

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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May 1, 2018

Ms. Emily W. Murphy  
Administrator  
U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)  
1800 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20405-0001

Dear Administrator Murphy:

As Members of the Committee on Science, Space & Technology of the U.S. House of Representatives we take our oversight obligations seriously. Over the past year, Scott Pruitt, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been embroiled in a number of controversies regarding mismanagement, the misuse of federal funds, and illegal actions regarding the management of his office and the EPA. Our Committee has oversight authority over the EPA and we are deeply concerned about the activities that have been, and are continuing to be, investigated by multiple federal agencies.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently found that the EPA broke federal law by violating the government's Antideficiency Act when it purchased a \$43,000 secure phone booth for Administrator Pruitt's personal office. The EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) is currently investigating Administrator Pruitt's frequent travel home to Oklahoma, his foreign trips, and his use of first class travel arrangements and charter aircraft. The IG's office is also investigating his use of an EPA security detail on personal trips. The Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has requested material from his office regarding his arrangement to pay \$50 per night to stay in a Washington, D.C. condominium owned by a lobbyist whose firm had clients with business before the EPA. In addition, Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has launched a review of Scott Pruitt's spending habits as EPA Administrator.

We are writing to you in order to request documents regarding yet another issue of concern regarding Administrator Pruitt. It is our understanding that beginning in January 2017 he began directing EPA staff to explore establishing an EPA office in Tulsa, Oklahoma, his hometown. Last year, media reports, based on his travel schedule, obtained via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) revealed that he frequently traveled home to Oklahoma on the weekends. He apparently directed staff to examine opening an EPA office in his hometown of Tulsa, although EPA's Region 6 office, which includes authority over Oklahoma, is located in Dallas, Texas.

On January 31, 2017, Mr. Ryan Jackson, currently the EPA's Chief of Staff, sent an e-mail to the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations reportedly at Administrator Pruitt's behest that directed EPA staff to inquire about establishing a new EPA office in Tulsa. At the time he sent the e-mail Mr. Jackson was the Majority Staff Director of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, under the Chairmanship of Senator James Inhofe. The e-mail was sent from his Senate e-mail account, [Ryan\\_Jackson@Inhofe.Senate.Gov](mailto:Ryan_Jackson@Inhofe.Senate.Gov), days before he assumed his current position as EPA's Chief of Staff. In the e-mail, Mr. Jackson directed EPA staff to identify proposed new office space in Tulsa that included a conference room, secure parking, would be able to accommodate 24/7 security, and included a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) for secure communications.

The following morning, on February 1, 2017, based on Mr. Jackson's direction, EPA staff contacted Mr. Saul Japson, in the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at the General Services Administration (GSA), in charge of federal building leases and construction. In the e-mail to the GSA, an EPA official reportedly relayed the requests made by Mr. Jackson for establishing a new EPA office in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as coming directly from Administrator Pruitt.

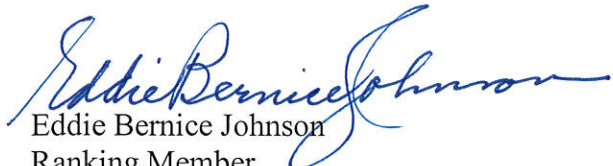
Establishing a new EPA office in Tulsa may be personally convenient for Administrator Pruitt, but it seems ethically questionable, professionally unnecessary and financially unjustified. To help us fully understand the circumstances of this request and the current status of these inquiries to the GSA please provide us with copies of the records listed below:

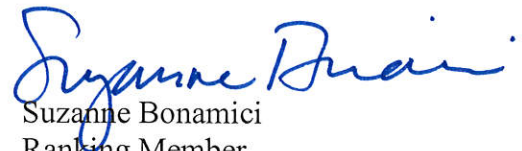
- 1) All e-mail communications between EPA and GSA officials regarding or related to the proposed, potential or anticipated lease, rental, construction or purchase of an EPA building, facility or office in Tulsa, Oklahoma;
- 2) All intra-GSA e-mail communications, or other records, relating to the potential lease, rental, construction or purchase of an EPA office in Tulsa, Oklahoma;
- 3) All records, including Memorandum(s), Memorandum of Agreement(s), floorplans, requirements, request(s) for proposal, draft or actual budget documents, or any other record related to the proposed, potential or anticipated lease, rental, construction or purchase of an EPA building, facility or office in Tulsa, Oklahoma.


The search for these records may be limited to January 1, 2017 to present. Please provide copies of these records to our Minority office at 394 Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 by May 16, 2018. If you have any questions regarding this request please have your staff contact Douglas Pasternak of our Minority staff at (202) 225-6375.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

  
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space & Technology

  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment

  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight