

To: Daisy Letendre Personal Email/Ex. 6
From: Dravis, Samantha
Sent: Mon 9/11/2017 12:38:49 PM
Subject: FW: EPA staffer: We're still working on climate adaptation

From: Bowman, Liz
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2017 6:46 AM
To: Dravis, Samantha <dravis.samantha@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: EPA staffer: We're still working on climate adaptation

Sent from my iPhone

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From: "POLITICO Pro Energy" <politicoemail@politicopro.com>
Date: September 11, 2017 at 5:06:31 AM EDT
To: <bowman.liz@epa.gov>
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EPA staffer: We're still working on climate adaptation

By Emily Holden

09/11/2017 05:02 AM EDT

Staff from the EPA's disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO.

An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation," said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. "Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues."

Pruitt has eliminated EPA's initiatives aimed at reducing man-made carbon dioxide emissions in order to curb climate change. He has questioned CO2's role in rising temperatures, proposing the agency should host public debates on the science. He is working to rescind the Clean Power Plan, the Obama administration's key proposal to start decreasing U.S. greenhouse gas levels, and he was a core proponent of exiting the Paris climate agreement.

But Scheraga said EPA is still available to work with state and local leaders who want to prepare for the effects of climate change, including heavy rains, more intense hurricanes and sea-level rise. The news is one of the first signs that Pruitt would allow some climate change efforts to continue.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the changes "occurred in the spring and allowed these four employees to continue their work on climate change adaptation within the office of policy." The staffers will work within the Office of Regulatory Planning and Management and the National Center of Environmental Economics.

Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example.

"We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs," Scheraga said. "They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water."

That kind of work will be important as Texas and Florida rebuild following two of the most damaging hurricanes in U.S. history.

Congress is moving ahead with an initial \$15 billion aid package for Texas and Louisiana, and scientists say addressing the role of a changing climate is crucial to spending that money effectively.

Fred Wagner, a lawyer who counseled the city of New Orleans in rebuilding its downtown medical center after Hurricane Katrina, said communities that want to spend more to rebuild smarter, with bigger and more frequent flooding in mind, will need to be able to point to climate change, even if they just call it "resiliency."

"It makes justifying the investment in those features much more acceptable, much more palatable," he said.

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