

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

August 17, 2021

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20052

Administrator Regan:

We write to request information regarding concerning reported irregularities in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) chemical review program. Last month, four whistleblowers, each a current or former staffer in EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP), alleged the office downplayed the dangers of new chemicals. They also claimed that there was inappropriate interference with risk assessments conducted pursuant to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).¹

Furthermore, several recent news reports have described the concerning interference in EPA's new chemicals program.² For instance, these whistleblowers alleged that OCSPP manipulated the review of dozens of chemicals in order to make the chemicals appear safer.³ Additionally, EPA employees were reportedly pressured to downplay evidence of chemicals'

¹ *Whistleblowers Expose Corruption in EPA Chemical Safety Office*, The Intercept (July 2, 2021).

² *EPA Approved Toxic Chemicals for Fracking a Decade Ago, New Files Show*, The New York Times (July 12, 2021); *Whistleblowers Expose Corruption in EPA Chemical Safety Office*, The Intercept (July 2, 2021).

³ *EPA Approved Toxic Chemicals for Fracking a Decade Ago, New Files Show*, The New York Times (July 12, 2021).

potential adverse effects such as cancer, birth defects, and neurological effects.⁴ The report also indicates EPA's scientific staff were subject to retaliation.⁵

The Committee has a longstanding interest in ensuring EPA's implementation of TSCA is based on sound science. We also firmly believe EPA's scientific staff must be able to perform their work of protecting human health and the environment free from inappropriate interference and retaliation. The allegations made by the four whistleblowers are troubling, and, if true, raise serious concerns about EPA's implementation of TSCA and about protections for EPA employees.

We therefore request a briefing from EPA regarding the Agency's response to the issues raised by the whistleblowers, as well as a written response to the following questions no later than August 31, 2021:

1. Please describe EPA's understanding as to the veracity of the complaints raised by whistleblowers regarding interference in the chemical program. Please also explain what actions, if any, EPA has taken to look into these allegations.
2. Is EPA considering reevaluating any chemicals in light of concerns that their review process may have been subject to interference or that they may include precursors to PFAS? If so, please describe the process and timeline for any reevaluation.
3. Does EPA have any ongoing or planned efforts to review and strengthen whistleblower protections at the Agency? If so, please describe these efforts, including the EPA office responsible for these improvements and any associated timelines.

⁴ *Whistleblowers Expose Corruption in EPA Chemical Safety Office*, The Intercept (July 2, 2021).

⁵ *Whistleblowers Expose Corruption in EPA Chemical Safety Office*, The Intercept (July 2, 2021).

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If you have questions, please contact Rebekah Jones on the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.

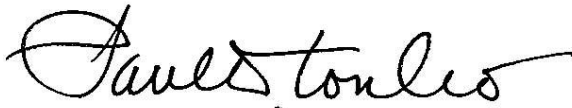
Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman



Diana DeGette
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations



Paul D. Tonko
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment
and Climate Change

The Honorable Michael S. Regan

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cc: The Honorable Sean O'Donnell
Inspector General
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency