

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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September 3, 2025

Ms. Marcia McNutt
President
The National Academy of Sciences
500 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President McNutt:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is conducting oversight of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s (National Academies) decision to “fast-track” a review of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) decision to rescind its 2009 Endangerment Finding.¹ The National Academies, without any apparent request from a U.S. Government agency or entity, announced on August 7 that it would conduct a fast-tracked review of evidence gathered since 2009 for whether greenhouse gas emissions endanger public health and welfare,² and pledged to complete and publicly release its report in September.³⁴ In 1863, Congress established the National Academy of Sciences as a federally chartered corporation to provide independent, objective advice on science for the United States Government at its request.⁵ This decision appears to be inconsistent with the purpose of the National Academies and a blatant partisan act to undermine the Trump Administration. With such an unprecedented short timeline for reviewing evidence gathered over a 16-year period, the Committee is additionally concerned that the results of this study have been predetermined. The Committee requests documents and communications related to this fast-tracked review.

On July 29, 2025, the EPA announced it would seek to rescind the 2009 Endangerment Finding that declared greenhouse gas emissions are a pollutant subject to federal regulation.⁶ Previous administrations used the Endangerment Finding to regulate emissions from automobiles, aircraft, agriculture equipment, power plants, and fossil fuel producers in order to

¹ News Release, Nat’l. Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, National Academies Launch Fast-Track Review of Latest Evidence for Whether Greenhouse Gas Emissions Endanger Public Health and Welfare (Aug. 7, 2025).

² *Id.*

³ *Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases and US Climate: Evidence and Impacts*, NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, available at <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/anthropogenic-greenhouse-gases-and-us-climate-evidence-and-impacts> (last visited Aug. 28, 2025) [hereinafter “Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases”].

⁴ Section 307(d) of the Clean Air Act requires that the EPA, when conducting rulemaking, explain why its proposal differs from the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences.

⁵ Mar. 3, 1863, ch. 111, §1, 12 Stat. 806.

⁶ Press Release, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Releases Proposal to Rescind Obama-Era Endangerment Finding, Regulations that Paved the Way for Electric Vehicle Mandates, (Jul. 29, 2025).

drive partisan, left-wing policy goals such as electric vehicle mandates.⁷ Subsequent EPA regulations on vehicles have resulted in an aggregate cost of more than \$1 trillion.⁸ The EPA's decision to rescind the Endangerment Finding will provide much needed regulatory relief, affordability, and consumer choice for the American people. In recent years, the Supreme Court, through its decisions in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, *West Virginia v. EPA*, *Michigan v. EPA*, and *Utility Air Regulatory Group v. EPA*, has clarified the scope of the EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act, and the EPA has recognized that major policy determinations are the prerogative of Congress, not administrative agencies.⁹

The Committee is concerned that this study is being conducted with partisan aims in mind, as the National Academy of Sciences has made several questionable decisions in past years while under your leadership, exposing potential partisan bias. In 2021, the organization endorsed President Biden's selection for his Top Science Advisor,¹⁰ despite his history of failing to disclose conflicts of interest and understating the contributions of his colleagues in developing a biotechnology.¹¹ The organization has also conducted politicized DEI-focused research and studies.¹²

Members of the committee conducting this fast-tracked study have also shown partisan bias. The study is led by a National Academies member who serves as an external advisor to the Science Philanthropy Alliance,¹³ which has ties to the left-wing group Arabella Advisors through the New Venture Fund, an organization that promotes a variety of progressive causes and funds major climate litigation.¹⁴ Another member of the committee conducting this study signed a letter endorsing Joe Biden in the 2020 Presidential election for his stance on climate change and accusing President Trump of "suppress[ing] science and silenc[ing] scientists."¹⁵ The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requires that individuals serving on a National Academy of Sciences committee inform the Academy of any conflicts of interest relevant to the functions to be performed, unless such conflicts are promptly disclosed and the Academy determines such conflicts are unavoidable.¹⁶ Given these positions and affiliations, it is unlikely these individuals can conduct an impartial scientific review and the Committee has serious concerns that the National Academy of Sciences appears to be enabling the aforementioned partisan conflicts of interest.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Carl Zimmer, *Biden to Elevate Science Adviser to His Cabinet*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Jan. 15, 2025).

