

**To:** Jacqueline Pata[jpata@ncai.org]  
**From:** Cason, James  
**Sent:** 2017-05-08T18:09:31-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: DOI Suspends Advisory Councils  
**Received:** 2017-05-08T18:10:08-04:00

Hi Jackie,  
I have told Mike Black to continue with TIBC meetings.

I believe TIBC is more related to our ongoing Tribal Consultation process rather than the FACA Committees being reviewed.

In our times of constrained budgets, we need to continue to work together to direct available funds to high priority tasks.

Let me know if you need more info.

Jim

On Mon, May 8, 2017 at 3:47 PM, Jacqueline Pata <[jpata@ncai.org](mailto:jpata@ncai.org)> wrote:

Jim I am getting lots of inquires does this impact TBIC?? Please let me know thanks- Jackie

Energy and Environment

**EPA dismisses half of  
key board's scientific  
advisers; Interior  
suspends more than  
200 advisory panels**

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By Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis By Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis

Energy and Environment

May 8 at 1:05 PM



Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt speaks with coal miners at the Harvey Mine on April 13 in Sycamore, Pa. (Justin Merriman/Getty Images)

Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Interior Department are overhauling a slew of outside advisory boards that inform how their agencies assess the science underpinning policies, the first step in a broader effort by Republicans to change the way the federal government evaluates the scientific basis for its regulations.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt decided to replace half of the members on one of its key scientific review boards, while Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is “reviewing the charter and charge” of more than 200 advisory boards, committees and other entities both within and outside his department. EPA and Interior officials began informing current members of the move Friday, and notifications continued over the weekend.

Pruitt’s move could significantly change the makeup of the 18-member Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC), which advises EPA’s prime scientific arm on whether the research it does has sufficient rigor and integrity. All of the people being dismissed were at the end of serving at least one three-year term, although these terms are often renewed instead of terminated.

EPA spokesman J.P. Freire said in an email that “no one has been fired or terminated” and that Pruitt had simply decided to bring in fresh advisers. The agency informed the outside academics on Friday that their terms would not be renewed.

“We’re not going to rubber-stamp the last administration’s appointees. Instead, they should participate in the same open competitive process as the rest of the applicant pool,” Freire said. “This approach is what was always intended for the board, and we’re making a clean break with the last administration’s approach.”

**EPA chief unconvinced global warming**

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The head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, says he is not convinced carbon dioxide from human activity is the main driver of climate change and wants Congress to weigh in on whether CO2 should be regulated. (Reuters)

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, says he is not convinced carbon dioxide from human activity is the main driver of climate change and wants Congress to weigh in on whether CO2 should be regulated. The head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, says he is not convinced carbon dioxide from human activity is the main driver of climate change. (Reuters)

*[EPA website removes climate science site from public view after two decades]*

Separately, Zinke has postponed all outside committees as he reviews their composition and work. The review will effectively freeze the work of the Bureau of Land Management's 38 resource advisory councils, along with other panels focused on a range of issues, from one assessing the threat of invasive species to the science technical advisory panel for Alaska's North Slope.

**“The Secretary is committed to restoring trust in the Department’s decision-making and that begins with institutionalizing state and local input and ongoing collaboration, particularly in communities surrounding public lands,” Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said by email Monday. “As the Department concludes its review in the weeks ahead, agencies will notice future meetings to ensure that the Department continues to get the benefit of the views of local communities in all decision-making on public land management.”**

Greg Zimmerman, deputy director of the non-partisan advocacy group

Center for Western Priorities, said in an interview that “it just doesn’t make any sense they would be canceling meetings as they do this analysis” of everything from which large national monuments should be preserved to how to manage public lands more broadly. BLM’s regional advisory councils include officials from the energy and outdoor recreation industry as well as scientists and conservationists, Zimmerman added.

“The only reasonable explanation is they don’t want to be hearing from these folks,” he said.

These moves came as a surprise to the agencies’ outside advisers, with several of them taking to Twitter to announce their suspensions.

John Peter Thompson, who chairs Interior’s Invasive Species Advisory Panel, tweeted Monday that he had been notified that “all activities are suspended subject to review by Depart of Interior.”

