

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
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<https://oversight.house.gov>

May 3, 2021

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Deputy Director for Climate and Environment
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

We are conducting oversight on the decision to remove Dr. Betsy Weatherhead, a qualified and dedicated atmospheric scientist, from her position at the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) supervising the U.S. government's report on climate change.¹ As such, we request documents and information about the decision to remove her from that position, including the process used for this decision.

According to media reports, Dr. Weatherhead has been reassigned to the U.S. Geological Survey.² Weatherhead was hired into the government as a career civil service employee in November 2020, and then she was tapped to lead the federal government's efforts on the National Climate Assessment.³ Although she was hired as a career employee, Kevin Droegemeir, the Trump-appointed Director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy, selected her to oversee the National Climate Assessment.⁴ The National Climate Assessment aims to "summarize the impacts of climate change on the United States, now and in the future."⁵ The reports is compiled by a group of more than 300 experts that are guided by a 60 person Federal Advisory Committee.⁶ While Dr. Weatherhead has decades of

¹ Jason Samenow, *White House removes scientist picked by Trump official to lead key climate report*, THE WASH. POST (April 18, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2021/04/18/betsy-weatherhead-removed-white-house/>

² *Id.*

³ Jason Samenow&Andrew Fredman, *Trump administration taps mainstream climate scientist to run key climate review*, THE WASH. POST (Nov. 4, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/11/04/national-climate-assessment-director/>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ U.S. Global Change Research Program, *National Climate Assessment*, (viewed on April 4, 2021), <https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/#submenu-highlights-overview>

⁶ *Id.*

experience in climate science, both in the private sector and academic arena, it appears the Biden administration is continuing to purge officials in the government based on their ties to the Trump Administration.

Dr. Weatherhead was removed from her position at OSTP even though she has years of experience in climate science. She previously served as senior scientist for Jupiter Intelligence, a company that “uses human and artificial intelligence to help companies look into the future and see the potential impact of climate change on their businesses.”⁷ She also had a 25 year career in academia at the University of Colorado.⁸ While working for the University of Colorado she was a contributor to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s reports.⁹

When Dr. Weatherhead was named the Director of the National Climate Assessment she received widespread adulation from Democrats, Republicans, and even Obama Administration officials.¹⁰ Don Wuebbles, who led the advancement of the Climate Science Report for the Fourth National Climate assessment during the Obama administration, stated that Dr. Weatherhead is “bright and accomplished....and she’s certainly a reasonable choice for this.”¹¹ With deep praise from both sides of the political aisle for the qualifications of Dr. Weatherhead, her reassignment within the first months of a new Administration solely based on her ties to the Trump Administration demonstrates yet another example of a deeply troubling partisan political agenda.

In order for Committee Republicans to better understand OSTP’s reasoning for the reassignment of Dr. Weatherhead in what appears to be a politically motivated decision, please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible but no later than May 17 2021.

- (1) All documents and communications from January 20, 2021 to present, related to the decision to reassign Dr. Betsy Weatherhead from her position as Director of the Fifth National Climate Assessment to the U.S. Geological Survey.
- (2) All documents and communications from January 20, 2021 to present, relating to OSTP’s plans to finish the Finish National Climate Assessment by 2023 without a Director in place.
- (3) All documents and communications between OSTP and any outside persons or organizations, from January 20, 2021 to present related to the decision to reassign Dr. Betsy Weatherhead from her position as Director of the Fifth National Climate Assessment to the U.S. Geological Survey.

⁷ Cassie Ordonio, *Jupiter Intelligence Shows Companies How Climate Change Will Impact Them*, <https://www.hawaiiibusiness.com/jupiter-intelligence/>

⁸ Samenow, *supra* note 1

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Samenow, *supra* note 3

¹¹ Samenow, *supra* note 1

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To ask any follow-up or related questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and 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 in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Ro Khanna
Subcommittee on Environment