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May 24, 2018

Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Inspector General Elkins:

I write to call your attention to recent actions by Administrator Scott Pruitt and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeking to block journalists and Members of Congress from attending a taxpayer-funded summit recently held at the agency's headquarters.

On May 22 and 23, 2018, the EPA hosted a National Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). According to multiple media reports, the EPA blocked some, but not all, journalists from attending both days of the summit. Reporters from CNN, POLITICO and other media organizations were not allowed to cover the summit at the EPA headquarters. On the first day of the summit, the Associated Press also reported that an EPA security official "grabbed a reporter by the shoulders and shoved her forcibly out of the EPA building" when the reporter asked to cover the event.

Additionally, my congressional staff was blocked from attending portions of the EPA PFAS summit. While the EPA selectively invited certain Members of Congress to participate, according to the list of confirmed organizations [posted on its website](#), I was never invited to attend. My office contacted the EPA's Congressional Affairs Office to inquire about attending, and our office was initially told by the EPA that they were "optimistic" that we could attend. However, the EPA subsequently would only allow my staff to attend certain portions of the summit, despite the public agenda for the summit inviting "federal partners and co-regulators."

I am very troubled by Administrator Pruitt and the EPA's attempt to block access to a taxpayer-funded meeting, either for journalists or Members of Congress. Simply put, the public has a right to know what is happening inside their government. I represent two communities—Flint and Oscoda, Michigan—that are facing drinking water contamination crises. In Flint, families continue to recover from a man-made crisis that leached lead into the city's water supply. In Oscoda, veterans and residents are finding high PFAS levels in their ground water. My constituents deserve answers from the EPA on its efforts to help these and other communities facing contamination issues.

Unfortunately, the EPA's actions to block journalists and elected officials fit a disturbing pattern by the Trump Administration when it comes to transparency in government. Last week, it was reported that the EPA intervened to block the publication of a health study showing dangerous levels of PFAS chemicals in drinking water across America. The actions by the Trump Administration and Administrator Pruitt give me great concern about the lack of accountability and transparency in our government.

It is my hope that the Office of Inspector General will conduct a fair and thorough investigation into this matter, including if Administrator Pruitt or the EPA, through their attempts to limit access, violated any federal laws or agency regulations, including federal statutes concerning open meetings and transparency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel T. Kildee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Daniel T. Kildee
MEMB ER OF CONGRESS