Message

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To: erin@danaperino.com
Subject: FW: Obama EPA Heads Spent Nearly $1 Million On Foreign Trips

FYI…

Obama EPA Heads Spent Nearly $1 Million On Foreign Trips
Michael Bastasch
The Daily Caller
March 21, 2018
http://dailycaller.com/2018/03/21/obama-epa-heads-foreign-travel-expense/

Two Obama administration Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chiefs racked up nearly $1 million tab for overseas trips, The Daily Caller News Foundation has learned.

Former EPA Administrators Gina McCarthy and Lisa Jackson spent at least $961,847 on foreign travel over six years, according to figures obtained by TheDCNF. McCarthy's overseas trips cost taxpayers $629,736 and Jackson's cost $332,111.

Recent media coverage has focused on current EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's travel, including a new Washington Post report that Pruitt's July trip to Italy for the G7 summit cost upwards of $120,000. The Post's story claims Pruitt's trip cost nearly $90,000, "including $36,000 for use of a military jet to catch a flight in New York and a $7,000 premium-class ticket for Pruitt on the transatlantic flight." Adding the $30,000 security detail bumped the cost to around $120,000.

On the other hand, the Washington Examiner reported Pruitt's Italy trip only cost $84,000, including the costs of his security detail. It's not really clear why the two estimates differ.

Virtually no attention has been paid to travel of past EPA administrators. Pruitt's security costs may be higher, which EPA attributes to increased threats against their chief. However, former President Barack Obama's administration also racked up costly foreign travel tabs.

For example, Jackson's 2011 trip to China cost taxpayers $155,763, which includes the cost of her security detail. Jackson left EPA in 2013 amid questions over her use of a secret email account to conduct federal business. Records obtained by TheDCNF show she made at least four foreign trips during her tenure.

McCarthy, who served from 2013 to early 2017, took at least 10 foreign trips while heading EPA. The most expensive for which TheDCNF obtained figures was a 2015 trip to Dubai. McCarthy's trip to Dubai cost taxpayers $90,367, including the cost of her security detail, according to the figures.

For months, reports have focused on Trump administration officials' travel. Former Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price resigned after it came to light he spent $400,000 on non-commercial flights in just a couple of months in 2017.

Reporters and environmental activists have since gone after travel by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Pruitt, seeking to tie them to Price's scandal. Media oversight can shed light on lavish spending, yet reporters have largely ignored Obama administration travel.

TheDCNF previously found that former Obama administration Interior secretaries spent nearly $1 million on non-commercial flights, including chartered jets. It turns out, Zinke had actually spent less than his immediate predecessors on non-commercial flights.

However, Pruitt came under scrutiny for his frequent flying on first class. Pruitt has since said he would fly coach, and EPA officials noted Pruitt flew first class because of security concerns. Pruitt's first-class travel was approved by career officials.

Documents given to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform by EPA officials show Pruitt spent $105,000 on first class, The Daily Beast reported. Chairman Trey Gowdy requested Pruitt's travel information from EPA in February.

EPA told Gowdy that Pruitt's travel was approved "on an individualized basis," and that his security team "identified specific, ongoing threats associated with the administration administrator's air travel and, therefore, shifted his class based on security protocols that require him to be near the front of the plane."

So far, Pruitt has only taken two foreign trips, the costs of which are in line with past administrators, an EPA spokesman said.

"The double-standard couldn't be more clear: under Barack Obama's EPA the media chose not to report on expenditures to protect the EPA Administrator for international travel or the costs of their trips, but under the Trump Administration the costs to protect our government officials is somehow scandalous," EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox told TheDCNF.

Listed below are all the foreign trips McCarthy and Jackson took while heading EPA.

McCarthy 2016 trips (includes security costs):

- Ghana — $68,382
- Peru — $45,139
- Tokyo — $74,737

McCarthy 2015 trips:

- Paris — $41,320
- Dubai — $90,367
- Tokyo — $67,702
- Italy — $56,192

McCarthy 2014 trips:

- Vancouver — $62,246
- Vietnam — $68,267

McCarthy 2013 trips:

- China — $55,384

Jackson 2012 trips:

- Israel — $64,963

Jackson 2011 trips:

- Rio De Janeiro — $59,950
- Montreal — $51,435
- China — $155,763

Obama's EPA appointees spent as much, or more, on travel than Trump's Pruitt, data show
Fox News
March 22, 2018
http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/03/22/obamas-epa-appointees-spent-as-much-or-more-on-travel-than-trumps-pruitt-data-show.html

Former Obama administration EPA directors spent as much or even more on international travel than the agency's current chief, Scott Pruitt, who is facing widespread criticism for wasteful spending.

The Trump appointee to the Environmental Protection Agency has gotten in hot water after revelations that taxpayers had to foot the bill for Pruitt's $120,000 trip to Italy last summer to attend a meeting of G-7 ministers and a private tour of the Vatican.

Nearly $90,000 was spent on food, hotels, commercial airfare and a military jet used by the EPA director and nine other members of the agency's staff. More than $30,000 was spent on providing a security detail during the trip.

Around $40,000 in total was also spent for a four-day trip to Morocco in December, where Pruitt promoted American natural gas exports.

But as the media continue to criticize Pruitt and his "luxury" international travel, his expenses are nothing out of the ordinary – or even lower – compared to previous EPA directors under the Obama administration, who avoided the criticism.

