



Institute for
Policy Integrity

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 6, 2023

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NEW GUIDANCE IMPROVES CONSIDERATION OF HEALTH, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS IN REGULATIONS

Long-overdue updates to OMB's Circular A-4 will help ensure that federal agencies use modern techniques to assess regulations

Today, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released updates to Circular A-4, the primary guidance document on federal agencies' economic analyses of regulations. This guidance, which has not been updated since 2003, plays a key role in federal regulatory policy, determining how agencies estimate the costs and benefits of rules.

The new updates modernize several outdated practices, including consideration of benefits that occur in the future or outside the United States; assessment of equity concerns related to the distribution of regulatory impacts; behavioral economics issues; and other matters. The Institute for Policy Integrity has long advocated for some of these updates.

Max Sarinsky, Senior Attorney at the Institute for Policy Integrity at NYU School of Law, issued the following statement:

"White House guidance on cost-benefit analysis has grown stale in several key respects since its last update 20 years ago. Today's update will help ensure that economic analysis applies state-of-the-art approaches to a range of issues, from valuing future impacts to considering distribution and equity. This guidance will enable government agencies to more evenhandedly assess the benefits and costs of proposed regulations. If applied faithfully, it should result in a regulatory system that better serves the public by ensuring that all regulatory impacts—including difficult-to-measure health and environmental effects such as impacts on climate change—receive due consideration."

Sarinsky and others who work on this issue are available for interviews on this topic.

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[The Institute for Policy Integrity](#) at New York University School of Law is a non-partisan think tank dedicated to improving the quality of government decisionmaking. The institute produces original scholarly research in the fields of economics, law, and regulatory policy; and advocates for reform before courts, legislatures, and executive agencies.