



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

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May 17, 2018

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

I write to you out of increasing concern regarding the pending appointment of Michael Stoker as Regional Administrator (RA) of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region IX. While I have no doubt that Mr. Stoker and I have very different opinions regarding environmental policy, I am also particularly troubled by reports that Mr. Stoker plans to work remotely from the EPA's Los Angeles Office.

As you know, the majority of Region IX's staff work out of the San Francisco Regional Headquarters. This includes almost all of the staff that would report directly to Mr. Stoker. We do not believe that the EPA's mission would be well served by having an absentee RA.

Furthermore, I am extremely concerned about the unnecessary costs that would be created by such an arrangement and have the following questions:


1. Would tax payers be expected to pay for Mr. Stoker's travel costs when he flies to San Francisco to meet with his own senior staff?
2. Does the EPA have any estimate how much such travel would be required?
3. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Stoker lives in Santa Barbara and has no plans to move to closer to Los Angeles. Is Mr. Stoker planning on commuting 2 to 3 hours each way every day?
4. What plans does the EPA have in place to keep Mr. Stoker's travel costs to a reasonable level?

It should be noted that, during President George W. Bush's administration, EPA Region IX Administrator Wayne Nastri attempted a similar working arrangement, splitting his time between San Francisco and his home in Southern California. The resulting EPA Investigator General's report determined that the agency needed to institute better controls for employee travel costs. The recent reports that your agency is considering Mr. Stoker's request suggest that the EPA has not taken those suggestions seriously.

As a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, I have a responsibility to ensure that the funds sent to the EPA are spent in a responsible and judicious manner. The Environmental Protection Agency should be spending as much of its money as possible on protecting the environment. The arrangement described above does not reflect that sentiment.

As I understand that you plan to announce Mr. Stoker's appointment soon, I ask that you consider these concerns and provide a response to my questions as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator