

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We are writing to demand clarification on your intended budget and personnel reductions at the Environmental Protection Agency. We collectively represent thousands of the over 15,000 civil servants across the country currently employed at the Environmental Protection Agency, and millions of constituents who rely on the EPA to ensure their water is safe to drink, their air is safe to breathe, and their health is protected. We are outraged at the credible reports suggesting that you and the President have discussed cutting up to 65% of spending at the EPA. This comes after the President said during a February 26th cabinet meeting, “He thinks he’s going to be cutting 65% or so percent of people from Environmental” and had to be corrected by a White House official. This anecdote is another example of the chaotic and unorganized nature of this Administration, and is leaving our civil servants, constituents, and environmental protections in a state of disarray.

The EPA is not just a regulatory body; it is a frontline defender of public health, environmental safety, and economic stability. Its science-driven programs ensure that the water we drink is free from harmful contaminants like PFAS and lead, that the air we breathe is not laced with toxic pollutants, and that hazardous chemicals are controlled before they endanger human health. The EPA holds polluters accountable, cleans up toxic waste left by negligent actors, and safeguards our food from dangerous pesticides. Every community, from urban to rural, industrial to agricultural, depends on the EPA’s expertise to prevent environmental crises before they spiral into public health disasters. Gutting the agency through drastic budget cuts would cripple its ability to respond to emerging threats, dismantle decades of scientific progress, and put millions of lives at risk. At a time when climate change and pollution are intensifying, weakening the EPA by cutting its budget and firing its invaluable civil servants is not just irresponsible. It is a direct threat to the well-being of every American. The value of the work conducted by the civil servants at EPA cannot be overstated, and Americans agree. Recent polling found that 86% of voters oppose attempts to weaken the EPA, including 76% of Trump voters.¹ Significant cuts to this vital agency are in direct opposition to what this country wants.

¹ 2024 Voter Priorities, Seven Letter Insight and Environmental Protection Network, Found at: <https://www.environmentalprotectionnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-Post-Election-Poll-EPN-Questions-Deck.pdf>

In addition to the damage proposed cuts would have on Americans, the current uncertainty and instability poses a direct threat to the integrity of the scientific community, which could reverberate for years to come. Slashing the EPA's funding would cripple its ability to provide essential protections, drive innovations in environmental science, and respond to emerging threats. Beyond the immediate damage, this instability discourages top scientists and experts from joining or remaining at the agency, jeopardizing its ability to safeguard public health and the environment for future generations.

We strongly urge you to faithfully fulfill your duties as Administrator and uphold the mission of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect human health and the environment by maintaining funding and personnel levels at your agency, thereby enabling the EPA to continue its vital work in safeguarding public health and the environment.

Consequently, we respectfully request responses to the following questions clarifying your plans by March 26, 2025:

1. Does the Administration plan to reduce EPA funding or staffing by 65%, as has been reported?
2. If significant funding or staffing cuts are intended, which specific programs, projects, and offices within the agency will be affected by these cuts, and what criteria will be employed to make that determination?
3. How many EPA employees across the country are expected to be fired as a result of these proposed cuts, and what criteria will be used to determine which individuals lose their jobs?
4. What EPA functions are expected to be disrupted due to these budget cuts? Can you guarantee that the disruptions caused by cuts to the EPA budget will not compromise drinking water quality, air quality, or public health?
5. Has EPA conducted a risk assessment to evaluate the short- and long-term risks to the environment, human health, and the economy that would result from these proposed cuts?
6. What is the expected timeline for implementing these budgetary and staffing cuts?

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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