Message

From: Abboud, Michael [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=B6F5AF791A1842F1ADCC088CBF9ED3CE-ABBOUD, MIC]
Sent: 3/27/2018 3:01:08 PM
To: Beach, Christopher [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=6b124299bb6f46a39aa5d84519f25d5d-Beach, Chri]; Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Block, Molly [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=60d0c681a16441a0b4fa16aa2dd4b9c5-Block, Moll]; Bowman, Liz [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c3d4d94d3e4b4b1f80904056703ebc80-Bowman, Eli]; Daniell, Kelsi [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=cd867173479344b3bda202b3004ff830-Daniell, Ke]; Dravis, Samantha [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=ece53f0610054e669d9dffe0b3a842df-Dravis, Sam]; Ferguson, Lincoln [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=08cd7f82606244de96b61b96681c46de-Ferguson, L]; Ford, Hayley [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4748a9029cf74453a20ee8ac9527830c-Ford, Hayle]; Gordon, Stephen [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=7c8fb4d82bff4eec98f5c5d00a47f554-Gordon, Ste]; Grantham, Nancy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=12a3c2ed7158417fb0bb1b1b72a8cfb0-Grantham, Nancy]; Hanson, Paige (Catherine) [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=95adc1b2ac3b40ab9dc591801d594df8-Hanson, Cat]; Hewitt, James [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=41b19dd598d340bb8032923d902d4bd1-Hewitt, Jam]; Jackson, Ryan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=38bc8e18791a47d88a279db2fec8bd60-Jackson, Ry]; Konkus, John [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=555471b2baa6419e8e141696f4577062-Konkus, Joh]; Letendre, Daisy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b691cccca6264ae09df7054c7f1019cb-Letendre, D]; McMurray, Forrest [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=344246fb2cb643bfab4f92fe016566e2-McMurray, F]; Wilcox, Jahan [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=88fd588e97d3405d869bcae98d391984-Wilcox, Jah]
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EPA News Highlights 3.27.18

The Wall Street Journal: The EPA Cleans Up Its Science

The Environmental Protection Agency will no longer rely on "secret" scientific data to justify regulations, Administrator Scott Pruitt announced last week. EPA regulators and agency-funded researchers have become accustomed to producing unaccountable, dodgy science to advance a political agenda. The saga began in the early 1990s, when the EPA sought to regulate fine particulate matter known as PM2.5—dust and soot smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter. PM2.5 was not known to cause death, but by 1994 EPA-supported scientists had developed two lines of research purporting to show that it did. When the studies were run past the EPA's Clean Air Science Advisory Committee, it balked. It believed the studies relied on dubious statistical analysis and asked for the underlying data. The EPA ignored the request. As the EPA prepared to issue its proposal for PM2.5 regulation in 1996, Congress stepped in. Rep. Thomas Bliley, chairman of the House Commerce Committee, sent a sharply written letter to Administrator Carol Browner asking for the data underlying studies. Ms. Browner delegated the response to a subordinate, who told Mr. Bliley the EPA saw "no useful purpose" in obtaining the data. Congress responded by inserting a provision in a 1998 bill requiring that data used to

support federal regulation must be made available to the public via the Freedom of Information Act. But it was hastily written, and a federal appellate court held the law unenforceable in 2003.

The Philadelphia Inquirer: EPA Settlement At Upper Merion Superfund Site Could Make Way For New Apartments
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Monday that it had reached a $1.8 million settlement with owners of a Superfund site in Upper Merion to clean up a portion of the area and pave the way for high-density housing... The EPA has been pushing to get Superfund site settlements completed to make way for development. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a recent interview with the Inquirer that some sites have been on the National Priorities List for decades. "The Superfund area, just to speak to it generally, seemed to be languishing as we arrived," said Pruitt, who took office in March 2017. "There didn't seem to be sufficient focus on providing leadership."

