

Bill Nelson

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To protect scientific integrity in Federal research and policymaking, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. NELSON introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on _____

+ Peters
Schatz
Blumenthal
Udall
Coons
Gillibrand
Merkley
Van Hollen
Whitehouse
Baldwin
Reed
Heinrich
Feinstein
Warren
Hassan
Stabenow
Markey
Booker
Cantwell
Warner
Shahen
Franken
Cardin
Murray
Carper
Cortez-Masto

A BILL

To protect scientific integrity in Federal research and
policymaking, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the "Scientific Integrity
5 Act".

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF FEDERAL AGENCY.**

7 In this Act, the term "Federal agency" has the mean-
8 ing given the term "agency" in section 551(1) of title 5,
9 United States Code.

1 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY.**

2 It is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) independent, impartial science and the sci-
4 entific process should inform and guide public policy
5 decisions on a wide range of issues, including im-
6 provement of public health, protection of the envi-
7 ronment, and protection of national security;

8 (2) the public must be able to trust the science
9 and scientific process informing public policy deci-
10 sions;

11 (3) science, the scientific process, and the com-
12 munication of science should be free from political,
13 ideological, or financial influence; and

14 (4) policies and procedures that ensure the reli-
15 able conduct and communication of publicly funded
16 science are critical to ensuring public trust.

17 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS.**

18 Except as provided in section 552(b) of title 5,
19 United States Code, the head of each Federal agency that
20 funds or conducts scientific research shall—

21 (1) promote and maximize the communication
22 and open exchange of data and findings to other
23 agencies, policymakers, and the public of research
24 conducted by a scientist employed or contracted by
25 a Federal agency that funds or conducts scientific
26 research; and

1 (2) prevent the intentional or unintentional sup-
2 pression or distortion of the data and findings de-
3 scribed in paragraph (1).

4 **SEC. 5. PRINCIPLES.**

5 Section 1009(a) of the America COMPETES Act (42
6 U.S.C. 6620(a)) is amended to read as follows:

7 “(a) PRINCIPLES.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days
9 after the date of enactment of the Scientific Integ-
10 rity Act, the Director of the Office of Science and
11 Technology Policy, in consultation with the head of
12 each Federal agency that funds or conducts sci-
13 entific research, shall develop and issue an over-
14 arching set of principles—

15 “(A) to ensure the communication and
16 open exchange of data and findings to other
17 agencies, policymakers, and the public of re-
18 search conducted by a scientist employed or
19 contracted by a Federal agency that funds or
20 conducts scientific research; and

21 “(B) to prevent the intentional or uninten-
22 tional suppression or distortion of the data or
23 findings described in subparagraph (A).

1 “(2) EXCHANGE OF DATA AND FINDINGS.—In
2 order to promote the sharing of data and findings,
3 as appropriate, the principles shall—

4 “(A) encourage the open exchange of data
5 and findings of research undertaken by a sci-
6 entist employed or contracted by a Federal
7 agency that funds or conducts scientific re-
8 search;

9 “(B) be consistent with existing Federal
10 laws, including chapter 18 of title 35, United
11 States Code (commonly known as the ‘Bayh-
12 Dole Act’); and

13 “(C) take into consideration the policies of
14 peer-reviewed scientific journals in which Fed-
15 eral scientists may currently publish findings.”.

16 **SEC. 6. SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICIES.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1009 of the America
18 COMPETES Act (42 U.S.C. 6620) is amended by strik-
19 ing subsection (b) and inserting the following:

20 “(b) SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICIES.—Not later
21 than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Scientific
22 Integrity Act, the head of each Federal agency that funds
23 or conducts scientific research shall—

24 “(1) develop and enforce a scientific integrity
25 policy, including procedures, regarding the release of

1 data and findings to other agencies, policymakers,
2 and the public of research conducted by a scientist
3 employed or contracted by that Federal agency; and

4 “(2) submit the scientific integrity policy to the
5 Director of the Office of Science and Technology
6 Policy and Congress.

7 “(c) REQUIREMENTS.—A scientific integrity policy
8 under subsection (b) shall—

9 “(1) be consistent with the principles estab-
10 lished under subsection (a);

11 “(2) specifically address what is and what is
12 not permitted or recommended under that policy, in-
13 cluding procedures;

14 “(3) be specifically designed for the Federal
15 agency;

16 “(4) be applied uniformly throughout the Fed-
17 eral agency; and

18 “(5) be widely communicated and readily acces-
19 sible to the public and all employees and contractors
20 of the Federal agency.

21 “(d) CONTENTS.—At a minimum, each scientific in-
22 tegrity policy under subsection (b) shall ensure that—

23 “(1) the scientific conclusions and personnel ac-
24 tions regarding scientists are not made based on po-
25 litical considerations;

1 “(2) the selection and retention of candidates
2 for science and technology positions in the Federal
3 agency are based primarily on the candidate’s exper-
4 tise, scientific credentials, experience, and integrity;

5 “(3) scientists adhere to the highest ethical
6 standards of honesty and professionalism in con-
7 ducting their research and disseminating their find-
8 ings;

9 “(4) the appropriate rules, procedures, and
10 safeguards are in place to ensure the integrity of the
11 scientific process within the Federal agency, includ-
12 ing procedures;

13 “(A) that allow for a scientist to review
14 public release of materials that cite work from
15 that scientist or otherwise claim to represent
16 the scientist’s scientific opinion; and

17 “(B) to identify, evaluate the merits of,
18 and address instances in which the scientific
19 process or the integrity of scientific and techno-
20 logical information may be compromised;

21 “(5) scientific or technological information con-
22 sidered in policy decisions is subject to well-estab-
23 lished scientific processes, including peer review
24 where appropriate;

1 “(6) except as provided in section 552(b) of
2 title 5, United States Code, each Federal agency
3 makes publicly available scientific or technological
4 findings that are considered or relied upon in policy
5 decisions and regulatory proposals;

6 “(7) technical staff are able to ensure the tech-
7 nical content of scientific documents, reports, press
8 releases, and fact sheets accurately represents the
9 relevant scientific data and conclusions; and

10 “(8) procedures, including any applicable whis-
11 tleblower protections, are in place as are necessary
12 to ensure the integrity of scientific and technological
13 information and processes on which the Federal
14 agency relies in its decision-making or otherwise
15 uses.

16 “(e) APPLICATION.—A scientific integrity policy shall
17 apply to each employee or contractor who conducts, han-
18 dles, communicates, or supervises federally funded sci-
19 entific research for the Federal agency or for a federally
20 funded research and development center sponsored by the
21 Federal agency.

22 “(f) DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY
23 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The head of each Federal
24 agency that funds or conducts scientific research shall—

1 “(1) make the scientific integrity policy avail-
2 able to the public on the Federal agency’s website;

3 “(2) disseminate the scientific integrity policy
4 to each new employee and contractor; and

5 “(3) develop and require training on the sci-
6 entific integrity policy for each employee or con-
7 tractor who conducts, handles, communicates, or su-
8 pervises scientific research for the Federal agency.

9 “(g) DEFINITION OF FEDERAL AGENCY.—In this
10 section, the term ‘Federal agency’ has the meaning given
11 the term ‘agency’ in section 551(1) of title 5, United
12 States Code.”.

13 (b) EXISTING SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICIES.—
14 Notwithstanding section 1009(b) of the America COM-
15 PETES Act (42 U.S.C. 6620(b)), as amended by this Act,
16 a scientific integrity policy that was in effect on the day
17 before the date of enactment of this Act may satisfy the
18 requirements of section 1009 of that Act if the head of
19 a Federal agency that funds or conducts scientific re-
20 search—

21 (1) makes a written determination that the pol-
22 icy satisfies the requirements of that section; and

23 (2) submits the written determination and the
24 policy to the Director of the Office of Science and
25 Technology Policy and Congress.

1 **SEC. 7. NAPA REVIEW.**

2 Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment
3 of this Act, the Director of the Office of Science and Tech-
4 nology Policy shall enter into an agreement with the Na-
5 tional Academy of Public Administration—

6 (1) to study the effectiveness of the scientific
7 integrity policies under section 1009 of the America
8 COMPETES Act (42 U.S.C. 6620), as added by
9 section 6 of this Act—

10 (A) in promoting the communication and
11 open exchange of data and findings to other
12 agencies, policymakers, and the public of re-
13 search conducted by scientists employed or con-
14 tracted by a Federal agency; and

15 (B) in preventing the intentional or unin-
16 tentional suppression or distortion of the data
17 and findings described in subparagraph (A);
18 and

19 (2) to recommend any improvements to the sci-
20 entific integrity policies to achieve the purposes de-
21 scribed in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph
22 (1).