



August 15, 2018

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Re: EPA's Proposed Rule: "Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science." Docket No. EPA-HQ-OA-2018-0259

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler,

On behalf of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) I am writing in opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rule "Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science."

The Association of Research Libraries, a collective of major research libraries in Canada and the US, advances research, learning, and scholarly communication. The Association fosters the open exchange of ideas and expertise, promotes equity and diversity, and pursues advocacy and public policy efforts that reflect the values of the library, scholarly, and higher education communities. ARL forges partnerships and catalyzes the collective efforts of research libraries to enable knowledge creation and to achieve enduring and barrier-free access to information.

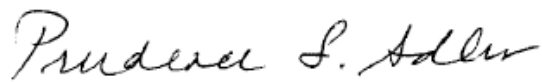
Sound and responsible policymaking relies on several factors, such as the use of the best available scientific data, ethical considerations and strong privacy protections for the data of human subject participants. The EPA's proposed regulation would ignore both of these long accepted practices and that could, unfortunately, lead to significantly inaccurate and biased policies. The importance of ensuring privacy protections cannot be overstated. These are grounded in law, ethics and confidentiality agreements with the human subject participants. If EPA discounts data that cannot be made publicly available, then it limits the universe of data and research studies available to develop well-supported and accurate rules and policymaking activities. As such, EPA would be unable to achieve its mission to preserve public health and the nation's air, waterways and land.

A recently released consensus report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, "Open Science by Design, Realizing a Vision for 21st Century Research," provides an excellent review of the life cycle of research from ideation to publication to preservation and

importantly, validation by others of the research underway. Peer review and validation of research findings are critical components of the research process. EPA's proposed rule would undermine long standing scientific practices and the public's ability to trust both the research that EPA conducts as well as the policies that flow from that research.

ARL is a strong proponent of improving the transparency of science and enhanced access to data but ARL cannot support any effort that limits the use of the best available science in rulemaking, indeed, in all of EPA's policy activities. ARL requests that EPA withdraw this proposed rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Prudence S. Adler".

Prudence S. Adler
Associate Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries