United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000
202-224-2035

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

I write today to express concern over Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent dismissal of nine members of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) (hereinafter "BOSC" or "the Board"). The BOSC serves an important role at EPA in providing recommendations and advice to EPA's Office of Research and Development, and in contributing to the integrity of agency scientific decisions, including those pertaining to agriculture. In fact, the "Chemical Safety for Sustainability Subcommittee" within the BOSC currently counts studies involving pesticides among its research goals. The EPA also contributes to important agricultural regulatory determinations under the Clean Water Act to ensure that farming and ranching operations are appropriately exempted, as Congress intended.

Recent press reports suggest many of the dismissed scientists were recently told they would be reappointed. Traditionally these counselors serve at least two terms, regardless of a change in Administrations. The EPA's vast research mandate – including research pertaining to pesticides and agriculture – requires that this board be comprised of experts from a broad range of specializations including engineers, economists, sociologists, toxicologists, chemists, climatologists, and hydrologists. Given the potential implications of the abrupt dismissal of nine of these experts for American agricultural workers and the larger industry, please answer the following questions no later than May 30, 2017.

1) Please provide the names, affiliations, and length of time served for all Board of Scientific Counselors members whose terms were not renewed. Please provide an explanation for the reason each such individual's term was not renewed.
2) Please provide a list of issues likely to come before the Board during the period of one year from the date of this letter.
3) Please explain the timeline of how long it is expected to take for individuals to apply for the open positions and for EPA to appoint members to the Board.
4) Please provide a description of any delays you expect in rules, determinations, recommendations or advice to be given by the Board stemming from the failure to renew the terms of the individuals named in response to question 1.
5) Does the Administration plan to take similar actions with the 47-member Science Advisory Board; the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)

Scientific Advisory Panel; or the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Science Review Board?

6) Please list the topical areas that the released board members were working on prior to their dismissal from the Board.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member