Casper Star Tribune: Washington To Hear From Coal Country In Clean Power Plan Meeting Tuesday In Wyoming
The federal agency responsible for the emissions-cutting Clean Power Plan will hold a public meeting today in Gillette, one of only three across the country this season as the agency plans to dissolve the Obama-era rule. The Clean Power Plan would have dealt a painful blow to one of Wyoming's key industries, and both its supporters and opponents are lining up to speak at the event in coal country. Many of the arguments will be familiar to those who have followed the development, and more recent devolution, of the Clean Power Plan. Supporters say regulations to cut carbon dioxide emissions are a necessary step towards combating climate change. Others will criticize the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation as an unwieldy and ineffective tool that targeted the coal industry.

The New York Times: Scott Pruitt's Attack on Science Would Paralyze the E.P.A.
Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, has announced that he alone will decide what is and isn't acceptable science for the agency to use when developing policies that affect your health and the environment. It is his latest effort to cripple the agency. Mr. Pruitt, who as Oklahoma's attorney general described himself as "a leading advocate against the E.P.A.'s activist agenda," said in an interview published in The Daily Caller last week that he would no longer allow the agency to use studies that include nonpublic scientific data to develop rules to safeguard public health and prevent pollution. Opponents of the agency and of mainstream climate science call these studies "secret science." But that's simply not true. Peer review ensures that the analytic methodologies underlying studies funded by the agency are sound.

National News Highlights 3.27.18

The Wall Street Journal: U.S. Stocks Extend Gains As Trade Fears Ease
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The New York Times: Despite Concerns, Census Will Ask Respondents If They Are U.S. Citizens
The 2020 census will ask respondents whether they are United States citizens, the Commerce Department announced Monday night, agreeing to a Trump administration request with highly charged political and social implications that many officials feared would result in a substantial undercount. In a statement released Monday, the Commerce Department, which oversees the Census Bureau, said Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had "determined that reinstatement of a citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census questionnaire is necessary to provide complete and accurate census block level data," allowing the department to accurately measure the portion of the population eligible to vote. But his decision immediately invited a legal challenge: Xavier Becerra, California's attorney general, plans to sue the Trump administration over the decision, a spokeswoman for Mr. Becerra said late Monday.

TRUMP TWEETS

The Wall Street Journal

https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-epa-cleans-up-its-science-1522105331

The EPA Cleans Up Its Science

By Steve Milloy, 3/26/18

The Environmental Protection Agency will no longer rely on "secret" scientific data to justify regulations, Administrator Scott Pruitt announced last week. EPA regulators and agency-funded researchers have become accustomed to producing unaccountable, dodgy science to advance a political agenda.

The saga began in the early 1990s, when the EPA sought to regulate fine particulate matter known as PM2.5—dust and soot smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter. PM2.5 was not known to cause death, but by 1994 EPA-supported scientists had developed two lines of research purporting to show that it did. When the studies were run past the EPA's Clean Air Science Advisory Committee, it balked. It believed the studies relied on dubious statistical analysis and asked for the underlying data. The EPA ignored the request.

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The controversy went dormant until 2011, when a newly Republican Congress took exception to the Obama EPA's anticoal rules, which relied on the same PM2.5 studies. Again the EPA was defiant. Administrator Gina McCarthy refused requests for the data sets and defied a congressional subpoena.

Bills to resolve the problem died in the Senate. Democrats argued that requiring data for study replication is a threat to intellectual property and an invasion of medical privacy. In fact, the legislation would protect property by requiring a confidentiality agreement, and no personal medical data or information would have been released.

This sort of data is already routinely made public for research use. In 2012 I was desperate for a way around the Obama EPA's secrecy on the PM2.5 issue, I found out in 2012 that I could get California death-certificate data in electronic form. The state's Health Department calls this sort of data "Death Public Use Files." They are scrubbed of all personal identifying and private medical information. Some of my colleagues used this data to prepare a 2017 study, which found PM2.5 was not associated with death.

The best part is that if you don't believe the result, you can get the same data for yourself from California and run your own analysis. Then we'll compare, contrast and debate. That's how science is supposed to work.

It would be better if Congress would pass a law requiring data transparency. A future administrator may backslide on the steps Mr. Pruitt is taking. In the meantime, we have science in the sunshine.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

http://www.philly.com/philly/health/epa-settlement-at-upper-merion-superfund-site-could-make-way-for-new-apartments-20180326.html

EPA Settlement At Upper Merion Superfund Site Could Make Way For New Apartments

By Frank Kummer, 3/26/18

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Monday that it had reached a $1.8 million settlement with owners of a Superfund site in Upper Merion to clean up a portion of the area and pave the way for high-density housing.

The 50-acre site, known as Crater Resources, was contaminated by coking and steel operations that sent hazardous chemicals into soil and groundwater. The site contains four quarries spanning about 14 acres.

As part of the settlement, two of the quarries will be cleaned by their owner, Renaissance Land Associates, with the goal of development, according to the civil suit filing. Renaissance Land Associates II and III completed purchase of those quarries in 2001. The two limited liability companies are under the control of O'Neill Properties.

The site, near the Gulph Mills Golf Club, has a long history of contamination stretching to 1919, when the Alan Wood Steel Co. disposed of coking wastes in the quarries. The Keystone Coke Co. purchased that firm in 1977 and continued until 1980 dumping "waste ammonia liquor" at the site — a by-product of a steel plant in Conshohocken.

Tests showed the soil and quarries were contaminated with hazards including cyanide, arsenic, mercury, fluorene, ammonia, phenol and other volatile organic compounds. The EPA placed the site on the National Priorities List of Superfund Sites in 1992.

Cleanup began in 2009, including removal of contaminated soil and building of caps designed to prevent contaminants from leaching into groundwater and to reduce the threat to public health. Groundwater contamination is also being addressed.

Much of the site is already redeveloped, with projects including the Renaissance Park office park. A small part of the Gulph Mills Golf Club is on the southern part of the site.

More commercial and residential projects are proposed for the 5.15 acres that contain the two quarries. EPA spokesman Roy Seneca said both will be capped before anything is built.

Upper Merion Township planner Rob Loeper said representatives of Renaissance Land Associates presented a plan in 2016 to build up to 300 multi-family units at one end of the property, provided issues were resolved with the EPA. Loeper said the units would likely be apartments.

Last year, the EPA said the company could build residential units provided the protective caps were built. The company agreed to take the extra measures as part of the agreement reached Monday.

The EPA has been pushing to get Superfund site settlements completed to make way for development.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a recent interview with the Inquirer that some sites have been on the National Priorities List for decades.

"The Superfund area, just to speak to it generally, seemed to be languishing as we arrived," said Pruitt, who took office in March 2017. "There didn't seem to be sufficient focus on providing leadership."

Casper Star Tribune

http://trib.com/business/energy/washington-to-hear-from-coal-country-in-clean-power-plan/article_c2e50386-0da1-5637-b03e-6b118af603b9.html

Washington To Hear From Coal Country In Clean Power Plan Meeting Tuesday In Wyoming

By Heather Richards, 3/26/18

The federal agency responsible for the emissions-cutting Clean Power Plan will hold a public meeting today in Gillette, one of only three across the country this season as the agency plans to dissolve the Obama-era rule.

The Clean Power Plan would have dealt a painful blow to one of Wyoming's key industries, and both its supporters and opponents are lining up to speak at the event in coal country.

Many of the arguments will be familiar to those who have followed the development, and more recent devolution, of the Clean Power Plan. Supporters say regulations to cut carbon dioxide emissions are a necessary step towards combating climate change. Others will criticize the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation as an unwieldy and ineffective tool that targeted the coal industry.

Some may criticize climate science, which identifies the burning of fossil fuels as the catalyst for human-caused climate change. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, along with others in the Trump administration, has expressed doubts about that conclusion, despite a widespread consensus of scientists from NASA to the University of Wyoming.

