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House of Representatives

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Opening Statement Ranking Member Stacey Plaskett

Hearing on “Regulatory Reform Task Forces: Part III” Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment and Subcommittee on Healthcare, Benefits, and Administrative Rules

November 29, 2017

Thank you, Chairman Farenthold, Chairman Palmer, and Ranking Member Demings for holding this very important hearing.

At President Trump’s direction, political appointees at federal agencies are repealing regulations that protect the health, environment and pocketbooks of average Americans. And worse, they are doing so under the cloak of darkness. This lack of transparency is depriving the American people of their right to participate in the rule making process.

Take the Environmental Protection Agency. Administrator Scott Pruitt is not fully disclosing details about which protections he’s planning to repeal and who is being consulted in his decision making. This is especially concerning since it has been reported that members of the task force have previously had ties to corporations and corporate sponsored organizations which have blocked efforts to clean up our air and water.

At the Department of Interior and the Department of Energy, Secretary Ryan Zinke and Secretary Rick Perry are not fully open about membership on their task forces that President Trump wants to dismantle lifesaving regulations.

Much is at stake. Americans in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have all recently endured three major hurricanes in succession, and scientists unanimously believe that climate change contributed to their severity.

Just ten days before Hurricane Harvey hit Texas, President Trump signed an executive order revoking regulations that, quote,

“would have required the federal government to take into account the risk of flooding and sea-level rise as a result of climate change when constructing new infrastructure and rebuilding after disasters.”

My constituents, and people in Puerto Rico, Texas, Florida, and other areas which have suffered in the past from devastating hurricanes, want our government take into account climate change when building infrastructure.

This is just commonsense. It will save lives.

But President Trump is rolling back this life-saving protection and many others.

I look forward to hearing this morning from the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, and the Department of Interior, and I hope they will be forthcoming about what protections they are targeting for repeal, which companies would benefit and what the factual justification is. The American people have a right to know what their government is doing.

Thank you.

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