"The double standard couldn't be more clear: Under Barack Obama's EPA the media chose not to report on expenditures to protect the EPA administrator for international travel or the costs of their trips," Jahan Wilcox, an EPA spokesman, told the Washington Free Beacon.

"But under the Trump administration the costs to protect our government officials is somehow scandalous."

"The double standard couldn't be more clear: Under Barack Obama's EPA the media chose not to report on expenditures ... But under the Trump administration the costs to protect our government officials is somehow scandalous." - Jahan Wilcox, EPA spokesman

Lisa Jackson, who was Obama's EPA director between 2009 and 2013, spent more than $332,000 on airfare and security for four international trips, on average $83,000 per trip, according to documents obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

She spent $64,963 for trips to Tel Aviv; $59,950 to Rio de Janeiro; $51,436 to Montreal; and $155,764 to Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai.

Gina McCarthy, the agency's director between 2013 and 2017, embarked on 10 international trips, spending nearly $630,000 on airfare and security, on average $63,000 per trip.

The documents revealed costs for McCarthy's journeys to Ghana ($68,382), Peru ($45,140), Tokyo ($74,738), Paris ($41,321), Dubai ($90,368), Tokyo ($67,703), Florence ($56,193), Vancouver ($62,247), Vietnam ($68,268), and Beijing ($55,385).

The figures for previous EPA officials also don't reflect the full picture – the cost of providing security for Pruitt is significantly higher as he was subjected to a number of credible threats of violence, including death threats, after he took office.

Authorities determined that the threats were real and the EPA inspector general's office recommended 24/7 security for the director, costing taxpayers roughly $2 million a year, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Anybody Recall The Media Looking At Gina McCarthy's Travel Expenses?
Hot Air
Jazz Shaw
March 21, 2018
https://hotair.com/archives/2018/03/21/anybody-recall-media-looking-gina-mccarthys-travel-expenses/https://hotair.com/archives/2018/03/21/anybody-recall-media-looking-gina-mccarthys-travel-expenses/

The media has certainly been interested in the travel costs associated with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, his staff and security team. Just yesterday the Washington Post ran a breathless article titled, Travel costs for EPA chief's security detail topped $30,000 on Italy trip. There's nothing wrong with the media keeping tabs on expenditures by government officials, of course. We want someone looking out for the taxpayer's dime. Of course, we would expect that the coverage be somewhat fair and balanced.

In the WaPo article, they made the "Italy trip" sound like some sort of sightseeing tour. In reality, Pruitt and his staff were attending the G7 summit, but did visit the Vatican, which the Washington Post found absolutely scandalous. But still, the cost of such things should be made available to the public, right?

Oddly enough, though, it wasn't that long ago that somebody else held the same position as Pruitt. (A couple of somebodys actually.) I don't seem to recall this level of interest, even though Gina McCarthy and Lisa Jackson both did quite a bit of globetrotting on the taxpayer's dime. Let's take a short trip down memory lane and see how the two administrations stack up, shall we?

In 2017, Scott Pruitt and his security detail went on two overseas trips. On the G7 trip, they spent $84,000. On a separate trip to Morocco they spent $40,000. Whether or not that bill for two trips all year is excessive can remain in the eye of the beholder. But before you decide, let's first look at how Gina McCarthy and her security detail did during the Obama administration.

In 2016, Team McCarthy made three trips spending the following amounts:
$68,382 to travel to Ghana
$45,139 to travel to Peru
$74,737 to travel to Tokyo

They were a bit more busy in 2015 it seems. McCarthy and the security team racked up the following bills:

$41,320 to travel to Paris
$90,367 to travel to Dubai
$67,702 to travel to Tokyo
$56,192 to travel to Italy

We need to pause and include a side note about that last entry. When McCarthy went on her own "Italy trip" where do you think she visited? Oh, that's right.. it was the Vatican. Of course she was there to "discuss climate change" so I'm sure everyone's cool with that.

Moving on, Gina McCarthy and her security detail hit the road a bit in 2014 as well.
$62,246 to travel to Vancouver (Seriously? It costs that much to go to Canada?)
$68,267 to travel to Vietnam

McCarthy and company only took one trip in 2013, spending $55,384 to travel to China.

Before McCarthy there was Lisa Jackson who also answered the beckoning call of the road on occasion. Let's see how she and her security detail did.

2012: $64,963 to travel to Israel.
2011: $59,950 to travel to Rio De Janeiro.
2011: $51,435 to travel to Montreal.
2011: $155,763 to travel to China. (No, that wasn't a typo. That was more than $155K for a single trip.)

Scouring the pages of the usual mainstream media outlets, I'm simply failing to find any sort of outraged pieces about how much all those trips cost or asking why there was a need for security details to accompany the EPA chiefs. But ever since Donald Trump came to town it appears to be a subject of keen interest. It almost seems as if there's some deeper, hidden meaning here but I just can't put my finger on it.

Reached for comment on these figures and the apparent disparity in media coverage, the EPA offered this:

The double-standard couldn't be more clear: under Barack Obama's EPA the media chose not to report on expenditures to protect the EPA Administrator for international travel or the costs of their trips, but under the Trump Administration the costs to protect our government officials is somehow scandalous. – EPA spokesman, Jahan Wilcox

Funny old world, isn't it?

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