



February 9, 2017

Dear Senator:

Clean Water Action, on behalf of our nearly one million members, urges you to reject Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator. During his confirmation hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and in his written response to questions for the record, Mr. Pruitt was unconvincing that he can lead EPA. He could not name one environmental regulation he supports, refused to say whether he would recuse himself from decisions regarding the Oklahoma AG's pending lawsuits to weaken EPA regulations, and he dodged questions about his ties to the fossil fuel industry. These alarming conflicts of interest clearly make him unqualified to head an agency whose very mission is to protect public health and the environment.

Americans expect and deserve an EPA administrator committed to protecting our health and environment from harmful pollution. Instead Scott Pruitt is hostile toward the very mission of the EPA and has made a career of suing to prevent the agency from doing its job - protecting our air, land, and water from polluters.

Particularly troubling to Clean Water Action and our members is that Scott Pruitt does not support commonsense clean water protections. As Oklahoma Attorney General, Mr. Pruitt was one of the first state AGs to sue EPA to overturn the Clean Water Rule, long overdue safeguards for water resources that feed the drinking water sources for at least one in three people, including 2.3 million people in Oklahoma.

In his written response to Senators' questions about the Clean Water Rule, Mr. Pruitt doubled down on his intent to gut these vital clean water protections if confirmed as EPA Administrator, claiming the rule should be withdrawn and replaced. This reckless action would be a waste of limited agency staff time and taxpayer resources. EPA staff spent years working on the rule; holding over 400 meetings to solicit input from polluting industries, farmers, state agencies, environmental groups and other state agencies. The public had six months to comment on the rule; over a million people did comment, and the vast majority of those comments were supportive.

In his written response Mr. Pruitt also grossly mischaracterized what the Clean Water Rule actually regulates, claiming the “rule exceeded the authority granted by Congress by allowing federal regulation of land if rainwater collects on the surface and seeps into the ground...” Mr. Pruitt must have “alternative facts,” because in reality the Clean Water Rule does not regulate land or create any new permitting requirements. Under the rule, a person or business only needs a Clean Water Act permit if they intend to pollute or destroy a federally protected river, stream, wetland or other surface water resource.

The Clean Water Rule is not the only water regulation Scott Pruitt has opposed or attempted to weaken. As Oklahoma AG, Mr. Pruitt joined the Farm Bureau, the Fertilizer Institute and other industrial agricultural interests to sue EPA over its enforcement of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits for nutrient and sediment pollution choking the Chesapeake Bay. EPA’s enforcement of these pollution limits is essential to restoring the health of the Bay.

Our country faces numerous complex environmental challenges and we need an EPA administrator who is prepared and committed to following science and law to make meaningful progress toward continuing to clean-up our nation’s air, land, and water. Scott Pruitt has made a career out of handing out free passes to some of the biggest polluting industries in the country – allowing these polluters to cause real, direct harm to public health and the environment - all while raking in huge profits.

Mr. Pruitt as EPA administrator would reverse over forty years of progress of cleaning up our environment and holding industries accountable for their pollution. We urge you to reject his nomination to head EPA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Wendelgass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert Wendelgass
President & CEO
Clean Water Action