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Finalized in 2015, the plan aimed to cut carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector by about 30 percent compared to 2005 levels. It would start taking effect in 2022 and ramp up to full implementation by 2030. But the plan was immediately tied up in court when states like Wyoming objected. Wyoming economists noted a potential 25 to 50 percent reduction in the state's coal production if the plan was implemented.

President Donald Trump's campaign promised to repeal the rule. The pledge sent a hopeful jolt through Wyoming's coal industry, which at the time suffered from contractions in coal demand, bankruptcies and layoffs.

Gillian Malone, a supporter of carbon dioxide emissions regulations and a member of the Powder River Basin Resource Council said in a statement Monday that the coal industry will continue to face market pressures with or without the Clean Power Plan, noting the closure of coal plants across the country in favor of natural gas and renewables.

"The Trump Administration's efforts to champion coal haven't been successful in bringing coal back, and cutting the Clean Power Plan won't save coal jobs and communities," Malone said.

Travis Deti, executive director of the Wyoming Mining Association noted that coal is juggling a number of challenges; however, the Clean Power Plan is a different beast.

"There is no doubt that we face headwinds," Deti said. "We face competition from natural gas and low gas prices. But they are separate issues. This is dealing with the regulatory burden on the industry."

The Clean Power Plan was designed to push coal out of the electricity mix, he said. A less-punitive approach that utilizes carbon capture technology would be preferable from industry's perspective, he said, noting Wyoming's work in capturing carbon dioxide and studying its alternative uses.

"You address the carbon dioxide. You solve it with technology, and you keep coal as a viable industry," he said.

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Repealing the Clean Power Plan is not a simple step. The Environmental Protection Agency is required to go through a similar process in undoing or rewriting the Clean Power Plan as it did when crafting it.

Tuesday's meeting to discuss unraveling the plan is part of that public process.

Despite the contention over the Clean Power Plan, the Environmental Protection Agency is also hamstrung by an endangerment finding from 2009. It determined that carbon dioxide was a harmful emission that the agency had to regulate under the Clean Air Act. Under the finding, the agency will have to attempt to curb carbon dioxide emissions, of which coal-burning power plants are a key contributor.

The EPA originally only scheduled a single meeting in West Virginia coal country. It was heavily attended by both sides, and the department later scheduled three additional listening sessions in San Francisco, Kansas City, Missouri and Gillette.

Pruitt, the EPA administrator, will be visiting coal country later in the week to see Wyoming's industry first hand. The state's delegates to Washington applauded the visit.

"In our community, it doesn't take long to understand how the coal industry is a source of reliable and affordable energy, a provider of high paying jobs and an amazing steward of the land," said Sen. Mike Enzi, former mayor of Gillette "If a picture is worth a thousand words, being on the ground is worth more than a thousand pictures."

The New York Times

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/26/opinion/pruitt-attack-science-epa.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FEnvironmental%20Protection%20Agency

Scott Pruitt's Attack on Science Would Paralyze the E.P.A.

By Gina McCarthy and Janet G. McCabe, 3/26/18

Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, has announced that he alone will decide what is and isn't acceptable science for the agency to use when developing policies that affect your health and the environment.

It is his latest effort to cripple the agency. Mr. Pruitt, who as Oklahoma's attorney general described himself as "a leading advocate against the E.P.A.'s activist agenda," said in an interview published in The Daily Caller last week that he would no longer allow the agency to use studies that include nonpublic scientific data to develop rules to safeguard public health and prevent pollution.

Opponents of the agency and of mainstream climate science call these studies "secret science." But that's simply not true. Peer review ensures that the analytic methodologies underlying studies funded by the agency are sound.

Some of those studies, particularly those that determine the effects of exposure to chemicals and pollution on health, rely on medical records that by law are confidential because of patient privacy policies. These studies summarize the analysis of raw data and draw conclusions based on that analysis. Other government agencies also use studies like these to develop policy and regulations, and to buttress and defend rules against legal challenges. They are, in fact, essential to making sound public policy.

