

**July 2025**

**To: Administrator Zeldin,**

**CC: U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Members of Congress**

**Declaration of Dissent**

EPA employees join in solidarity with employees across the federal government in opposing this administration's policies, including those that undermine the EPA mission of protecting human health and the environment. Since the Agency's founding in 1970, EPA has accomplished this mission by leveraging science, funding, and expert staff in service to the American people.

Today, we stand together in dissent against the current administration's focus on harmful deregulation, mischaracterization of previous EPA actions, and disregard for scientific expertise.

Since January 2025, federal workers across the country have been denigrated and dismissed based on false claims of waste, fraud, and abuse. Meanwhile, Americans have witnessed the unraveling of public health and environmental protections in the pursuit of political advantage.

Today, we come directly to you, Administrator Zeldin and our elected officials, with the five concerns outlined below. We expect your deliberate consideration of these concerns and look forward to working with you to restore EPA's credibility as a premier scientific institution.

Communities across America are counting on you to lead EPA in carrying out its mission.

**Our Shared Commitment to Protecting Human Health and the Environment**

Administrator Zeldin, at your Senate confirmation hearing, you committed to leading EPA in its "simple but essential" mission. You expressed gratitude that President-elect Trump had given you the opportunity to "do everything in our power to harness the greatness of American innovation with the greatness of American conservation and environmental stewardship." You acknowledged the realities of climate change, the benefits of clean energy, the economic need for

environmental justice, and the importance of protecting human health through smart regulation. Like you, EPA employees are committed to these principles. We call on you to reaffirm your testimony, honor your oath to the Constitution, and renew your commitment to become the environmental steward the public entrusted you to be.

### **Our Five Primary Concerns**

Under your leadership, Administrator Zeldin, this administration is recklessly undermining the EPA mission including in these five critical areas:

**Undermining public trust.** EPA's non-partisan nature ensures that all Americans—regardless of political affiliation—are served by an agency guided by scientific expertise, professional integrity, and an unwavering commitment to the public good. For over five decades, EPA's strength has come from its commitment to science-based decision-making. However, under this administration, the Agency's communication platforms have been used to promote misinformation and overtly partisan rhetoric. For example, EPA press releases and the "Call it a Comeback" newsletter have referred to EPA grants as “[green slush funds](#)” and praised “[clean coal](#)” as “[beautiful](#).” The Office of the Administrator has used official EPA channels to liken climate science to a [religion](#), issue [attacks against individual members of Congress](#), and criticize former presidents. These communications are partisan and scientifically unsound. The Office of the Administrator may have violated the Hatch Act by using EPA’s official website and social media to promote political initiatives such as [President Trump’s tariffs](#) and the so-called “[Big Beautiful Bill](#).” **This politicized messaging distracts from EPA’s core responsibility: to protect human health and the environment through objective, science-based policy.**

**Ignoring scientific consensus to benefit polluters.** This administration's actions directly contradict EPA's own scientific assessments on human health risks, most notably regarding [asbestos](#), [mercury](#), and [greenhouse gases](#). Health-based regulatory standards are being repealed or reconsidered, including drinking water limits for four [PFAS "forever chemicals"](#) that [cause](#)

cancer. Under your leadership, Administrator Zeldin, EPA is promoting the fossil fuel-powered auto industry while simultaneously stripping away support for cleaner electric vehicles. You are supporting new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), without addressing AI's intense consumption of environmental resources. The decisions of the current administration frequently contradict the peer-reviewed research and recommendations of Agency experts. Such contradiction undermines EPA's reputation as a trusted scientific authority. **Make no mistake: your actions endanger public health and erode scientific progress--not only in America--but around the world.**

**Reversing EPA's progress in America's most vulnerable communities.** Research overwhelmingly shows that the country's most vulnerable communities, including Black communities and other communities of color, poor communities, disabled communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and historically overburdened and underserved rural and urban communities are consistently exposed to disproportionate environmental and climate burdens. EPA's environmental justice program—one that you have effectively dismantled—was addressing this disparity by funding states, cities, and communities all around the country through extensive grant programs and technical assistance. Now these same communities are the ones most at risk for losing federal funding. Since January 2025, EPA has placed the vast majority of environmental justice staff on administrative leave, canceled billions of grant dollars to communities, and removed a valuable mapping analysis tool that enabled EPA and others to work towards environmental equity. **Canceling environmental justice programs is not cutting waste; it is failing to serve the American people.**

**Dismantling the Office of Research and Development.** EPA's research provides the scientific basis for its rulemaking, stakeholder needs, and other key decisions. U.S. Law (42 U.S.C. § 4363) states that the EPA Administrator *shall* "establish a separately identified program of continuing, long-term environmental research and development," which is currently led by the

Office of Research and Development, or ORD. Your administration has proposed a reorganization that moves EPA's foundational research to the Administrator's Office and reassigns ORD's research staff to the program offices. A move that places ORD scientists in regulatory program offices will make EPA science more vulnerable to political interference. In addition, the gutting of staff and science and your proposed budget cuts for the coming year will leave ORD unable to meet the science needs of the EPA and its partners and will threaten the health of all Americans.

**Promoting a culture of fear, forcing staff to choose between their livelihood and well-being.**

OMB Director Russell Vought has stated that he wants EPA employees to be in a constant state of trauma and unable to do their jobs: "When they wake up in the morning, we want them to not want to go to work because they are increasingly viewed as the villains. We want their funding to be shut down so that the EPA can't do all of the rules against our energy industry [...] We want to put them in trauma." Administrator Zeldin, you have done your best to ensure that employees have no recourse against these assaults by nullifying bargaining agreements and refusing to negotiate. In addition, your administration has fired or forced onto administrative leave several categories of employees, including those responsible for environmental justice and those managing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives. Your administration has also targeted probationary employees, including a range of students and recent graduates, whom U.S. District Judge William Alsup has called "the lifeblood of [the] government." Since January 2025, your administration has offered multiple rounds of resignation and retirement options. Of the employees who accepted your contractual agreements, few accepted without extenuating circumstances, such as immediate financial concern, fear of their position being eliminated, or concerns about changes to their retirement, among others.

**Delivering on your duty to EPA and the public**

Your decisions and actions will reverberate for generations to come. EPA under your leadership

will not protect communities from hazardous chemicals and unsafe drinking water, but instead will increase risks to public health and safety.

**Administrator Zeldin, we urge you to honor your oath and serve the American people.**

Going forward, you have the opportunity to correct course. Should you choose to do so, we stand ready to support your efforts to fulfill EPA's mission.

**Who We Are**

This declaration was written and signed by EPA employees across Offices, Regions, and Labs in our personal capacity, on our own time, and without Agency resources. We are devoted to [EPA's mission](#): to protect human health and the environment.

Administrator Zeldin, we share your stated goal of wanting every child in this nation, including your own, to "inherit a world with clean air, clean water, and a thriving economy." We are civil servants who are dedicated to responsibly managing public resources to drive innovative, high-impact research to create and implement the country's environmental regulations and solve environmental challenges. We want to work together, not to power the "Great American Comeback," but to launch America into a safer, healthier, and thriving future.

We sign this declaration both as concerned citizens and dedicated civil servants. In addition to the named signers, we include anonymous signers and speak for countless others at EPA who share our concerns, but who chose not to sign their names for fear of retaliation.