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On March 18, the House passed Representative Lamar Smith's (R-TX) Secret Science Reform Act of 2015 (H.R.1030). The bill would require all science used in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rulemaking to be "publicly available online in a manner that is sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results." Democrats expressed concern over releasing scientific data pertaining to personal health information. They proposed an amendment to the bill to protect the privacy of public health study participants during the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee mark up; however, the amendment did not pass. While the bill is quite similar to H.R. 1422 passed by the House last year, the 2015 version includes an additional clause restricting the EPA to \$1 million or less per year to carry out the requirements. A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate found the legislation would cost \$250 million a year for the EPA to implement, an average of \$10,000-\$30,000 per study used in the regulatory process. The bill would result in a 50 percent cut to EPA studies, though CBO said costs would likely lessen after the first few years. Democratic members of the House stated the bill would set EPA up for failure and called the bill an attack on the EPA's ability to use science in forming regulations.

On March 17, the House passed another related bill, Representatives Frank Lucas (R-OK) and Collin Peterson's (D-MN) EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act (H.R. 1029). This bill adds peer-review requirements for the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) and creates a quota for state and local officials on the panel, as well as allowing corporate interests to serve on the panel after disclosing their financial conflicts of interest. The bill also requires disclosure of the origin of grant money for academics on the SAB.

The White House has threatened to veto the bills, saying H.R. 1029 would be burdensome to the advisory board and H.R. 1030 imposes unnecessary and expensive requirements on the EPA. Two companion bills have been introduced in the Senate, Senator John Barrasso's (R-WY) Secret Science Reform Act of 2015 (S. 544) and Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and Joe Manchin's (D-WV) EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2015 (S. 543). Both bills are currently under review in the Environment and Public Works Committee.

Sources: Congress, E&E News
