

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Pruitt to limit science advisers who have received grant money

By Alex Guillén

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EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt today questioned whether scientists who received agency research grants in the past should be allowed to serve on its various advisory boards, and said he would issue an order limiting their roles.

Speaking at a Heritage Foundation event, Pruitt said that he is concerned about the recommendations coming from advisers who have received "sometimes tens of millions" of dollars in research grants from EPA.

"If we have individuals that are on those boards receiving money from the agency — sometimes going back years and years to the tune of literally tens of millions of dollars over time — that to me causes question on the independence and the veracity and the transparency of those recommendations that are coming our way," he said.

"Next week I'm going to issue a directive that addresses that ... to ensure the independence and transparency and objectivity with respect to the scientific advice that we're getting at the agency," he added.

Pruitt did not specify whether his order would simply impose restrictions or outright ban any scientist who has received grant money.

The move is likely to cause further uproar from Pruitt's critics, particularly since many established and reputable scientists have received a research grant from EPA in the past. EPA ethics rules prohibit board members from having a current grant.

House Republicans have unsuccessfully pushed legislation in recent years that would bar grant recipients from serving on EPA's boards.

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