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OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

February 20, 2017

Mr. Scott Pruitt, Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Mail Code 1101A  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Pruitt,

The EPA, through administration of such strong statutes as the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, has overseen dramatic improvements in the quality of our water, air and soil. In general, our air and water are much cleaner than they were decades ago, when heavy smog enveloped our cities, beach closures were common, and a river caught fire. Through Superfund cleanups, legacy soil pollution is being addressed. But most assuredly, there remains work to do.

As head of the EPA, you are responsible to all of the American people for protection of environmental health. Polls have shown that a large majority of Americans consider it important to continue to provide such protections. Environmental safeguards need not cause the loss of jobs, and the "jobs versus the environment" mindset is false and unproductive. There will always be jobs developing and producing cleaner technologies and sources of energy. The economy has advanced with environmental regulations in place, and will continue to move forward.

Also, despite denials, the existence of climate change is scientifically established, just as is the link between tobacco smoke and lung cancer. There is no debate among serious climate scientists about whether or why our global climate is warming. Miami Beach experiences flooding on sunny days. Glaciers are receding and disappearing. Summertime sea ice coverage in the Arctic has been dramatically shrinking, and polar bears, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, drown from exhaustion trying to swim to the ice from shore. Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are at unprecedented highs and are climbing. Methane is being released from tundra soils as permafrost melts. That plus the disappearance of reflective ice surface contributes to heat absorption, creates positive feedback loops, and accelerates warming. These phenomena have all been observed and documented.

It cannot be overstated how important it is for you be briefed by EPA science personnel concerning climate science, and to maintain an open mind. There are those who disparage science if its conclusions are not comfortable or convenient for them. That, of course, does not define good science, which is objective and not political. Your agency includes competent scientists doing credible work on climate change, and EPA has a necessary role in regulating

greenhouse gases. As an American citizen, I strongly support work by EPA that helps advance climate science and informs our response to climate change.

Of major concern to me and many others is that litigation that has been brought against EPA by the State of Oklahoma presents disturbing possibilities for conflicts of interest in your new role. I very much hope you will consult with EPA legal counsel and make a sincere effort to disentangle yourself from those legal actions in a manner that protects the integrity of the agency you now head.

Finally, there is draft legislation (H.R. 861) in the House of Representatives to eliminate the EPA by 2018. I am greatly concerned that such an action is even being contemplated. Water and air contamination, if not also soil pollution, crosses state lines, meaning the Federal government must regulate what state and local governments cannot. Climate change is a global issue requiring leadership by the United States Government. Elimination of EPA would be a very serious step backward and absolutely against the interests of the American people and our environment. Your understanding and support of the legitimate and necessary role of EPA to steward and defend environmental health will help Congress act responsibly. The American public has a right to expect no less.

I look forward to your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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cc:

Senator Maria Cantwell, Washington

Senator Patty Murray, Washington

Representative Pramila Jayapal, Washington 7th District

Senator John Barrasso, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Representative Rob Bishop, House Natural Resources Committee

Representative Lamar Smith, House Science, Space and Technology Committee

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