

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
Sent: Fri 11/3/2017 10:24:20 PM
Subject: GAO to review Pruitt appearance in beef group's anti-WOTUS video

By Alex Guillén

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The Government Accountability Office will investigate EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's appearance in an industry group's video calling for public comments in favor of repealing the Waters of the U.S. rule, according to a [letter](#) released today by House Democrats.

Rep. [Peter DeFazio](#) (D-Ore.) asked GAO to investigate whether Pruitt's actions violated laws "on the use of appropriated funds for lobbying and publicity or propaganda purposes and the Antideficiency Act," according to the letter, dated Oct. 31.

The [video](#) was posted on Aug. 16 by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a major critic of the Obama-era WOTUS regulation. It includes an interview in which Pruitt discusses his criticisms of the rule, along with text urging viewers to submit pre-written comments via the NCBA's website.

The video quickly drew criticisms from environmental groups. EPA at the time [said](#) Pruitt sought "engagement with all stakeholders, especially those who felt their voices were ignored by the previous Administration."

GAO previously dinged the Obama-era EPA in 2015 when it [concluded](#) the agency's use of a "Thunderclap" social media campaign promoting the WOTUS rule amounted to "covert propaganda."

WHAT'S NEXT: GAO's letter does not specify how long the inquiry will take.

To view online:

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