

Office of the Honorable Susan Collins
Office of the Honorable Angus King
202 Harlow Street
Bangor, ME 04401

January 19, 2017

Dear Senators Collins and King:

As a group of scientists working and living in Maine who are deeply committed to using our research to protect public health and worker safety, we write in strong opposition to the appointment of Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Mr. Pruitt has spent his career challenging and undermining public health protections and critical science-based standards. The EPA has enormous responsibilities to protect our public health and safety, as well as the environment, and must rely on the best available science to make decisions. Standards under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act save lives in Maine, and we need an EPA administrator who will adhere to the science and preserve these protections rather than erode them for the benefit of industry.

As Attorney General of Oklahoma, Mr. Pruitt has repeatedly sued the EPA and tried to undermine key protections that limit pollution from power plants, including the Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) which limits sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and the Mercury and Air Toxics standard (MATS), which limits mercury and other toxic emissions.

Reducing SO₂ and NO_x emissions is critical to decreasing soot and smog pollution, which causes numerous health problems such as breathing difficulties, aggravation of asthma, and even premature death. These pollutants are often carried long distances by the wind; consequently some of the biggest health effects are seen in states thousands of miles away. Toxic pollutants like mercury are linked to health problems such as cancer, heart disease, neurological damage, birth defects, asthma attacks, and early deaths.

Together, the CSAPR and MATS will prevent premature deaths and are projected to save up to \$680 million a year in health¹ costs in Maine. If confirmed, Mr. Pruitt may rescind public health standards that are directly beneficial for Maine, putting the health of your constituents at increased risk.

¹ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2011. Combined national and state-level health benefits for the cross-state air pollution rule and mercury and air toxics standards. EPA-452/R-11-014. Washington, DC. Online at <https://www3.epa.gov/ttn/ecas/regdata/Benefits/casprmat.pdf>.

Mr. Pruitt has also sued the EPA to block implementation of the Ozone Rule, another health-based standard. Ozone pollution harms some of our most vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and those suffering from respiratory diseases such as asthma. He has also been party to challenges to the Clean Water Act, one of our bedrock public health protection laws, and absolutely essential to keeping Maine's drinking water supply safe.

We ask that, as you consider the nomination of Scott Pruitt for EPA administrator, you also consider the important role that the EPA plays in protecting the health and environment of your constituents in Maine, in addition to its role in protecting the climate. Science-based safeguards are vital to protecting the health and safety of all Mainers, and are especially important for low income communities and communities of color who often bear a disproportionate health burden from air and water pollution.

Scott Pruitt's past actions subjugating science and public health to the benefit of private industry make him an unacceptable choice to run the EPA, an agency whose mission is to protect our air and water, and the health of all Americans. We strongly urge you to vote "nay" on Scott Pruitt for EPA administrator and stand up for public health in Maine.

Sincerely,

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