



**ACS**  
Chemistry for Life®

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**Thomas M. Connelly, Jr., Ph.D.**  
Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer

November 7, 2017

The Honorable E. Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

On behalf of the American Chemical Society (ACS), I write to express concern over recent changes to the membership structure of EPA advisory committees as detailed in your memo, "Strengthening and Improving Membership on EPA Federal Advisory Committees," dated October 31, 2017.

The October 31 policy includes the new requirement that "no member of an EPA federal advisory committee be currently in receipt of EPA grants, either as principal investigator or co-investigator..." Federal agencies, including EPA, award funding to scientists through competitive peer review, and those who receive grants through this rigorous process are among the very best in their fields. Agencies across the federal government have sought the advice of their funded scientists for years to no apparent detriment. The October 31 policy would deprive EPA of counsel from some of the most knowledgeable experts in Agency-critical fields.

Existing federal conflict of interest and ethics measures should prove more than adequate to address any potential conflict of interest for all members of EPA federal advisory committees whether they receive EPA funding or not. ACS respectfully asks that you reconsider your decision and instead allow talented, EPA-supported researchers to contribute their expertise through EPA federal advisory committees.

If you or your staff have any questions or would like to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mr. Glenn Ruskin, Director of External Affairs & Communications ([G\\_Ruskin@acs.org](mailto:G_Ruskin@acs.org); 202-872-4475). Please also find attached a copy of the ACS statement on *Scientific Integrity in Public Policy*, which fully details ACS's views on this important subject.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Thomas M. Connelly, Jr.  
ACS Executive Director & CEO

## SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC POLICY

Our government faces a wide range of critical and complex issues that involve significant technical challenges, as well as important economic, legal, and political components. Complex issues frequently create tension between technical and nontechnical stakeholders. Technical approaches to problems often are intertwined with disparate political, economic, and cultural concerns.

In addressing these complex issues, the nation has been served by the tradition of open inquiry that characterizes the science and engineering process.

Most scientists and engineers understand that complex policy decisions are not made on technical grounds alone. However, without up-to-date, accurate scientific and technical information, the decision-making process will not lead to the most effective public policies.

Scientists and engineers have an obligation to provide comprehensive, transparent, unbiased, and understandable technical analyses. Policymakers have the responsibility to consider these analyses and any other relevant technical input in a comprehensive, transparent, and unbiased manner.

The American Chemical Society (ACS) strongly supports the use of insightful, comprehensive, scientific and engineering input to the development and evaluation of policy options. ACS also encourages scientific integrity policies<sup>i</sup> that help the federal government obtain and integrate scientific assessments into policy development and implementation.

To clarify and strengthen the role of scientific insight and integrity in the development of public policy, ACS recommends the following:

### **Government – Congress and Federal Agencies**

- Federal agencies should consistently review and improve their ability to obtain and utilize unbiased scientific and technical input for policy development.
- Federal agencies should utilize scientific and technical advisory committees composed of qualified scientists and engineers to enhance and stimulate the efforts of their technical staff members.
- Federal agencies should clearly and transparently present what scientific information would be needed to inform their key regulatory issues, and develop frameworks that evaluate and use that information in a consistent and timely manner, while protecting intellectual property rights, confidential company information and the privacy of personal information.
- Congress should access transparent science, technology and policy analyses performed by qualified professionals to create effective legislation.
- Congressional committees should seek direct testimony from technical experts on scientific and policy issues.

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The American Chemical Society is a non-profit scientific and educational organization, chartered by Congress, with more than 158,000 chemical scientists and engineers as members. The world's largest scientific society, ACS advances the chemical enterprise, increases public awareness of chemistry, and brings its expertise to state and national matters.

## **Scientific Processes and Procedures**

- Scientific discourse should be encouraged, noting that it is purposely designed to question what is known, leading to honest differences in interpretation among scientists.
- Potential conflicts of interest and bias among researchers and other experts involved in policy development and assessment should be handled transparently and fairly.<sup>ii</sup>
- Congressional hearings about the science used to inform the crafting of laws and the regulatory decisions to implement them should be encouraged because the scientific method provides the best basis to identify the nature and certainty of knowledge about technical issues.
- Scientists and their institutions should not be burdened unreasonably by extensive or repetitive requests for information and explanation.

## **Data Quality, Use and Review**

- Government policy analysts should ensure that scientific input incorporates and references all relevant, peer-reviewed sources.
- Quantitative scientific input with careful uncertainty and sensitivity analyses should be the norm. Conflicting results should be documented and to the extent possible, quantitatively assessed, evaluated, and reconciled by experts.
- Cross-agency communication is encouraged and should be as transparent as possible.

## **Scientific Access and Advice**

- Federally employed or funded scientists and engineers should be empowered to pursue professional development, present their unclassified research at appropriate technical symposia, and publish in peer-reviewed journals without interference.
- Government scientists should be allowed to discuss their published, peer-reviewed research with the media and the public. When they comment publicly on policy options informed by their research and general technical knowledge, they should clearly state that they are offering their own opinions and not speaking for the agency.
- When federal agencies must prevent their employees, grantees, and/or advisors from commenting publicly on scientific results or policies, restrictions should be transparent and consistently enforced. Appeal processes should be easily available and timely.
- Advisory committees should comprise an appropriate mix of technical expertise and breadth of experience. Employer, professional or political affiliations, and prior policy positions should not preclude anyone from serving on advisory committees.

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<sup>i</sup> Holdren, J. P., Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies: Scientific Integrity, Office of Science and Technology Policy, December 2010.

<sup>ii</sup> The National Academies Policy on Committee Composition and Balance and Conflicts of Interest for Committees Used in the Development of Reports (2003). Pg. 3-5