The agency also relies on industry data to develop rules on chemical safety that is often kept confidential for business reasons.

For instance, foundational epidemiological research into the effects of air pollution on health by scientists at Harvard and the American Cancer Society established a clear connection between exposure to fine particles and increased mortality. This research led to further studies that supported the development of air quality standards and rules requiring industry to reduce pollution, improving health and reducing costs for millions of Americans.

Yet, because the personal health data associated with individuals participating in the studies were obtained with guarantees of confidentiality, Mr. Pruitt apparently would have argued for those studies to be tossed out had he been at the helm then.

The E.P.A. administrator simply can't make determinations on what science is appropriate in rule-making without calling into question decisions by other federal agencies based on similar kinds of studies, including on the safety and efficacy of pharmaceuticals, and research into cancer and other diseases. All rely to some extent on data from individual health records. If one agency rejects studies based on that sort of data, it could open up policies by other agencies based on similar studies to challenge.

Mr. Pruitt — who is a lawyer, not a scientist — told The Daily Caller: "We need to make sure their data and methodology are published as part of the record. Otherwise, it's not transparent. It's not objectively measured, and that's important."

We don't have the details of the new policy. But don't be fooled by this talk of transparency. He and some conservative members of Congress are setting up a nonexistent problem in order to prevent the E.P.A. from using the best available science. These studies adhere to all professional standards and meet every expectation of the scientific community in terms of peer review and scientific integrity. In the case of the air pollution studies, a rigorous follow-up examination was done by the Health Effects Institute, a nonprofit research group that studies air pollution. The institute corroborated the findings.

In taking this action, Mr. Pruitt appears to be adopting the policies of the Honest and Open New E.P.A. Science Treatment Act, a bill aimed at the agency. Conservative lawmakers have tried to pass versions of this bill before to shackle the agency's rule making. That law would prohibit the E.P.A. from taking any action "unless all scientific and technical information relied on to support" it is "specifically identified, and publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results."

An analysis of a similar bill introduced in 2015 by the Congressional Budget Office estimated it would cost $250 million a year over the first few years to carry out because it would require new "data collection, correspondence and coordination with study authors, construction of a database to house necessary information, and public dissemination" of the information.

The analysis, which did not appear to take into account the cost of redacting details like trade secrets or personally identifiable medical information, also predicted the agency would reduce by half the number of studies it relies on in developing policies and regulations because of the cost of complying with the law.

"The quality of the agency's work would be compromised if that work relies on a significantly smaller collection of scientific studies," the analysis found.

This approach would undermine the nation's scientific credibility. And should Mr. Pruitt reconsider regulations now in place, this new policy could be a catalyst for the unraveling of existing public health protections if the studies used to justify them could no longer be used by E.P.A.

So why would he want to prohibit his own agency from using these studies? It's not a mystery. Time and again the Trump administration has put the profits of regulated industries over the health of the American people. Fundamental research on the effects of air pollution on public health has long been a target of those who oppose the E.P.A.'s air quality regulations, like the rule that requires power plants to reduce their mercury emissions.

Mr. Pruitt's goal is simple: No studies, no data, no rules. No climate science, for instance, means no climate policy.

If a tree falls in the forest, we know it makes a sound, even if people aren't there to hear it. When people are exposed to mercury, lead or other air- and waterborne pollutants, we know their health is affected, whether or not E.P.A. is allowed to use the scientific studies that confirm those health impacts.

This policy no doubt will become a matter of litigation. It will be interesting to hear the agency defend Mr. Pruitt's view that peer-reviewed studies that meet every standard for proper scientific method and integrity should not be considered in drafting policies and regulations that regulate threats to the environment.

Representative Bill Foster, a physicist and Democrat from Illinois, has argued that "scientists should set the standards for research, not politicians."

