

INTRODUCTION

To Protect the Public, Agencies Must Restore Science

The COVID-19 pandemic is only one of the crises facing the United States as we look toward a new presidential term starting in 2021. Climate change and racism also threaten public health and well-being and demand comprehensive solutions. Fortunately, US government agencies are staffed with many skilled employees whose leadership and expertise can help us meet these challenges and many others.

In order for federal agencies to advance solutions to public health and environmental problems, their leaders must renew a commitment to scientific integrity and science-based public policies, and they must demonstrate that decisionmakers will respect evidence even when scientific findings are not politically palatable. In recent years, public trust and civil servants' morale have suffered as agencies have ignored, defunded, suppressed, and distorted science. Bipartisan support for scientific integrity safeguards is strong, though, and new agency leadership can make immediate, meaningful changes to restore confidence and position the US government to meet the challenges that face our nation today and in the future.

The following eight memos identify top priorities for agencies to adopt in the next presidential term to advance scientific integrity and science-based public policies. Each memo begins with a brief overview of the scientific integrity issues that agency faces and short descriptions of between two and five priority areas, followed by a list of specific actions recommended for the early days of the next presidential term. The remainder of each document provides additional detail about these priorities and specific recommended actions. The memos are designed so that high-level agency officials can read the first few pages and then pass them on to specialized colleagues who can use the more detailed information.

A companion set of memos—***Restoring Science, Protecting the Public: 43 Steps for the Next Presidential Term***—contains cross-agency recommendations for making independent science a core pillar of an agenda for the next presidential term. It has the support of good-government, public health, environmental, consumer,

MEMOS

- Department of Agriculture
 - Department of Health and Human Services—Public Health: Ensuring Science Drives Policy
 - Department of Health and Human Services—Sexual and Reproductive Health, Education, and Services
 - Department of the Interior—Restoring Science into Decisionmaking
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Mine Safety and Health Administration, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
 - Office of Science and Technology Policy
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and human and civil rights advocates representing tens of millions of people of varying political affiliations. These two sets of memos complement one another and together provide a roadmap for repairing and rebuilding scientific integrity starting in 2021.

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