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## Administrator Pruitt answers questions from House lawmakers at EPA FY 2019 budget hearings

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On April 26, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt fielded an array of questions at back-to-back congressional hearings, which were originally intended to discuss the EPA's fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget. Administrator Pruitt submitted testimony to the House Committee on Appropriations and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce advocating for the EPA's budget request of \$6.15 billion, a \$1.9 billion or 24 percent reduction from FY 2018 enacted levels, as supporting the goals and objectives in the FY 2018-FY 2022 EPA Strategic Plan.

The hearings were peppered with questions regarding ethics issues, policy concerns, and parochial projects. While many Republicans voiced support for Administrator Pruitt's agenda, Democrats focused on recent spending and ethical tumults and major policy decisions by the current Administration. Lawmakers questioned the EPA's decision to revise [fuel economy standards for cars and trucks](#), repeal and replace the Clean Power Plan, delay limits on methane emissions from oil and gas sites, and give states more authority to change rules around the disposal of toxic power-plant coal ash. Many also expressed disapproval of removing climate change from the agency's website and the placement of industry representatives on an independent science advisory panel.

Members also focused on the EPA rulemaking [announced](#) earlier in the week, "Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science ." The proposed regulation directs the EPA to ensure that the data underlying regulations are publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent validation. When the members of Congress inquired if this new rule would restrict the kinds of scientific studies that it would use in forming policy, Administrator Pruitt responded, "It seems to me that it's common sense that as we do rule-making, we base it on scientific conclusions that we should be able to see the data and methodology that causes those conclusions. That makes sense to me."

*Sources: E&E News, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Register, U.S. House of Representatives*

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