funds to start the programs to begin with, it would "inhibit our ability" to continue the programs.

But the state's lawmakers are optimistic that the White House's proposed EPA budget cuts for fiscal year 2018 won't come to fruition:

"We are watching it very closely," State Rep. Mike Greear (R) said. "We are not too excited by it at this point. We are still at the beginning of the process" -- a sentiment echoed by many observers in Washington watching the appropriations process.

And Parfitt in his remarks said he did not believe the EPA cuts would survive the budget process.

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Mark your calendar for the July 17 ECOS STEP Meeting in Washington, DC!

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