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On March 8, two members of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee introduced bills addressing scientific research and review practices at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Congressman Lamar Smith (R-TX-21) introduced the Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment (HONEST) Act (H.R.1430). Representative Frank Lucas (R-OK-3) introduced the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 (H.R.1431).

Both bills were the topic of discussion at a markup session of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee on March 9. The HONEST Act would alter the EPA's ability to create rules using current methodologies. H.R.1430 restricts the EPA to only finalizing rules that include transparent and reproducible science. During the markup session, House Democrats expressed concerns that this bill would hinder the ability of the EPA to create rules using confidential data and modern scientific developments, especially in the case of longer study periods.

The EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act would change the membership of the Science Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB reviews EPA research and directly reports to the EPA Administrator. This bill would prevent current EPA grant-recipients from serving on the board and emplace a background distribution of at least 10% membership from state or local government, and would increase the amount of members with industry background. The bill would also extend current public comment periods. During the markup, ranking member Edie Bernice-Johnson (D-TX-30) stated that this bill would create conflicts of interest for new SAB members, and would exclude many qualified scientists.

The bills were reported without amendments to the House of Representatives by the Science, Space, and Technology Committee on March 9.

The House passed the HONEST Act on March 29; the Science Advisory Board Reform Act passed on March 30. The Senate received both bills on March 30 and referred them to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Sources: Congress.gov, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
