

February 10, 2025

To: Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior

cc: Gary Washington, Acting Secretary of Agriculture

Denise L. Carter, Acting Secretary of Education

Lee Zeldin, Environmental Protection Agency  
Laura Gentile, Acting Director, Office of Media Relations and Risk Communications

Dorothy Fink, Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services

Thomas Corry, Acting Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

Pamela Bondi, Attorney General

Wyn Hornbuckle, Deputy Director, Office of Public Affairs

Marco Rubio, Secretary of State

Jenny Weil, External Affairs Officer, Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Dear Secretary Burgum,

As leaders of the Association of Health Care Journalists, Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, National Association of Science Writers and Society of Environmental Journalists, we object strenuously to the removal of public data and information about science, health and the environment from more than a dozen U.S. government websites.

The accurate, timely and transparent communication of scientific, health and environmental information is essential to creating a just, healthy, safe, and prosperous society. Our organizations provide support for thousands of science, health and environmental journalists and communicators who serve the public by reporting on and holding accountable the nation's scientific, health and environmental researchers, institutions and agencies, including those funded by the federal government. This newly censored information has been used every day by journalists and communicators to inform the U.S. public.

The public has a right to access data collected by the U.S. government about issues that affect their health, safety, and livelihoods. U.S. taxpayers paid for and continue to fund the collection and publication of these recently deleted databases and pages at agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Census Bureau, Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency, Food and Drug Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Scientific and Technical Information, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. These information sources keep the public informed.

Our reporting promotes the health and well-being of the public by enabling people to make the best decisions for themselves, their families, and their communities. Our work also upholds the public's right to know how its government operates. Our endeavors rely fundamentally on journalists and communicators having open, direct and unrestricted access to public data and information created and published by the federal government.

We respectfully request that the removed data and information is restored immediately and completely. And we request that no further public data and information, particularly science, health and environmental information, is removed from government websites.

We also request a meeting at your earliest opportunity with our organizational leadership to discuss these issues, including the importance of maintaining public access to these vital data and to the critical work of your agencies.

Best regards,

Robin Lloyd

*President, Council for the Advancement of Science Writing*

Felice J. Freyer

*President, Association of Health Care Journalists*

Gideon Gil

*Vice President, Association of Health Care Journalists*

Sandeep Ravindran

*President, National Association of Science Writers*

Halle Parker

*President, Society for Environmental Journalists*

Tim Wheeler

*Society for Environmental Journalists Freedom of Information Task Force Chair*

Paola Rosa-Aquino

*The Uproot Project Advisory Board Vice Chair*

***The Association of Health Care Journalists works to improve public understanding of health care issues by advancing the quality, accuracy, and visibility of health care journalism. With 1,400 members, AHCJ provides fellowships, workshops, and other training and networking opportunities, as well as advocating for government transparency.***

*The **Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW)** is a 62-year-old non-profit organization that is committed to improving the quantity and quality of science news reaching the public. CASW develops and funds programs to help reporters and writers produce accurate and informative stories about developments in science, technology, medicine and the environment.*

*Founded in 1934 with a mission to fight for the free flow of science news, the **National Association of Science Writers (NASW)** is an organization of 2,800 professional journalists, authors, editors, producers, public information officers, students, and people who write and produce material intended to inform the public about science, health, engineering, and technology.*

*The **Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ)** works to strengthen the quality, reach and viability of journalism that advances public understanding of complex environmental issues. With more than 1,500 members, SEJ supports reporters from all media through training, mentorship, fellowships, grants and other programs, as well as staunchly advocating for freedom of information and the press.*

*The **Uproot Project** is a network with a mission to bring diverse voices to the forefront of environmental and climate journalism. The Uproot Project is open to journalists of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds who share its goal of uplifting and supporting journalists of color who have been underrepresented in the journalism industry for far too long.*