



March 27, 2017

Dear Representative:

The undersigned health and medical organizations are writing to express our opposition to the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 and the Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017. Our organizations are dedicated to saving lives and improving public health.

Science is the bedrock of sound medical and public health decision-making. The best science undergirds everything our organizations do to improve health. Under the Clean Air Act, EPA has long implemented a transparent and open process for seeking advice from the medical and scientific community on standards and measures to meet those standards. Both of these bills would restrict the input of scientific experts in the review of complex issues and add undue industry influence into EPA's decision-making process.

As written, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act would make unneeded and unproductive changes that would:

- Restrict the ability of scientists to speak on issues that include their own expertise;
- Block scientists who receive any EPA grants from serving on the EPA Scientific Advisory Board, despite their having the expertise and conducted relevant research that earned them these highly competitive grants;
- Prevent the EPA Scientific Advisory Board from making policy recommendations, even though EPA administrators have regularly sought their advice in the past;
- Add a notice and comment component to all parts of the EPA Scientific Advisory Board actions, a burdensome and unnecessary requirement since their reviews of major issues already include public notice and comment; and
- Reallocate membership requirements to increase the influence of industry representatives on the scientific advisory panels.

In short, EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act would limit the voice of scientists, restrict the ability of the Board to respond to important questions, and increase the influence of industry in shaping EPA policy. This is not in the best interest of the American public.

We also have concerns with the HONEST Act. This legislation would limit the kinds of scientific data EPA can use as it develops policy to protect the American public from environmental exposures and permit violation of patient confidentiality. If enacted, the legislation would:

- Allow the EPA administrator to release confidential patient information to third parties, including industry;
- Bolster industry's flawed arguments to discredit research that documents the adverse health effects of environmental pollution; and
- Impose new standards for the publication and distribution of scientific research that go beyond the robust, existing requirements of many scientific journals.

Science, developed by the respected men and women scientists at colleges and universities across the United States, has always been the foundation of the nation's environmental policy. EPA's science-based decision-making process has saved lives and led to dramatic improvements in the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the earth we share. All Americans have benefited from the research-based scientific advice that scientists have provided to EPA.

Congress should adopt policy that fortifies our scientists, not bills that undermine the scientific integrity of EPA's decision-making or give polluters a disproportionate voice in EPA's policy-setting process.

We strongly urge you to oppose these bills.

Sincerely,

Katie Huffling, RN, CNM
 Director
 Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

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