



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 21 2018

OFFICE OF
CONGRESSIONAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6115

Dear Representative Pallone:

This responds to your letter, dated February 20, 2018, regarding past air travel of Administrator Pruitt. The Administrator asked that I respond on his behalf.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Protective Service Detail has identified specific, ongoing threats associated with the Administrator's air travel and, therefore, shifted his class based on certain security protocols that require him to be near the front of the plane. This location allows the Administrator's security agents to expeditiously exit with him upon the occurrence of a threat. According to EPA's Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, Administrator Pruitt "has had significantly more threats directed against him. There's absolutely no question about it."¹ In fact, EPA has received "at least four to five times the number of threats against Mr. Pruitt than [the agency] had against Ms. [Gina] McCarthy."² In addition to the increased number of threats, the Assistant Inspector General explained that the threats "run the variety of direct threats – 'I'm going to put a bullet in your brain' – to implied threats – 'if you don't classify this particular chemical in this particular way, I'm going to hurt you.'"³ These threats are not limited to just Administrator Pruitt – they also target his family.⁴

Because of these ongoing security concerns, EPA had approved, on an individualized basis, each time the Administrator needed to use other than coach-travel accommodations. Federal Travel Regulations state that "[w]hen exceptional security circumstances require other than coach-class airline accommodations," an agency "may authorize/approve first class accommodations."⁵ Further, "exceptional security circumstances are determined by [an] agency and should only be

¹ *Threats on rise via tweets, postcards and emails*, Greenwire (January 11, 2018). Available at <https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060070805>.

² *EPA pulls agents from criminal investigations to guard Pruitt*, CNN (November 28, 2017). Available at <https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/21/politics/epa-pruitt-agents/index.html>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *EPA Chief's First-Class Travel Prompted by 'Aggressive' Encounters, Official Says*, Bloomberg Politics (February 15, 2018). Available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-15/epa-chief-s-high-flying-travel-prompted-by-vulgar-encounters>.

⁵ 41 C.F.R. § 301-10.123(a)(3).

authorized up to the minimum other than coach-class accommodation necessary.”⁶ These circumstances include, but are not limited to, situations when the “[u]se of coach-class accommodations would endanger [one’s] life or Government property” or an agent on protective detail is “accompanying an individual authorized to use other than coach-class accommodations.”⁷ The regulations for an agency to approve/authorize business-class accommodations mirror those for first-class accommodations.⁸

Enclosed please find information and documentation responsive to your request for official air travel of the Administrator, including airfare and other travel information. On past trips, his protective service detail accompanied him in first class. Should you need information and documentation regarding the travel of the Administrator’s Protective Service Detail, we can work with your staff to provide you with an opportunity to review those documents at EPA, as they are security sensitive.

If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Kyle Aarons in my office at (202) 564-7351 or Aarons.Kyle@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Troy M. Lyons
Associate Administrator

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ §§ 301-10.123(a)(3)(i), (ii).

⁸ *See* 41 C.F.R. § 301-10.123(b)(2).