

**STATEMENT OF LISA P. JACKSON
FORMER ADMINISTRATOR OF THE EPA BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**

Good morning Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings and members of the committee. I appreciate having a chance to offer my statement to the committee this morning.

Serving as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was a great privilege and the high point of my 25-year career in public service. I joined the EPA shortly after graduate school, after earning a master's degree in chemical engineering. I spent 15 years on the staff at EPA, at headquarters here in Washington and later in the field office in New York before joining the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in 2002. I believe my public service ethic came from my father - a Navy vet, and mailman and machinist for the U.S. Postal Service.

In January 2009, like EPA Administrators before me, I was assigned two e-mail addresses at EPA.gov. One address was to be published on the EPA website and the inbox was managed by EPA staff. A second address was shared with a more limited number of people and the inbox was managed primarily by me.

As you know firsthand, public officials get a lot of e-mail. The EPA has estimated that the Administrator receives well over a million e-mails every year. (*That's a new e-mail message almost every 30 seconds, around the clock, 365 days a year.*) Managing an inbox that big is more than one person can handle and still do their job effectively, to say

the least. That's why many members of congress as well as the executive branch set up a second account. It's about time management and efficiency.

I'd like to address the naming of my second account. I suggested that we label the second account "adminjackson" or something similar with my name or title in it. But career staffers recommended using a full name, since the e-mail address database was publicly available and searchable. People looking to have unimpeded access or a faster way to reach the Administrator would be searching for a secondary address, so I was advised against anything obvious. My husband and sons were still living in East Windsor, New Jersey, and our family dog's name is Ricky. So, with tongue in cheek, I named my account Windsor-DOT-Richard at EPA-DOT-gov. Regardless of the choice of name, the account was for official business and subject to the Freedom of Information Act. There was a learning curve for me on who should have access to the second account. I eventually decided that the account should be primarily for my senior staff and White House staff. EPA has released thousands of e-mails from this account. I used it every day to do my job more effectively.

I'd like to address personal e-mail. When I was confirmed as Administrator, like most people, I had a personal e-mail account. We public officials are, after all, also private citizens. I maintained a personal email account for personal matters. Every public official has to use her best judgment in ensuring appropriate use of personal e-mails. My practice was to forward any email that I deemed pertaining to government business into an official [EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov) email account so that it could be captured for record-keeping purposes.

I respectfully call the committee's attention to an example of this practice. On February 8, 2009, I forwarded an email from my home e-mail account to an official EPA email account. The business value of the e-mail was questionable but, out of an abundance of caution, I forwarded it to a staffer as an FYI, with a note to ensure that it was not given undue weight in the policy-making process. This e-mail chain can be found on EPA's website and I am here submitting it for the record. It was released as part of a Freedom of Information Act request, and I offer it as evidence that my action captured this email for transparency and record-keeping purposes.

I have come to accept that there are those who will second-guess the judgments that I made or question the motives behind those judgments. On one hand, there can certainly be honest and reasoned debate over my judgments, and on the other hand, there are some who want to theorize that there is a hidden agenda. The principle reason I wanted to come here today is to make it perfectly clear that it was my practice to ensure that any official business conducted by me or through my email accounts was appropriately captured for record keeping purposes.

I recognize that the issue of preserving official government correspondence is of critical importance and, in the digital age, these issues are difficult ones. I commend you, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee for tackling them. In a world that has been transformed by our ever increasing ability to connect, it is my hope that you can find a path forward that encourages transparency without unduly restricting job efficiency, personal convenience and privacy.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.