

September 24, 2020

Dr. Neil Jacobs  
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction  
Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW, Rm. 5128  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Jacobs:

We are writing, again, to express our dismay at the recent hire of Dr. Ryan Maue as the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chief Scientist. Dr. Maue recently attacked California Governor Gavin Newsom (in a now deleted tweet) as “us(ing) the devastating California fires as an opportunity to score political points” when Gov. Newsom correctly identified climate change as increasing the frequency and destruction of the wildfires.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Maue has referred to scientists who provide evidence and facts acknowledging the dangers of climate change to public health as “alarmists.” Dr. Maue attempts to create confusion where general scientific consensus already exists on the state of the climate by regularly contributing to climate denial blogs.

His work while previously serving as an adjunct associate at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank founded by wealthy businessman Charles Koch, who made his fortune in the fossil fuel industry, is similarly concerning. These associations are in direct conflict with the fundamental interests of NOAA and public confidence in government-published climate science.

In 2018, Dr. Maue co-authored a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed rejecting former NASA climate scientist James Hansen’s valid warnings in 1988 on climate change by writing, in part: “On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mr. Hansen’s galvanizing testimony, it’s time to acknowledge that the rapid warming he predicted isn’t happening.” His willful dismissal of the facts that the average global temperature has increased more than 1°C since 1880 and that the rate has been rapidly increasing since 1981 threatens public health and safety. A track record such as Dr. Maue’s precludes him from effectively executing one of the primary responsibilities of NOAA’s Chief Scientist – ensuring scientific integrity.

NOAA’s Acting Chief Scientist, Craig McLean, came to the defense of good science in the face of political interference and leveraged his position to investigate the events surrounding the Hurricane Dorian forecast and recommendations made by the Birmingham Weather Forecast Office. That role would now fall to Dr. Maue, who has no previous government experience and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/21/noaa-chief-scientist-maue/>

