

June 19, 2018

RE: Please Oppose the Appointment of Mary Neumayr to the Council on Environmental Quality

Dear Senator:

We are writing to express our opposition to the nomination of Mary Neumayr for chairwoman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Her appointment would be counter to the mission of CEQ and perpetuate the trend of environmental attacks backed by the Trump administration. Ms. Neumayr's appointment would further weaken our most fundamental environmental laws. With her at the helm, CEQ would serve the anti-environmental agenda of President Trump, rather than promoting environmental quality, as it is directed to do. Ms. Neumayr and other anti-environmentalists have no place in environmental protection entities. Please oppose Ms. Neumayr's appointment to CEQ.

Ms. Neumayr has spent much of her career in furtherance of efforts to weaken or eliminate our fundamental environmental safeguards. For eight years, she served as Deputy Counsel for the House Energy and Commerce Committee from 2009-2017. During her years in the majority office, she was likely instrumental in advancing dozens, if not nearly one hundred bills, through the Committee process and on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. As just one of many examples, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed legislation like the Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2016 (H.R. 4775). Had it been enacted into law, it would have worsened air quality across the country, leading to increased instances of heart and lung conditions and even premature death, and delayed the deadline to meet Clean Air Act standards, ensuring that polluters could continue to dirty our air for years to come. The Ozone Standards Implementation Act passed the House in the 114th Congress. If confirmed as chairwoman of CEQ, Ms. Neumayr would be in a prime position to continue to undermine our air, endangering human health and the environment.

In addition to the Clean Air Act, during Ms. Neumayr's tenure, the the Energy and Commerce Committee enabled attacks on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Committee facilitated Keystone XL legislation that bypassed both NEPA and the ESA, prohibiting further evaluation of potential environmental damage. Also during Ms. Neumayr's tenure, Republicans sought to circumvent the ESA through legislation to block resources for the endangered northern long-eared bat and force the delisting of the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes and Yellowstone National Park. There is no place at an environmental office for a person who shows blatant disregard for our most bedrock environmental statutes.

The Council on Environmental Quality is tasked with ensuring that federal agencies meet their obligations under environmental statutes. While she may certainly appear to be a far more reasonable choice compared to President Trump's earlier nominee, Kathleen Hartnett White, that is not a high bar to clear for such an important position. There are many questions about Ms. Neumayr's record and views on the environment that must be answered before her confirmation, and until that record becomes clear, we urge you to oppose Ms. Neumayr's nomination.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity
[GROUPS]