We couldn't agree more. Scientific research provides factual support for policies that reduce exposure to pollution and protect the American people from costly and dangerous illnesses and premature deaths. Under Mr. Pruitt's approach to science, the E.P.A. would be turning its back on its mandate to "protect human health and the environment."

The Wall Street Journal
https://www.wsj.com/articles/asia-pacific-stocks-rise-on-lower-anxiety-about-global-trade-1522114769

U.S. Stocks Extend Gains As Trade Fears Ease
By David Hodari, 3/27/18

U.S. stocks edged higher, extending sharp gains from the previous session, as fears of a trade war between the U.S. and China continued to fade.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 23 points, or 0.1%, to 24226 shortly after the opening bell, while the S&P 500 climbed 0.1% and the tech-focused Nasdaq Composite added 0.2%.

U.S. technology and financial stocks in the S&P 500 rose, with software firm Red Hat—after an upbeat earnings call—climbing 6.7% and BB&T rising 1.7%.

Meanwhile, real estate stocks declined 0.6% and shares of health-care firms fell 0.2%.

European stocks rebounded, with the Stoxx Europe 600 climbing 1.4%, more than recouping its Monday decline, which came amid rising tensions between multiple EU nations and Russia.

Pharmaceuticals company GlaxoSmithKline climbed 5.7% higher after buying Novartis's 36.5% stake in its health-care joint venture for $13 billion. Novartis shares rose 2.3%.

Shares in Dutch paint maker Akzo Nobel rose 2.9% after the company confirmed the $12.6 billion sale of its specialty chemicals arm to a Carlyle Group-led consortium.

The upbeat trading in Europe echoed the sharp resurgence in equities markets in Asia-Pacific. That recovery began on Monday as the U.S. and China appeared to soften their stances over trade, after tensions between the two superpowers ratcheted up last week.

The two countries traded barbs after the Trump administration threatened $60 billion of levies in addition to import tariffs on aluminum and steel. China responded with its own measures and the promise of immediate retaliation to further tariffs.

The friction was soothed Monday by the news that the two countries were in talks to improve U.S. access to Chinese markets.

That said, rules requiring foreign companies to form joint ventures with domestic partners in China were likely to be a sticking point, given that U.S. firms would be required to divulge trade secrets.

"Talk of these tariffs started off with the EU coming back strongly, saying they'd look at countermeasures, so the U.S. added in that caveat about allies and friends being exempted. [That exemption] has been extended to more and more countries and if its also extended to China it will look like it was a bit of saber-rattling to bring China to the table and that seems to have succeeded," Edward Park, a director at asset manager Brooks Macdonald, said.

Some analysts see stock swings as a consequence of investor pessimism and broadly healthy equity-market performance.

"The market seemed to be assuming the worst-case scenario. That they responded this way may reflect overall positioning because we've had quite a good run and that correction was a bit stronger than expected," said Geoffrey Yu, head of the U.K. investment office at UBS Wealth Management. "That volatility is going to continue due to [central bank] renormalization."

Rising inflation has prompted growing speculation about the Federal Reserve's interest-rate policy, with some analysts suggesting the central bank will increase rates four times in 2018 instead of the three times it has penciled in.

"If the Fed does change to four hikes this year, it's not that much of a concern unless it's in reaction to much higher inflation. A rapid rate hike cycle would concern investors," Brooks Macdonald's Mr. Park said.

Higher stock valuations may continue to drive volatility, according to Shane Oliver, head of investment strategy and chief economist at AMP Capital in Sydney. "You don't have a valuation buffer as you had in the past," he said.

In Asia, the Shanghai Composite Index closed 1.1% higher and the tech-heavy Shenzhen composite index rose 2.2%. Taiwan's Taiex climbed 1.4% and Hong Kong's Hang Seng increased by 0.8%.

Japan's Nikkei closed 2.7% higher, clawing back some more of Friday's 4.5% amid easing domestic political concerns. Former finance ministry official Nobuhisa Sagawa told parliament that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe didn't order officials to alter documents in a disputed sale of government land.

