



One of the nation's leading climate change scientists is quitting the Agriculture Department in protest over the Trump administration's efforts to bury his groundbreaking study about how rice is losing nutrients because of rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Lewis Ziska, a 62-year-old plant physiologist who's worked at USDA's Agricultural Research Service for more than two decades, told POLITICO he was alarmed when department officials not only questioned the findings of the study — which raised serious concerns for the 600 million people who depend on rice for most of their calories — but also tried to minimize media coverage of the paper, which was published in the journal [Science Advances](#) last year.

“You get the sense that things have changed, that this is not a place for you to be exploring things that don't agree with someone's political views,” Ziska said in a wide-ranging interview. “That's so sad. I can't even begin to tell you how sad that is.”

The departure comes soon after several other government officials resigned from their posts over accusations that the administration is censoring climate science — reports that have raised alarm about scientific integrity in the federal government.

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