

RICHARD C. SHELBY, ALABAMA, CHAIRMAN

MITCH McCONNELL, KENTUCKY
LAMAR ALEXANDER, TENNESSEE
SUSAN M. COLLINS, MAINE
LISA MURKOWSKI, ALASKA
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS
JOHN HOEVEN, NORTH DAKOTA
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA
STEVE DAINES, MONTANA
JOHN KENNEDY, LOUISIANA
MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
CINDY HYDE-SMITH, MISSISSIPPI

PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT
PATTY MURRAY, WASHINGTON
DIANNE FEINSTEIN, CALIFORNIA
RICHARD J. DURBIN, ILLINOIS
JACK REED, RHODE ISLAND
JON TESTER, MONTANA
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
JOE MANCHIN, III, WEST VIRGINIA
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND

SHANNON HUTCHERSON HINES, STAFF DIRECTOR
CHARLES E. KIEFFER, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025
<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

July 17, 2018

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

As the Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the EPA, I strongly disapproved of Administrator Pruitt's reckless spending and disregard for legal and ethical standards, not to mention proper protocols and procedures throughout his tenure as administrator. Like many Americans, I was even more outraged by his actions and efforts to weaken public health protections, sideline expert EPA career staff, and undermine scientific findings that support regulatory protections. Administrator Pruitt's policy proposals and rollbacks of environmental health regulations were connected to his ethical problems and his cozy relationships with political donors, stakeholders and private corporations.

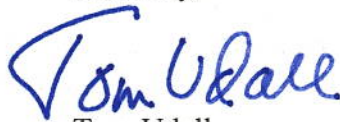
Given your employment history as a lobbyist for EPA regulated companies and industries, there are legitimate concerns that your priorities could place your past and potential future employers' interests over the public interest. I deeply and sincerely hope that this is not the case and that you will seize this unique and historic moment in the EPA's history to restore public confidence in the Agency. I welcome your first address to EPA employees where you committed to support the agency's workforce and work towards "protecting human health and the environment."

As we discussed in our recent phone call, your plan to publish your daily schedule soon after the close of each day and announcing events for press in advance is welcome. I also understand that you acknowledge that coordination with Congress over proposed reorganizations and closures is also required and that you committed to work with our Committee to seek approval on all such matters. Additionally, we discussed the potential crisis in staffing at the Agency, which I believe was worsened by former Administrator Pruitt. Addressing this crisis is important to the agency properly functioning, in large part because the EPA employs highly technical subject matter experts that cannot easily be replaced. It should remain a priority to retain this staff and hire for positions that see retirements in accordance with Congressional direction.

While I welcome these steps, the job of re-establishing trust with the American people will require more than simply publishing a public schedule and abiding by the appropriations process. In order to rebuild credibility at the EPA, I would urge that you stop and reevaluate all ongoing roll-backs to public health and environmental protections that were initiated by Administrator Pruitt. Reasonable people may differ about the appropriate levels of environmental protections in various contexts and we are both very well aware of the vigorous stakeholder debates about environmental policies, but regardless of party, the job of the EPA Administrator is to protect human health and the environment and the primary constituent of concern is the American people. Not corporations, donors, or companies who are regulated by the EPA.

As such, it is imperative for the EPA to start anew and rebuild its credibility as a regulator and enforcer of protections that prioritize the health of our citizens and environment. Please stop and reevaluate all ongoing EPA regulatory revisions designed to loosen pollution control standards and work with me and others in Congress to identify ways to rebuild the credibility of the Agency.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies