Message

From: Stoker, Michael B. [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DCB64B4E7EDF48AABE8EF43996A4652E-STOKER, MIC]
Sent: 10/15/2019 2:49:55 PM
To: Hage, Christopher [hage.christopher@epa.gov]; Munoz, Charles [munoz.charles@epa.gov]
Subject: Fwd: NYT request re: EPA/California

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Best regards,
Mike Stoker
Southwest Region Administrator US-EPA
Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Abboud, Michael" <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
> **Date:** October 15, 2019 at 7:25:40 AM PDT
> **To:** "Stoker, Michael B." <stoker.michael@epa.gov>, "Munoz, Charles" <munoz.charles@epa.gov>
> **Cc:** "Benevento, Douglas" <benevento.douglas@epa.gov>, "Jackson, Ryan" <jackson.ryan@epa.gov>, "Woods, Andrea" <Woods.Andrea@epa.gov>, "Beach, Christopher" <beach.christopher@epa.gov>, "Block, Molly" <block.molly@epa.gov>, "McFaul, Jessica" <mcfaul.jessica@epa.gov>, "Schiermeyer, Corry" <schiermeyer.corry@epa.gov>
> **Subject: FW: NYT request re: EPA/California**
>
> Mike –
>
> **Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)**
>
> Michael Abboud
> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
> Office of Public Affairs
> M: 202-578-9013
>
> **From:** Friedman, Lisa <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>
> **Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2019 9:15 AM
> **To:** Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
> **Cc:** Press <Press@epa.gov>
> **Subject:** Re: NYT request re: EPA/California
>
> Hi! Sorry I don't understand the second sentence. If you're asking me who is making these claims - the story will cite multiple sources who have attended all-hands meetings at Region 9 regarding Mr. Wheeler's letter. Does that help?
>
> On Tue, Oct 15, 2019 at 9:13 AM Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov> wrote:
>
> > Hey Lisa, will get you a statement soon. What exactly from Region 9 to make these claims?

From: Friedman, Lisa <lisa.friedman@nytimes.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2019 8:39 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>; Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>
Subject: NYT request re: EPA/California

Hi Michael -

We are running a story later today that will say that EPA's own leadership in California has been distancing itself from and disavowing Mr. Wheeler's accusations against the state - in particular the Oct. 2 Notice of Violation to San Francisco and the Sept. 26 letter regarding Clean Water Act violations. We will further report that Region 9 leadership has informed staff that the regional office had nothing to do with these letters and are internally referring to them as purely political.

I wasn't sure whether to go to you or Region 9 press office but given the time difference I thought I'd start with you. Questions are in bold. Thanks so much for your assistance.

I'd like to get EPA's comment on Region 9's actions. **Doesn't the acknowledgement of EPA's own officials in California that the letters are political undermine Mr. Wheeler's insistence that this is purely about bringing California into environmental compliance?**

The story will also report that in cases where a state is exhibiting severe problems there are typically months or even years of letters/reviews/warnings at the regional level before something of such magnitude might reach the administrator. Yet I see that California has gotten pretty satisfactory marks in its State Review Framework reports on a number of levels. **Can you point me to some background in which EPA has previously been unsuccessful in getting California to address violations or other problems?** In addition, several other states have more compliance violations than the ones Mr. Wheeler noted in his letter. **Can you tell me whether at this point any of those states or any others have received similar warning letters from EPA?**

Finally, the story will report that the data in the CWA letter was compiled by a small group of political appointees in Washington, primarily in the Office of Water, and that the people who would typically run such numbers in the office of compliance were not looped in. **Can you address that and explain why this effort was conducted primarily by political staff?**

Obviously if you feel any of this is inaccurate let's discuss. If I can get some comments addressing this stuff by 2 p.m. I'd be appreciative. Thanks so much and as always my cell is Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP) Best

Lisa

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Lisa Friedman

Reporter, New York Times

(202) 862-0306 office

Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

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