



# ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS OF CALIFORNIA LOCAL 20

## INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL ENGINEERS

### AFL-CIO/CLC



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January 31, 2017

Senator Diane Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein,

On behalf of over 6000 members of the Engineers and Scientists of California, Local 20, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, AFL-CIO, including over 250 Environmental Scientists, Researchers, and Analysts who work at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9, San Francisco, I write to you to register our organization's deepening alarm about impending changes under the new Administration that will fundamentally damage the EPA's mission as the guardian of our environment and the public's health and safety.

As a review, EPA Region 9 serves California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, the South Pacific territories, and 148 Native American tribes. There are huge urban population centers in the Region, and the Region monitors significant manufacturing and natural-resource intensive industries, such as agriculture and mining. Further, EPA Region 9 deals with a wide array of environmental issues connected to the U.S. border with Mexico. The protection of air quality and water quality, waste management, compliance with environmental law and regulation, stewardship of our natural resources, and emergency preparedness are all key areas of focus of the Agency, and of the work of our union's members in Region 9.

The President has nominated Scott Pruitt, the Oklahoma Attorney General, to lead the EPA. This is unacceptable. Mr. Pruitt is a vociferous critic of the Agency he is now slated to lead. This nomination was the first ominous sign that the new administration will seek to undermine the mission of environmental protection. More recently, the administration official in charge of transition at EPA has indicated that the workforce of the Agency should be cut by two-thirds, and returned to the staffing levels in place when the EPA was founded in the early 1970s. This is a ludicrous and frightening proposal, given the greatly increased numbers of environmental protection laws that the EPA now has to enforce and monitor, the tremendous advances in environmental sciences that have emerged over the last 40 years, and the growing awareness that environmental issues are perhaps the greatest challenge to health, safety, and security that face our country--and, indeed, the entire planet.

As of the date of this letter, the President's team has taken actions that may impair public safety and health. The team is currently reviewing all press releases and other public-facing communications, which cannot be released until their approval. This means that enforcement actions and public comment announcements may not make their way to the public in a timely manner.

EPA professionals work every day to ensure that our government functions effectively and efficiently, and that our citizens receive the valuable services that are funded through their taxes. In overseeing approximately 28 federal statutes and executive orders, EPA Region 9 employees verify that federal taxpayer dollars are spent

according to federal laws and regulations, seek the return of taxpayer dollars when funds are not spent according to law, enforce federal environmental laws per statute and regulation, oversee permitting for a wide range of industry activities to ensure the protection of public health, and coordinate with states to meet federal law standards associated with pollution of the land, water and air. As Flint proved, local and state government are not enough to protect public health. Protection of the tax dollar and public health stops with the federal government.

Our union local will do all that it can to fight for the mission of the EPA and the critical work of our members at the Agency. We ask that you join us in this fight, and we hope that we can count on your leadership and work with you in what seem likely to be the many upcoming battles to defend and sustain the mission of environmental protection in our federal government. It is wrong to dismantle and weaken the EPA -- we cannot allow the degradation of environmental protections and the degradation of the professional expertise of the very U.S. citizens that conduct this public service that is based in science and our law.

Accordingly, we ask for your commitment to protect and expand public awareness of the critical work of our members at the EPA and for your pledge to defend the overall mission of the Agency. Nothing less than the health and future of all Americans is at stake.

Sincerely,



Karen Sawislak  
Executive Director