

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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March 12, 2012

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Whitfield:

I am writing to express my concern about how you and other Republican members continue to characterize EPA's grants for research and environmental activities abroad.

During the February 28 hearing on the FY2013 budget for EPA, you called EPA's international grantmaking an "example of EPA mission creep and abuse of discretion." You cited a "rise in spending for grants going to other countries" and stated that the "agency shouldn't be spending taxpayer dollars on such foreign efforts."¹ Rep. McKinley stated during his questioning of Administrator Jackson that EPA gave \$28 million to foreign governments last year. During your questioning, you cited two EPA grants—one for work in China and one for work in Thailand—as of particular concern.

These statements misrepresent the Obama Administration's track record in awarding grants for international environmental work.

First, as EPA Administrator Jackson testified, EPA has a long history of awarding grants to organizations and institutions, both here and abroad, to tackle pressing environmental problems. This established practice, spanning decades and several administrations, hardly constitutes "mission creep" under the current administration and is not a practice started under

¹ Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield, Subcommittee on Energy and Power and Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, *Joint Hearing on The FY 2013 EPA Budget*, 112th Cong. (Feb. 28, 2012) (online at http://republicans.energycommerce.house.gov/Media/file/Hearings/Joint/20120228_EP_EE/HH RG-112-IF03-IF18-MState-W000413-20120228.pdf).

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President Obama. In fact, the two grants you singled out as problematic during your questioning of Administrator Jackson—a grant to China to reduce emissions of persistent organic pollutants and a grant to Thailand to reduce methane emissions from swine farms—were initiated by the Bush administration in 2004 and 2008, respectively.

Second, I question the basis for your assertions that EPA's grant payments to foreign governments under the Obama administration represent a significant departure from grant-making under previous administrations.

EPA has provided the Committee with information on 500 grants to projects that have a foreign component. In FY2011, the Obama Administration paid out \$28 million to these grantees. But not all of this money went to foreign governments, as Rep. McKinley asserted during the hearing. In fact, a more careful review of these 500 grants shows that 84% of the funds paid in FY2011 went to organizations based in the United States. Moreover, in some cases, these grantees appear to have spent only a small percentage of their funding outside of the United States.²

This is the second time I have sent a letter to clarify the record regarding the majority's misleading statements on this matter. In June 2011, the majority staff produced an analysis of EPA's international grant-making under the Obama Administration. An analysis of that report by my staff revealed that it contained multiple inaccuracies. I asked Chairman Upton to retract that report pending a more careful review of the record.³ Regrettably, it remains available on the Committee's website.

I support rigorous oversight of government spending, but I am disappointed by the majority's inaccurate statements and continued attempts to paint all EPA's grants for international work as a waste of taxpayer dollars. Many of these grants are designed to cut air pollution, which knows no borders; reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are fueling climate change; and to provide much-needed assistance in countries suffering from tremendous poverty and environmental contamination.

I again request that you to retract the erroneous June 2011 report and urge you to reassess the majority's approach to this investigation as it moves forward.

² For example, EPA awarded a multi-million dollar grant to a U.S. university for air pollution research in the United States. Because researchers at the university traveled to Spain in 2011 to present their scientific findings at an epidemiology conference, EPA counted this as a "foreign" grant for purposes of responding to the majority's request for information, even though the vast majority of the grant has been used for research conducted at the university in the United States.

³ Letter from Ranking Member Henry Waxman to Chairman Fred Upton, Committee on Energy and Commerce (July 11, 2011) (online at http://democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Letter_Upton_07.11.11.pdf).

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Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Bobby Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Power