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**Subject:** Federal Insider: Energy Dept. rejects Trump's request to name climate change workers, who remain worried

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## Energy Dept. rejects Trump's request to name climate change workers, who remain worried

By Joe Davidson

President-elect Donald Trump is interviewed Saturday by Chris Wallace of "Fox News Sunday" in Trump Tower in New York. (Richard Drew/AP)

Global warming — ["it's a hoax."](#)

Donald Trump has said that more than once.

So it's understandable that the [request by the president-elect's transition team](#) for the names of individual Energy Department employees and contractors who worked on the issue makes them worry that the trick could be on them.

"There is major concern amongst my members," said Jeff Eagan, president of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) chapter at the department's headquarters building in Washington. He's also a 17-year Energy employee, but was speaking in his union capacity. "I have received lots of calls, emails, messages expressing shock and dismay."

The scientists and their colleagues at Energy know global warming is real. What they don't know is what Trump might do to those whose work has been in line with the science and the Obama administration, which has spoken about "the urgent imperatives of climate change."

Perhaps Trump's crew will do nothing. Trump more recently has said he has an [open mind](#) about global warming, so maybe he's discarding his flat-earth approach to the subject. Nonetheless, the [transition team's request](#) to "provide a list of all Department of Energy employees or contractors who have

attended” certain climate change meetings casts a shroud of apprehension over the workforce. The transition team ignored a request for comment.

*[Scientists are frantically copying U.S. climate data, fearing it might vanish under Trump]*

Given civil service protections, it’s not likely department employees would be fired for working on climate change. There is good reason for concern, however. Trump advisers have urged him to [fire feds faster](#) and Energy staffers know protections for senior executives at the Department of Veterans Affairs have been weakened. But firing isn’t the only way to punish people.

“A greater concern would be that selected employees could be marginalized, i. e., ignored, by new leadership at the Department solely based on unfounded conjecture that those employees cannot be trusted by the new political team,” said John Palguta, a civil service expert with decades of federal government experience. “The consequences for contract employees could be greater if a future decision not to renew a contract is influenced by the same unsupported speculation.”

On the question of providing names, Energy officials resolutely rejected the request, while reassuring workers.

“The Department of Energy received significant feedback from our workforce throughout the department, including the National Labs, following the release of the transition team’s questions. Some of the questions asked left many in our workforce unsettled,” said Eben Burnham-Snyder, a department spokesman. “Our career workforce, including our contractors and employees at our labs, comprise the backbone of DOE (Department of Energy) and the important work our department does to benefit the American people. We are going to respect the professional and scientific integrity and independence of our employees at our labs and across our department.

“We will be forthcoming with all publically-available information with the transition team. **We will not be providing any individual names to the transition team.**” Burnham-Snyder’s email had the last sentence in boldface for emphasis.

That’s the response members of Congress, who were outraged by Trump’s request, wanted.

“I am alarmed by the questionnaire sent by the Trump transition team to the Department of Energy seeking the names of career civil servants who have

worked on climate change policy,” said Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (Md.), the second ranking Democrat in the House. “This raises serious concerns as to the motivation of such a request and raises questions of possible retribution for following President Obama’s policies.”

“This looks like a scare tactic to intimidate federal employees who are simply doing their jobs and following the facts,” added Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (Md.), the top Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. “I am sure there are a lot of career scientists and others who see this as a terrible message of fear and intimidation — ‘either ignore the science or we will come after you.’” Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) did not respond to a request for comment.

The Trump transition team has issued a list of 74 questions for the Energy Department, asking officials there to identify which department employees and contractors have worked on forging an international climate pact as well as domestic efforts to cut the nation's carbon output. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

Trump’s request surprised employee leaders.

NTEU President Tony Reardon said his Energy Department members were “stunned” by the transition team request.

American Federation of Government Employees President J. David Cox Sr., who also represents Energy employees, warned against “a return to the political witch hunts of the 1950s. President-elect Trump must instruct his transition team to cease this profoundly anti-democratic behavior immediately.”

Senior Executives Association President Bill Valdez said the questionnaire only increases the nervousness and apprehension that comes with any change of administrations.

“I can’t recall that I’ve ever seen anything like this,” said Valdez, who worked at Energy for 20 years. “I guess there is a first time for everything.”

This needs to be the last.

1 of 61 Full Screen Autoplay Close Skip Ad X Inside Trump Tower: The epicenter of a presidential transition

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13, 2016 President-elect Donald Trump and Kanye West stand together in the lobby at Trump Tower in New York. Andrew Kelly/Reuters Buy Photo Wait 1 second to continue.

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