

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
Sent: Thur 11/9/2017 9:50:09 PM
Subject: Senators ask GAO to review Pruitt's advisory board grant ban

By Alex Guillén

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Nine Senate Democrats and independent [Bernie Sanders](#) today asked the GAO to expand a previous inquiry into EPA's advisory boards to include Administrator Scott Pruitt's new directive barring grant-holders from serving on those committees.

GAO is already considering the independence of EPA's various advisory committees following complaints from the lawmakers about whether Pruitt was protecting their independence and neutrality.

The lawmakers pointed to a 2004 court ruling in which the 5th Circuit said the presence of federal grant recipients on a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health advisory board was not a valid reason to reject the scientists' recommendations.

"The double-standard is striking: an academic scientist that receives an EPA grant for any purpose cannot provide independent advice on a completely different subject matter on any of EPA's science advisory boards, while industry scientists are presumed to have no inherent conflict even if their research is entirely funded by a company with a financial stake in an advisory board's conclusions," the lawmakers wrote.

The letter was signed by [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) of Rhode Island, [Tom Carper](#) of Delaware, [Ed Markey](#) of Massachusetts, [Brian Schatz](#) of Hawaii, Sanders of Vermont, [Jeanne Shaheen](#) of New Hampshire, [Mazie Hirono](#) of Hawaii, [Gary Peters](#) of Michigan, [Sherrod Brown](#) of Ohio and [Al Franken](#) of Minnesota.

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