

House Passes Bill that Prohibits Expert Scientific Advice to the EPA

by [Beverley Mitchell](#), 11/20/14



While everyone's attention was focused on the Senate and [the Keystone XL decision](#) on Tuesday, some pretty shocking stuff was quietly going on in the House of Representatives. The GOP-dominated House passed a bill that effectively prevents scientists who are peer-reviewed experts in their field from providing advice — directly or indirectly — to the EPA, while at the same time allowing industry representatives with [financial interests](#) in fossil fuels to have their say. Perversely, all this is being done in the name of “transparency.”



Bill H.R. 1422, also known as the [Science Advisory Board Reform Act](#), passed 229-191. It was sponsored by Representative Chris Stewart (R-UT), pictured. The bill changes the rules for appointing members to the Science Advisory Board (SAB), which provides scientific advice to the EPA Administrator. Among many other things, it states: “Board members may not participate in advisory activities that directly or indirectly involve review or evaluation of their own work.” This means that a scientist who had published a peer-reviewed paper on a particular topic would not be able to advise the EPA on the findings contained within that paper. That is, the very scientists who know the subject matter best would not be able to discuss it.

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On Monday, the White House [issued a statement](#) indicating it would veto the bill if it passed, noting: “H.R. 1422 would negatively affect the appointment of experts and would weaken the scientific independence and integrity of the SAB.” Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA) was more blunt, telling House Republicans on Tuesday: “I get it, you don't like science. And you don't like science that interferes with the interests of your corporate clients. But we need science to protect public health and the environment.”

Director of the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) Andrew A. Rosenberg [wrote a letter](#) to House Representatives stating: “This [bill] effectively turns the idea of conflict of interest on its head, with the bizarre presumption that corporate experts with direct financial interests are not conflicted while academics who work on these issues are. Of course, a scientist with expertise on topics the Science Advisory Board addresses likely will have done peer-reviewed studies on that topic. That makes the scientist's evaluation more valuable, not less.”

Two more bills relating to the EPA are set to go to the vote this week, bills that **opponents argue** are part of an “**unrelenting partisan attack**” on the EPA and that demonstrate more support for industrial polluters than the public health concerns of the American people.

HOUSE BILL FORBIDS SCIENTISTS FROM ADVISING THE EPA ON THEIR OWN RESEARCH.



Rep. Michael Burgess wants EPA's Scientific Advisory Board to include industry experts.

“academic scientists who know the most about a subject can't weigh in, but experts paid by corporations who want to block regulations can.”

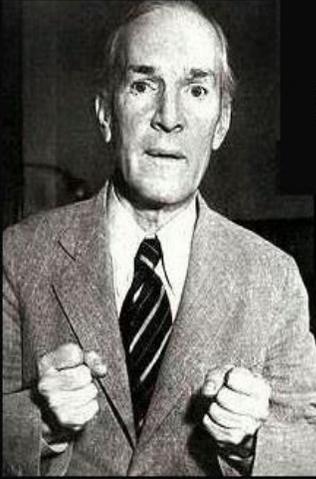
*—Union of Concerned Scientists Director
Andrew A. Rosenberg*



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(Upton Sinclair)

Not just Difficult, Damm near Impossible, Money is more Important then Truth



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