The New York Times

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/26/us/politics/census-citizenship-question-trump.html

Despite Concerns, Census Will Ask Respondents If They Are U.S. Citizens

By Emily Baumgaertner, 3/26/18

WASHINGTON — The 2020 census will ask respondents whether they are United States citizens, the Commerce Department announced Monday night, agreeing to a Trump administration request with highly charged political and social implications that many officials feared would result in a substantial undercount.

In a statement released Monday, the Commerce Department, which oversees the Census Bureau, said Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had "determined that reinstatement of a citizenship question on the 2020 decennial census questionnaire is necessary to provide complete and accurate census block level data," allowing the department to accurately measure the portion of the population eligible to vote.

But his decision immediately invited a legal challenge: Xavier Becerra, California's attorney general, plans to sue the Trump administration over the decision, a spokeswoman for Mr. Becerra said late Monday.

Critics of the change and experts in the Census Bureau itself have said that, amid a fiery immigration debate, the inclusion of a citizenship question could prompt immigrants who are in the country illegally not to respond. That would result in a severe undercount of the population — and, in turn, faulty data for government agencies and outside groups that rely on the census. The effects would also bleed into the redistricting of the House and state legislatures in the next decade.

The Justice Department had requested the change in December, arguing that asking participants about their citizenship status in the decennial census would help enforce Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which aims to prevent voting rights violations.

"The Justice Department is committed to free and fair elections for all Americans, and has sought reinstatement of the citizenship question on the census to fulfill that commitment," a Justice Department spokesman, Devin M. O'Malley, told The New York Times in February.

In a memorandum explaining his decision, Mr. Ross wrote that he had considered opponents' arguments about the potential to discourage responses.

"I find that the need for accurate citizenship data and the limited burden that the reinstatement of the citizenship question would impose outweigh fears about a potentially lower response rate," he wrote.

The decennial census generally included a citizenship inquiry for more than 100 years through 1950, according to the Commerce Department. And other, smaller population surveys, such as the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey, continue to ask respondents about it.

But critics dismissed administration officials' reassurances.

"The census numbers provide the backbone for planning how our communities can grow and thrive in the coming decade," said Mr. Becerra. "What the Trump administration is requesting is not just alarming, it is an unconstitutional attempt to discourage an accurate census count."

Others argued that an undercount in regions with high immigrant populations would lead not only to unreliable data but also to unfair redistricting, to the benefit of Republicans.

"Adding this question will result in a bad census — deeply flawed population data that will skew public and private sector decisions to ensure equal representation, allocate government resources and anticipate economic growth opportunities — for the next 10 years," Vanita Gupta, the chief executive of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and a deputy attorney general in the Obama administration, said in a statement Monday night. "The stakes are too high to allow this. We urge Congress to overturn this error in judgment."

The announcement of the citizenship question comes at a troublesome time for the Census Bureau: Its top two positions have interim occupants, and it has been forced to skip two of its three trial runs for the 2020 census because of funding shortfalls. If response rates for the census are low, critics worry that the bureau may be unable to adjust the data or deploy enough census takers to low-response communities.

The bureau is required to submit a final list of the 2020 census questions to Congress by the end of March.

TRUMP TWEETS

Donald J. Trump Retweeted

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · Mar 25

Because of the $700 & $716 Billion Dollars gotten to rebuild our Military, many jobs are created and our Military is again rich. Building a great Border Wall, with drugs (poison) and enemy combatants pouring into our Country, is all about National Defense. Build WALL through M!

28K 27K 98K

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 14h

Trade talks going on with numerous countries that, for many years, have not treated the United States fairly. In the end, all will be happy!

14K 16K 73K

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 18h

Great news! #MAGA

CNBC Now @CNBCnow

BREAKING: Dow posts third best one-day point gain ever cnb.cx/2G6ga8Y

15K 13K 54K