Message

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Sent: 3/22/2018 2:40:46 PM
To: kfry@oklahoman.com; Justin Wingerter [JWingerter@oklahoman.com]
CC: Ferguson, Lincoln [ferguson.lincoln@epa.gov]
Subject: Obama's EPA appointees spent as much, or more, on travel than Trump's Pruitt, data show

Obama's EPA appointees spent as much, or more, on travel than Trump's Pruitt, data show
Fox News
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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."

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.

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