¹¹ Luca F. Schroeder, *Geneticist Embroiled in Conflict of Interest Controversy*, THE HARVARD CRIMSON (Jan. 29, 2016).

¹² Andrew Mark Miller, *'Structural racism': Top taxpayer-funded academy rife with DEI programs, hefty executive salaries*, FOX NEWS (Feb. 27, 2025).

¹³ Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases, *supra* note 3.

¹⁴ Andrew Mark Miller & Amanda Macias, *'Leftist' taxpayer-funded academy sparks backlash after moving against Trump's rollback of key regulation*, FOX NEWS (Aug. 22, 2025).

¹⁵ Press Release, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Biden Campaign Press Release - More Than 80 Scientists Endorse Joe Biden Ahead of Earth Day's 50th Anniversary (Apr. 21, 2020).

¹⁶ 5 U.S.C. § 1014(b)(1)(A).

The National Academies states it will use funds from the National Academy of Sciences for its study, all of which are privately-sourced, as the federal government did not request it to review the EPA's decision.¹⁷ This raises concerns that this study is being conducted at the behest of private donors, the largest of which hold radical-leftist views about climate change. For example, the Ford Foundation, which provided the National Academy of Sciences' largest single donation in 2024,¹⁸ aims to phase out fossil fuels and promote renewable energy and claims that oil, gas, forest, and mineral extraction drive inequality and injustice.¹⁹ The National Academies of Sciences also received a donation of over \$7 million from an anonymous donor "for the general purposes of the Academy."²⁰ Such a large "anonymous" donation is cause for concern, as a foreign individual or entity wishing to undermine the national interests of the United States could use significant anonymous donations to influence the National Academy of Sciences. It also appears that the National Academies is fundraising off what it refers to as the "climate crisis," which only raises additional questions about a predetermined outcome and conflicts of interest.²¹

To assist the Committee's oversight of this matter, we request the following information no later than September 17, 2025:

1. All documents and communications between National Academies staff or members and federal officials, career or political appointees, regarding the EPA's Proposed Rule "Reconsideration of 2009 Endangerment Finding and Greenhouse Gas Vehicle Standards";
2. All documents and communications between National Academies staff or members and federal officials, career or political appointees, regarding the Department of Energy's Report "A Critical Review of Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions on the U.S. Climate";
3. All documents and communications between the National Academy of Science and its private donors related to its study "Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases and US Climate: Evidence and Impacts";
4. All documents detailing the National Academy of Sciences' process for deciding to provide resources and research to inform the EPA's regulatory rulemaking process;

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, DOI 10.17226/29218, REPORT OF THE TREASURER: FOR THE YEAR ENDED DEC. 31, 2024, 10 (2025) [hereinafter "Report of the Treasurer"].

¹⁹ *Natural Resources and Climate Justice*, FORD FOUNDATION, available at <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/challenging-inequality/natural-resources-and-climate-justice/> (last visited Aug. 28, 2025).

²⁰ Report of the Treasurer, *supra* note 10.

²¹ *Donate to Climate Crossroads*, NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE, available at <https://www.nationalacademies.org/giving/donate/ccx>.

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5. All communications between or among National Academy of Sciences' staff or members related to the EPAs Endangerment Finding or the "Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases and US Climate: Evidence and Impacts," study;
6. All documents detailing the sources of the National Academy of Sciences' funding for the fast-tracked review;
7. All documents and records detailing the National Academy of Sciences' funding sources, both federal and private, by year for the calendar years 2022, 2023, and 2024, including but not limited to any donation publicly labeled as "anonymous"; and
8. All documents and communications related to the National Academies' considerations and determinations of potential conflicts of interest of the members of the Committee on Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases and US Climate: Evidence and Impacts, including but not limited to the minutes from the committee's closed virtual meetings held on August 20 and 25-26, 2025.

To arrange for delivery of the requested information or to ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform