

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 24, 2020

Dr. Neil Jacobs

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction  
Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW, Rm. 5128  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Jacobs:

We are writing, again, to express our dismay at the recent hire of Dr. Ryan Maue as the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chief Scientist. Dr. Maue recently attacked California Governor Gavin Newsom (in a now deleted tweet) as “us(ing) the devastating California fires as an opportunity to score political points” when Gov. Newsom correctly identified climate change as increasing the frequency and destruction of the wildfires.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Maue has referred to scientists who provide evidence and facts acknowledging the dangers of climate change to public health as “alarmists.” Dr. Maue attempts to create confusion where general scientific consensus already exists on the state of the climate by regularly contributing to climate denial blogs.

His work while previously serving as an adjunct associate at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank founded by wealthy businessman Charles Koch, who made his fortune in the fossil fuel industry, is similarly concerning. These associations are in direct conflict with the fundamental interests of NOAA and public confidence in government-published climate science.

In 2018, Dr. Maue co-authored a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed rejecting former NASA climate scientist James Hansen’s valid warnings in 1988 on climate change by writing, in part: “On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mr. Hansen’s galvanizing testimony, it’s time to acknowledge that the rapid warming he predicted isn’t happening.” His willful dismissal of the facts that the average global temperature has increased more than 1°C since 1880 and that the rate has been rapidly increasing since 1981 threatens public health and safety. A track record such as Dr. Maue’s precludes him from effectively executing one of the primary responsibilities of NOAA’s Chief Scientist – ensuring scientific integrity.

NOAA’s Acting Chief Scientist, Craig McLean, came to the defense of good science in the face of political interference and leveraged his position to investigate the events surrounding the Hurricane Dorian forecast and recommendations made by the Birmingham Weather Forecast Office. That role would now fall to Dr. Maue, who has no previous government experience and

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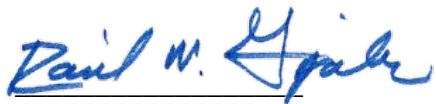
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/21/noaa-chief-scientist-maue/>

has shown sympathy to climate deniers, not to mention the current administration's destructive deregulatory policies.

It was once unimaginable that any political agenda could poison the legitimacy of a scientific agency whose integrity was beyond reproach. Dr. Maue's appointment is now only one of many examples of a larger pattern of corrupting federal agencies to support the anti-science agenda of the White House. NOAA is now following the Environmental Protection Agency, Centers for Disease Control and, on a larger scale, the Department of the Interior in the systematic dismantling of leadership and manipulation of research, data, and scientific findings. Such reckless actions put American lives at risk now and will have lasting consequences.

Dr. Jacobs, we implore you to stand up to an administration that is intent on using its power to distort science and discredit the valuable scientists and professionals in your organization. Know that you have our explicit and unequivocal support in this critically important mission. Please confirm by October 2 what you will do to maintain your agency's scientific integrity in the face of another politically motivated hire and regain the quickly fading trust of the American people. Please contact Lora Snyder, Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife at [lora.snyder@mail.house.gov](mailto:lora.snyder@mail.house.gov) should you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chair  
Committee on Natural Resources



Jared Huffman  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and  
Wildlife