

To: Dravis, Samantha[dravis.samantha@epa.gov]
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EPA's Scott Pruitt Drains The Swamp Like No One Else In Washington

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Emmett McGroarty And Erin Tuttle

<http://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/360763-epas-scott-pruitt-drains-the-swamp-like-no-one-else-in-washington>

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is a man who gets things done. Despite resistance from within his own agency and an environment lobby bent on stopping him, he's doing his part to drain the swamp and return government to the people. He's bringing what citizens demand of a federal agency: Transparency and reasoned, fact-based decision-making resting on sound statutory footing.

Take the contentious issue of global warming. Pruitt called for a reasoned debate. But his critics mocked the suggestion, claiming it would be an outrage to place "fringe" views on an even platform with "established, peer-reviewed research." But it is tyrants and mobs — not reasonable policymakers intent on serving the public — who ridicule debate and discussion. It undercuts arbitrary rule and fear, their chief weapons.

Consider Pruitt's recent directive prohibiting scientists from serving on one of the agency's three main advisory panels while they are receiving EPA grant funding. It applies to the three main advisory boards at the EPA: The Science Advisory Board, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), and the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC).

Pruitt made the case that the directive is necessary to ensure the agency's research programs are informed by independent experts with no financial ties to the programs. As he noted, advisory board members have received \$77 million in grant money over the past three years — half of the total amount allotted.

"When we have members of those committees that received tens of millions of dollars in grants at the same time that they are advising this agency on rulemaking, that is not good," Pruitt said. His directive is prudent, and it is the type of common-sense safeguard that citizens expect in a self-governed republic.

In contrast, the resistance of the EPA's bureaucracy and its apologists shows arrogant contempt for the citizen. Board member and chair of BOSC, Deborah Swackhamer, seemingly unfazed by these relationships, labeled Pruitt's directive as "clearly political" and suggested it is an attempt to effectively stack the committees with members who disagree with her (although she didn't put it quite that way).

What's really going on at EPA is the swamp draining that needs to happen across the federal bureaucracy. It is a death-fight (meant figuratively) for bureaucrats intent at reshaping society according to their world-view. To do so, they need to maintain an appearance that scientific consensus supports their views.

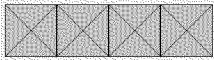
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But, as Pruitt commented, the focus at EPA should be "sound science, not political science." His approach should be emulated by the other agencies.

[To Read The Full Op-Ed Click Here](#)

Emmett McGroarty and Erin Tuttle work for American Principles Project. They are co-authors of the forthcoming book "Deconstructing the Administrative State: The Fight for Liberty."

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