

On October 2, 2025, Dr. John Darling, Senior Research Biologist, was terminated after spending over two decades supporting EPA's efforts to curb the damaging impacts of aquatic invasive species, particularly in the Great Lakes region. He was also a key contributor to the advancement of environmental DNA, or eDNA, as a tool for cost-effective monitoring of aquatic resources. Last year, he helped author the US National Aquatic eDNA Strategy, providing a roadmap for public and private investment in this new technology. Dr. Darling established EPA as a central international contributor in these fields, and his termination not only represents a loss of important expertise but also substantially damages the Agency's reputation in the scientific community.

Missy Haniewicz was an EPA employee for 10 years, serving as a committed public servant through the Obama, Trump, and Biden Administrations. Prior to her termination on October 1, 2025, her most recent role was working with hazardous waste cleanup teams in Utah as a Community Involvement Coordinator. Haniewicz provided support to more than 20 sites in both urban and rural communities, and collaborated with local elected leadership, county health departments, the Air Force, Department of Energy, Veterans Affairs, and private mining companies on public education efforts regarding potential exposure hazards. Her work was frequently done in partnership with the state department of environmental quality, providing community leadership with consistent and comprehensive educational messaging. Her removal means that these partnerships, developed to ensure the best information gets to community members as quickly as possible, may need to be rebuilt and communications with local agencies reestablished.

Dr. Tom Luben is an international expert in environmental epidemiology with more than 18 years of EPA experience investigating the impact of exposure to air pollution during pregnancy on birth defects, preterm birth, and infant mortality. His highly decorated work directly informed EPA's regulatory decisions for criteria air pollutants and resulted in more than 75 peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals until he was unexpectedly removed on October 2, 2025. EPA recognized Dr. Luben's outstanding contributions to EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment with 14 National Honor Awards for collaborative research efforts and high-quality performance. His removal from EPA means vital research into the health of pregnant people, fetuses, and infants will end, and nearly two decades of institutional knowledge, leadership, and mentorship will be lost.

Sarah Sullivant's 9 years working on public education and outreach related to environmental initiatives and public health at EPA came to a halt when she was removed on October 3, 2025. Sullivant spent years educating and supporting communities, including Tribal communities, about environmental health and safety, particularly for children. Most recently, she served as a supervisor and co-manager in EPA Region 9's Indian General Assistance Program, which supports 148 federally recognized Tribes' development and implementation of environmental protection programs. Examples of Sullivant's decorated work include co-leading community awareness initiative education sessions about the risks of lead exposure, which supported a national model for such lead education programs, and developing educational materials to protect people during the 2020 California wildfires. Sullivant's removal will severely hinder EPA's ability to provide vital information on environmental risks to the American public and grant funds for environmental projects that advance the Agency's mission.

Ted Yackulic was removed from his position as an Attorney-Advisor in EPA's Region 10 Office of Regional Counsel on October 3, 2025, abruptly ending his decorated 36-years of service at the agency. Yackulic helped promote public health through his extensive casework to hold polluters accountable and ensure cleanup of toxic waste and polluted waterways. Yackulic's extensive contributions included work on over 36 high priority Superfund and Clean Water Act matters, such as negotiating the removal of contaminants like arsenic and other carcinogens from the Lower Duwamish Waterway site in Seattle. Yackulic's supervisors and colleagues have referred to him as a "brilliant legal mind" and "invaluable member of EPA," highlighting the gravity of losing him.