Members of EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselors had been informed twice — in January, before President Barack Obama left office, and then more recently by EPA career staff members — that they would be kept on for another term, adding to their confusion.

“I was kind of shocked to receive this news,” Robert Richardson, an ecological economist and an associate professor in Michigan State University’s Department of Community Sustainability, said in an interview Sunday.

Richardson, who on Saturday tweeted, “Today, I was Trumped,” said that he was at the end of an initial three-year term but that members traditionally have served two such stints. “I’ve never heard of any circumstance where someone didn’t serve two consecutive terms,” he said, adding that the dismissals gave him “great concern that objective science is being marginalized in this administration.”

Courtney Flint, a professor of natural resource sociology at Utah State University who had served one term on the board, said in an email that she was also surprised to learn that her term would not be renewed, “particularly since I was told that such a renewal was expected.” But she added, “In the broader view, I suppose it is the prerogative of this administration to set the goals of federal agencies and to appoint members to advisory boards.”

*[EPA just buried its climate site for kids]*

Ryan Jackson, Pruitt’s chief of staff, noted in an email that all the board members whose terms are not being renewed could reapply for their positions. “I’m not quite sure why some EPA career staff simply get angry by us opening up the process,” he said. “It seems unprofessional to me.”

Terry F. Yosie, who directed EPA’s Science Advisory Board from 1981 to 1988, noted in an email that the Board of Scientific Counselors does not report directly to the administrator or his office. “It’s quite extraordinary that such a body would receive this level of attention by the Administrator’s office,” he said.

Pruitt is planning a much broader overhaul of how the agency conducts its scientific analysis, said a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. Pruitt has been meeting with academics to talk about the matter and putting thought into which areas of investigation warrant attention from the agency’s scientific advisers.

The agency may consider industry scientific experts for some of the board positions as long as these appointments do not pose a conflict of interest, Freire said.

Conservatives have complained for years about EPA’s approach to science,

including the input it receives from outside scientific bodies. Both the Board of Scientific Counselors and the 47-member Scientific Advisory Board have come under criticism for bolstering the cause for greater federal regulation.

A majority of the members of the Board of Scientific Counselors have terms expiring this fiscal year, along with the terms of 12 members of the Scientific Advisory Board. GOP lawmakers have frequently criticized the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC)—a committee within the Scientific Advisory Board—for its recommendation that the EPA impose much stricter curbs on smog-forming ozone. The seven-person panel, which is charged under the Clean Air Act to review the scientific basis of all ambient air quality standards, is legally required to have a medical doctor and a member of the National Academy of Sciences as members.

Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), who questions the link between human activity and climate change and has several former aides now working for Pruitt, said in an interview earlier this year that under the new administration, “they’re going to have to start dealing with science, and not rigged science.”

House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Tex.) held a hearing on the issue in February, arguing that the Scientific Advisory Board should be expanded to include more non-academics. The panel, which was established in 1978, is primarily made up of academic scientists and other experts who review EPA’s research to ensure that the regulations the agency undertakes have a sound scientific basis.

“The EPA routinely stacks this board with friendly scientists who receive millions of dollars in grants from the federal government,” Smith said at the time. “The conflict of interest here is clear.”

In a budget proposal obtained by The Washington Post last month, the

panel's operating budget is slated for an 84 percent cut — or \$542,000 — for fiscal 2018. That money typically covers travel and other expenses for outside experts who attend the board's public meetings.

The document said the budget cut reflects “an anticipated lower number of peer reviews.”

Joe Arvai, a member of the Scientific Advisory Board who directs the University of Michigan's Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise, said in an email that Pruitt and his colleagues should keep in mind that the board's membership, just like its standing and ad hoc panels, “already includes credible scientists from industry” and that its “work on agency rulemaking is open to public viewing and comment. So, if diversity of thought and transparency are the administrator's concerns, his worries are misplaced because the SAB already has these bases covered.

“So, if you ask me, his moves over the weekend — as well as the House bill to reform the SAB — are attempts to use the SAB as a political toy,” Arvai said. “By making these moves, the administrator and members of the House can pander to the president's base by looking like they're getting tough on all those pesky ‘liberal scientists.’ But, all else being equal, nothing fundamentally changes about how the SAB operates.”