



ADVANCING EARTH
AND SPACE SCIENCE

15 July 2019

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4330

Dear Chairwoman Johnson,

On behalf of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), a non-profit scientific society representing 60,000 Earth and space scientists, I am writing to express our shared concerns on the planned policy changes at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding transparency and accuracy of scientific information, including changes to the Science Advisory Board (SAB) nomination process.

The purpose of the SAB is to provide scientific advice to the EPA Administrator to inform policy decisions. For the SAB to fulfill its mission and serve the greater public good, it is imperative that it be comprised of expert, independent scientists and technical advisors. In selecting advisors to serve on the SAB or any of its subcommittees, the EPA should consider candidates with impeccable scientific credentials in specifically applicable disciplines who are held in high regard by the broader scientific and technical community. Scientists that either lack appropriate expertise or do not accept scientifically sound and well-established research will not adequately represent the best scientific data and will weaken the ability of the EPA to protect our health and environment.

The troubling changes at the EPA are merely one example of how science advisory boards at any federal agency can potentially be weakened, harming our national scientific enterprise and thus hampering our national economy, safety, and security. AGU is fully committed to efforts to ensure that scientific information is communicated openly with policymakers and the public. However, it is critical that such scientific information undergo the peer review process, which remains the gold standard of academic achievement. The peer review process affords the type of informed discourse necessary for the objectivity, rigor, and legitimacy of scientific information.

AGU stands ready to work with the House Science Committee and the Administration to ensure that that best scientific advice and information can be shared freely and can help guide decisions that will protect the nation.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christine W. McEntee'.

Christine W. McEntee
CEO/Executive Director
American Geophysical Union