

21 March 2022

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
House Science Committee
2321 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
House Science Committee
2321 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas, and Honorable Members:

We, the undersigned, represent organizations working to promote and protect science for the public good. We urge you to move forward expeditiously to finalize and pass H.R.849, the *Scientific Integrity Act*, legislation which would safeguard the rights of scientists working at federal agencies and ensure the public can benefit from their work. We support requiring agencies that fund, conduct, and or oversee scientific research to develop strong scientific integrity policies that include enforcement mechanisms. It is vital that these safeguards are codified in statute this Congress to ensure their permanence and stability in the coming years.

Our various organizations work to advance science, public health, environmental justice, civil rights, reproductive health, worker safety, government oversight, and whistleblower protections. All of us depend on high-quality federal scientific research and the hard work of federal scientists to protect our health, safety, economy, and environment. The Biden-Harris administration has committed to strengthening federal agency policies to support scientific integrity and protect against politically motivated manipulation of scientific evidence or attacks on science. However, internal agency policies can only go so far without statutory requirements. As noted in the recent report on scientific integrity by an interagency task force, many issues have arisen in the past from senior leadership, and agency policies cannot fully hold these leaders accountable for internal policy violations.

H.R. 849, the *Scientific Integrity Act*, introduced last year and referred to the House Science Committee, contains provisions that would address many challenges of consistency, stability, accountability in ensuring federal science and scientists are not censored or politically manipulated. It would prohibit political appointees from altering or suppressing scientific findings and give scientists final review over how agencies portray their research. It also would ensure that federal agencies designate scientific integrity officers and provide federal employees with ethics training to help prevent misconduct.

Another vital component of the *Scientific Integrity Act* is its codification of scientists' right to disseminate their work without interference. It would enable scientists to talk about their research with reporters, in scientific journals, and at scientific conferences, as well as directly with members of the public. Such communication is essential both for public understanding

and for federal scientists' ability to share their insights for better oversight and accountability of agency decisions.

The organizations below have worked long and hard to help codify scientific integrity in law. We have connected with committee staff, participated in briefings, drafted suggested text, and highlighted issues with our supporters around the country. Although we understand that the House Science Committee and Congress have many competing priorities, ensuring the government and the public have access to the best available science, free from political manipulation, directly impacts the most pressing issues facing our country.

We urge you to bring H.R.849, the *Scientific Integrity Act*, up for consideration in the Science Committee and keep the passage of this important bill a high priority for this Congress.

Sincerely,

Union of Concerned Scientists
American Association of Geographers (AAG)
American Institute of Biological Sciences
Breast Cancer Action
Center for Auto Safety
Center for Inquiry (CFI)
Center for Progressive Reform
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Climate Science Legal Defense Fund
Diamond Ivy Technologies
Endangered Species Coalition
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
Green Science Policy Institute
GreenFaith
Ibis Reproductive Health
In the Public Interest
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
National Center for Health Research
Native Plant Conservation Campaign
Oceana
Open The Government
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
Sciencecorps
Society for Conservation Biology North America
The Digital Democracy Project
UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment
Woodhull Freedom Foundation

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives