

## Government Report Criticizes EPA For 'Covert Propaganda'

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has used every tactic possible to attack the oil and gas industry during the past seven years. Now, a report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) finds that some of those tactics are illegal.

GAO says that EPA used a social media site to lobby the public to communicate the benefits of EPA's programs on Facebook and Twitter without attributing the statements to EPA. The law states that the government must acknowledge that it created such messages, which are presented by citizens.

Henry I. Miller, who writes for Forbes, recently wrote that federal agencies are supposed to be apolitical, and federal law prohibits lobbying for or against proposed legislation. EPA, however, encouraged members of the public to "urge your senators to defend Clean Water Act safeguards for critical streams and wetlands."

"This 'grassroots lobbying' was a violation of federal law because at the time, Congress was considering a number of pieces of legislation to derail the EPA's 'waters of the United States' (WOTUS) regulation," Miller stated.

Miller, whose credentials include being a scholar at the Hoover Institution, which is a think-tank at Stanford University, said the combination of EPA's "covert propaganda" and "grassroots lobbying" and the agency's ideological efforts to achieve "environmental justice"—which it defines as "fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies"—is a prescription for more of the zealotry and malfeasance for which EPA is renowned.

"EPA has a long history of actions that are illegal, unethical and incompetent," Miller wrote in his March 9 column. "Various national and state policy groups in January raised objections and concerns about Obama administration plans to impose cap-and-trade style emissions restrictions nationwide. A coalition coordinated by William Yeatman of the Competitive Enterprise Institute compiled and submitted comments from more than 20 groups that questioned the legitimacy of EPA's implementation of the president's Clean Power Plan. Specifically, its Model Federal Implementation Plan appears to be a cap-and-trade scheme that is the product of a defective political process, and thereby raises concerns under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." (In early February the Clean Power Plan was stayed by the U.S. Supreme Court, which directed the EPA to cease implementation until the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court itself renders a final decision on litigation to overturn the rule.)

Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma and David Vitter of Louisiana have raised questions about EPA's "sue and settle" program with environmental groups that have allowed EPA to expand its agenda without public input.

GAO's report will be the topic of hearings in the U.S. House and Senate throughout 2016, but EPA's agenda continues on with the announcement on March 10 that it will expand its methane regulations to cover all oil and gas operations.