

GOP to Revive 'Secret Science' Bill

LEGISLATION, US EPA

By LANA BECKETT, March 20, 2017

Scott Waldman¹⁾, E&E News reporter, **wrote**²⁾ in January about the "**Secret Science Reform Act**³⁾." The legislation has been pushed by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) for years. It would require that U.S. EPA use only "transparent or reproducible" science to develop regulations and that such scientific data be posted online so that they can be scrutinized.

Proponents argue that the legislation simply makes science transparent and allows for independent scrutiny to ensure science is not politically tainted before it influences policy. While Democrats and scores of scientific organizations say the measure would have a crippling effect, since large-scale studies are not easy to reproduce and some industry data cannot be made public.

"The legislation simply requires the EPA to base its regulations on publicly available data," Smith said. "Why would the EPA want to hide this information from the American people? Obviously, it's one of three reasons. The data doesn't show what they claim that it might show, or the data doesn't exist, or they've cherry-picked the data. The American people have every right to be suspicious when the EPA uses politically correct science to get the results they want and then refuses to reveal the data behind how those decisions were made."

Opponents argue that the measure would intentionally weaken the scientific process by casting unnecessary doubt on research while opening policy up to industry influence. What's more, the bill could quickly spread to other agencies, said Yogin Kothari of the Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "If something like this passes, it sets a really bad precedent," he said. "This bill, it's not designed to promote good science; it's really just crafted to prevent the use of independent science in developing public health and safety protections, and if a version like this were to get into other areas of the federal government, it could bring the entire regulatory process to a grinding halt."

Resources for this article

1. Scott Waldman

http://www.eenews.net/staff/Scott_Waldman

2. wrote

<http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/01/09/stories/1060048033>

3. Secret Science Reform Act

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1030/text>