

**TESTIMONY OF
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**BEFORE THE
U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

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Good morning, Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas, and members of the committee.

The Environmental Protection Agency is one of the world's leading research organizations. Every day, our scientists and researchers develop information and technology that are critical to protecting human health and the environment.

Since I've taken the lead at EPA, I've visited five of our research facilities and the *Lake Guardian* – our largest research vessel. I am regularly briefed by Agency scientists, and I rely on their work and expertise. I am always impressed with the rigor, integrity, and dedication of our career scientists and staff.

I'm here today to discuss the ways we are supporting and advancing their efforts. We are promoting science at the Agency more than it has been in years. And these efforts are leading to groundbreaking advancements in environmental science.

Earlier this week, for example, we announced approximately \$6 million in new funding to eight leading research organizations to advance our understanding of PFAS. This is just one of the many ways we are delivering on our PFAS Action Plan – the most comprehensive, multi-media research and risk communication plan to address a chemical of concern ever issued by the Agency.

Our scientists, working in concert with the Department of Defense, are providing the research and technology to support the Action Plan. They are developing methods to detect and quantify PFAS in the air, water, and soil. They are evaluating methods to treat or remove PFAS from drinking water. They developed the draft toxicity assessments for GenX and PFBS. And they are working to understand the potential toxicity for the many other PFAS and their potential degradation products.

EPA is one of a few places in the world where this type of cutting-edge science is being conducted day in and day out.

We are also leading the way on research for reducing childhood lead exposure. Our scientists are identifying high-risk areas and providing technical assistance for reducing lead in drinking water and at contaminated sites.

Their modeling efforts and research activities are directly impacting major regulatory decisions, such as our forthcoming proposal to update to the Lead and Copper Rule – the first major update in over two decades. And the same outstanding researchers who provided vital information to help Flint, Michigan are now working with state and local officials in Newark, New Jersey on their efforts to ensure safe drinking water for the city's residents.

To support our scientists and researchers, we are continually looking for ways to make the Agency more effective and more responsive. This is why we are restructuring the Office of Research and Development (ORD).

We've briefed many of you and your staff on this reorganization, but I'd like to reiterate that it will help ORD better address the increasingly complex environmental challenges of the 21st century. It will not result in the loss of jobs. It does not change any of the important work ORD is tasked with – only how we manage those functions. And I remind you that this effort is led by EPA career staff. We plan to have the reorganization in place by October 1.

Earlier this month, we took another step to modernize the Agency by committing to aggressively reducing animal testing. This issue is very important to me personally.

I issued a memo that commits the Agency to important goals, such as reducing mammal study requests and funding by 30 percent by 2025 – and then eliminating all requests and funding by 2035. Any requests or funding after 2035 will require Administrator approval on a case-by-case basis. We also announced \$4.25 million in funding to five research universities to advance the development of alternative test methods for evaluating the safety of chemicals that will minimize – and hopefully eliminate – the need for animal testing.

Finally, we are committed to the highest-quality science. Good science is science that can be replicated and independently validated; science that holds up to scrutiny. That is why we are moving forward to ensure that the science supporting Agency decisions is transparent and available for evaluation by the public and stakeholders.

I cut my teeth at the agency working on the Community Right-to-Know Act. I fundamentally believe the more information we provide to the public, the better our regulations will be and the more they will trust our decisions.

At the same time, we will ensure that we're not disclosing confidential or personal information. Other agencies already do that, and we can do the same. Our proposed rule would apply prospectively to final significant regulatory actions. We intend to issue a supplemental proposed rule in 2020.

I am very proud of the science we do at the Agency. As you all heard at a recent hearing, EPA has one of the strongest Scientific Integrity Policies in the federal government. A recent Government Accountability Office report examined the Scientific Integrity Policies of nine federal agencies. EPA was the only regulatory agency that received no recommendations to correct deficiencies.

That is a testament to the tremendous work of EPA career staff. I will continue to support them and their work. And we will ensure that the EPA of the twenty-first century remains a global leader in science and research.