

OPENING STATEMENT  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
*“Ensuring Sound Science at EPA”*  
June 22, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome Administrator McCarthy to today’s hearing and express my deep appreciation for her distinguished public service. I look forward to her testimony.

Based on previous Committee EPA hearings, I have little doubt that some Members will try to argue today that EPA is an over-zealous, job-killing agency that needs to be reined in—namely, the rhetoric that we have heard from our Majority colleagues throughout this entire Congress.

Of course, the reality is far different. Administrator McCarthy, you and your dedicated agency staff have the noble—and unenviable—task of trying to protect human health and the environment in which we live and work from harm arising from many different sources. As such, your job is never truly done, and the ongoing nature of your work makes it easy for critics to find fault, with some arguing you are doing too much and some arguing you are doing too little. Let us be clear, the issues that underlie achieving these goals are complex, necessitating equally complex rules and regulations that require commitments and sacrifices from all involved parties to achieve a common benefit – a healthy environment.

I am pleased that EPA continues to rise to this challenge, and has developed regulations that are balanced and progressive, further illustrating that economic prosperity and environmental protection can go hand in hand—they are not mutually exclusive.

Just in the last year, EPA has finalized the Clean Power Plan, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and its first-ever standards to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. While protecting public health, these regulations have also helped advance our efforts to limit the harmful effects of climate change. Actions taken by EPA have demonstrated America’s intention lead the world’s efforts to address climate change and have led to such positive results as the last December’s Paris Agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that this Committee will take the opportunity today to give serious attention to Administrator McCarthy’s testimony and examine what has actually been accomplished. It is an impressive record, and one that this Congress should support.

Unfortunately, that has not been this Committee’s approach to EPA oversight in recent years. Instead, since the beginning of the current Congress alone, this Committee has sent some 28 oversight requests to EPA and has launched 12 separate EPA-related investigations. EPA has already delivered more than 15 thousand documents—consisting of almost 139,000 pages to the Science Committee—with more document demands still outstanding. And you can multiply those numbers by three to get the number of documents and pages provided to Congress as a

whole over that same period. We are imposing an incredible burden on the hard-working men and women of EPA, and spending a lot of taxpayer dollars in the process, and to what end?

The sum total result of all this Committee “oversight” can be measured more in press releases than in any concrete findings that could justify the time and resources EPA has had to expend in trying to satisfy the Majority’s demands.

I would hope that this Committee will step back from the path that it is on, and not continue to engage in reflexive opposition to the efforts of an agency simply trying to carry out its statutorily mandated missions. While no agency is perfect, preventing EPA from doing its job at all is not good for the country, and not a good use of our time. Instead of trying to score political points through efforts to undercut EPA’s important work, we should work together in a productive way to advance our economy, a cleaner environment, and a healthier world for humanity.

Thank you, and I yield back.