

EPA's Scott Pruitt faces new scandals over ties to lobbyists, spending and foreign trips



Washington, May 4 (RHC)-- In the U.S., Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt is facing a slew of new scandals over ethics violations and his environmental policies.

Earlier this week, it was revealed a lobbyist arranged Pruitt's controversial \$100,000 trip to Morocco last year. The lobbyist, Richard Smotkin, also accompanied Pruitt on the whirlwind trip and organized meetings for Pruitt, including one with the head of Morocco's state-owned phosphate mining company.

The New York Times reports the head of the highly conservative Federalist Society, Leonard Leo, planned Pruitt's separate trip to Italy last summer.

The New York Times is also reporting that lobbyist J. Steven Hart, whose wife rented Pruitt a Washington, D.C., condo for only \$50 a night, asked Pruitt to appoint three people to the EPA's prestigious Science Advisory Board, which is tasked by Congress to evaluate the science used by EPA to craft policy.

Two of Pruitt's top aides have resigned in recent days amid widening scrutiny of the agency. The resigned aides are Pruitt's chief of security, who organized Pruitt's \$3 million security detail, and Albert Kelly, a

former banker who has been banned for life from the financial industry and was in charge of the EPA's Superfund program.

It's also emerged Pruitt tried to set up an office in his hometown of Tulsa with a soundproof booth. Pruitt is already facing a spending violation probe over his decision to install a \$43,000 soundproof booth in his Washington, D.C., office. Amid the inquiries, Pruitt is setting up a legal defense fund.

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