

Message

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I've given a lot of speeches during my time here as the Administrator and this one is the hardest. Partly because its two years too soon. Mostly because I'm going to miss seeing all of you regularly.

When you have been in my office, you may have noticed on the wall a small print with a quote from Abraham Lincoln. It has hung in every office I have had since I started working at the EPA in 1991. It has guided my career and my personal life. It reads as follows:

I do the very best I know how; the very best I can: and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out alright, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.

I think those words are more appropriate now than they have ever been.

I have said this many times, we, collectively as a group, accomplished a lot. More in the past four years than in any four year period of this Agency.

- Air pollution down 7%
- Water quality at record levels and will continue to improve thanks to the Lead and Cooper rule.
- 82 Superfund sites cleaned up.
- The first ten TSCA chemicals done.
- The Science Transparency and Cost Benefit rules done.
- An incredible response across the Agency to the Covid pandemic
- The list goes on.....

Nobody can take these accomplishments away from us. We have fulfilled our mission to protect public health and the environment. The press may not acknowledge our accomplishments. Environmental groups will say we didn't do enough, or worse. The Democrats will demagogue this for fundraising and election purposes.

But we know what we have done. We know we made the best decisions for the American public, and there are literally millions of Americans who appreciate us for what we have accomplished. At least 74 million of them.

A new team will be coming in starting next week. They will undoubtedly undo some, if not many of the things we have done. Or they will at least try to. But they will not be as talented and dedicated and unified as the people in this room today.

We are a team today and we will be a team for the rest of our careers and the rest of our lives. And it is incumbent on all of us to continue to tell our story everywhere we go and to everyone who will listen to us. We must all defend our record together.

Like myself, you all came here to make a difference, to be part of something greater. And we have all made sacrifices to be here. None more so than the last week.

As we leave here, we leave a building, but we don't leave our EPA family. That travels with us. True, like every family we have our crazy uncle and our sketchy cousin. You know who you are. But we are a

family. There will be reunions, I hope we get together at least once a year with everyone. I know many of you will see each other regularly, and I hope you make it a point of seeing me. There are real friendships that have been born here that will last a lifetime.

Many of you have heard me say that I value loyalty and I have always strived to be loyal. I have a saying that started when I was Staff Director at EPW. Once you work for me, you always work for me. And that goes for everyone here. But loyalty, true loyalty is a two way street. And anytime you need me, I pledge to be there for you.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, General Washington held a dinner with all of his officers at the Fraunces Tavern in New York.

They drank 54 bottles of madeira wine, 60 bottles of Bordeaux wine, 8 bottles of old stock whiskey, 22 bottles of porter ale, 8 bottles of hard cider, 12 jugs of beer and 7 large bowls of punch. There were only 54 of them

He ended the dinner with the following toast:

“With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable.”