

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro
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Subject: EPA started hiring process for Dourson ahead of hearing, document shows

By Alex Guillén

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EPA began laying the groundwork to get Michael Dourson onto the agency payroll without waiting for him to be confirmed — even before his nomination hearing occurred, according to documents obtained by POLITICO via a Freedom of Information Act request.

Dourson joined EPA as a senior adviser to Administrator Scott Pruitt sometime last month. On Sept. 20, Pruitt and EPA chief of staff Ryan Jackson signed Dourson's "position description coversheet," outlining his duties advising Pruitt on legislative and regulatory issues related to chemicals and pesticides. That was two weeks before Dourson's Oct. 4 hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, though President Donald Trump nominated him in July as the assistant administrator for toxic substances. (In an apparent error, the document does not include Dourson's name, but was identified by EPA as Dourson's paperwork.)

The committee approved his nomination along party lines Oct. 25, but a Senate floor vote has not yet been scheduled. Dourson has drawn criticism over his past toxicology work for various companies, and some Republicans have indicated they have reservations.

EPA last month pointed out that previous administrations had hired nominees to begin working before their confirmation. The agency did not immediately respond to a request for a comment today.

Susan Bodine, who is awaiting a confirmation vote to become EPA's enforcement chief, also has already started at EPA. Pruitt and Jackson signed off on her job description July 12, according to a copy of the document obtained by POLITICO.

WHAT'S NEXT: It is unclear when Dourson may receive a final floor vote in the Senate.

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