



Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility | PEER
Strategic Plan: 2026-2029

Approved by the Board of Directors on December 12, 2025

INTRODUCTION

PEER believes that our nation's public health and environment are best protected by a government workforce that is nonpartisan and embraces the ideals of transparency, inclusion, and accountability. That is why we vigorously defend environmental whistleblowers in government and partner with current and former government employees in federal, state, and local governments who want to make a difference in the world around them.

We recognize the moment we are in—one where the fate of our work protecting public employees and the environment is inextricably linked to our ability to combat the rise in authoritarianism and promote democratic values in our country.

The democratic processes that have shaped the implementation of federal environmental laws for three decades are under threat. Attacks on science and the rapid dismantling of programs that address the dangers of climate change and toxic chemicals, as well as other health and environmental programs, threaten our nation's well-being.

In addition, illegal actions to deplete and politicize the federal government while appointing industry insiders and loyalists to government positions portend a dangerous shift toward authoritarianism. They also portray a callous disregard for the well-being of public employees and our environment.

At the state, local, and tribal levels of government, there is both progress and new threats emerging in the important work of protecting the environment. The threats that are engulfing the federal government will have rippling effects on the environmental programs and public employees of these governmental entities.

This strategic plan charts PEER's course over the next three years. It articulates PEER's vision, mission, and the core values that drive our work, and it outlines our goals, strategies, and initiatives. It also describes PEER's projects and the goals, activities, outcomes, and indicators of success for those projects. This plan will help us continue our work with renewed vigor and purpose while staying true to our mission.

VISION – *What do we strive to achieve?*

We envision a future in which people and the planet are healthy and secure because government agencies work to protect the environment, natural resources, and public health in ways that are transparent, legal, based in sound science, equitable, and free from corruption and undue political influence.

MISSION – *Why do we exist?*

PEER protects public employees who protect our environment, natural resources, and public health. We support current and former environmental and public health professionals, land managers, scientists, enforcement officers, and other civil servants dedicated to upholding environmental laws and values across federal, state, local, and tribal governments.

VALUES – *What are the core beliefs that guide our work?*

- **Accountability.** We deliver on our promises, and we are accountable to our clients, our board of directors, the public, and the people we serve. We use donated funds effectively and efficiently.
- **Transparency.** We communicate the reasons for our actions, and we operate with honesty.
- **Integrity.** We conduct our work using informed, ethical decision-making and sound science. We hold ourselves to high ethical standards.
- **Commitment to clients.** We stand with our clients and represent them on agreed-upon matters diligently, without charge, no matter how long their case may take to resolve.
- **Democracy.** We oppose authoritarianism and believe in promoting democratic values in our country.

OUR COMPETENCIES – *What does PEER bring to the table?*

- A dedicated legal team with deep experience and knowledge of public sector employment law and environmental litigation.
- An uncompromising approach to whistleblower defense and environmental litigation.
- Connections to current and former government employees who help guide our work.

- A dedicated, compassionate, and professional staff who represent clients zealously without charge.
- A deep understanding of complex legal and political systems.
- A commitment to elevating diverse perspectives and supporting the environmental justice work of marginalized and historically disempowered communities.

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

PEER embraces a healthy workplace culture and supports staff efforts to grow professionally, contribute to each other's success, and achieve more together.

GOALS – *What are the outcomes that we aim to realize?*

- **Support** current and former public employees who seek a higher standard of environmental ethics and scientific integrity within their agencies.
- **Protect and Restore** public lands, wildlife habitats, waters, and all of our natural environments.
- **Address** the climate crisis.
- **Minimize** toxic pollution in the environment.
- **Improve** public health.
- **Build coalitions** that will achieve lasting environmental and public health improvements for diverse habitats and communities.
- **Strengthen** democratic norms and values.

APPROACHES – *How do we achieve our goals?*

1. **Protect public employees.** We use legal and other means to support employees who suffer retaliation or other negative consequences because of their work protecting the environment.
2. **Increase government transparency.** Maintaining government transparency is essential for environmental protection and to ensure that government serves the public good. PEER works with current and former government employees, usually anonymously, to address issues through official channels and bring hidden information into the light of day.
3. **Improve laws and regulations.** We engage in litigation and advocacy to ensure the enforcement and implementation of environmental laws, the use of sound science in

decision-making, and adherence to the rule of law. We work to provide solutions to environmental problems both nationally and locally.

4. **Develop and execute investigations.** We use public documents, freedom of information laws, lawsuits, and anonymous activists to develop and execute investigations into waste, fraud, and abuse by government agencies that affect environmental decision making.
5. **Educate policy makers and the public.** We provide training and resources on civil service and environmental issues to advance understanding about the important relationships between governance and environment, and to provide possible solutions to the issues we encounter in our work.
6. **Expand collaboration with other groups.** Building lasting change requires coalitions working toward common goals. PEER partners with groups on projects and litigation and provides counsel to other nonprofits within our areas of expertise.
7. **Elevate lesser heard voices.** Finding solutions to environmental problems requires the involvement of marginalized and disempowered communities. PEER works with current and former government employees to elevate the voices of individuals, communities, and local coalitions often left unheard.

INITIATIVES – *What are we doing to support our strategies?*

These initiatives will occur at all levels of government.

Environment, public lands, and public health

- **Fighting for our public lands, waters, and air.** Our public lands are continually under threat, whether from privatization, mismanagement, political interference, resource extraction, the changing climate, habitat destruction, or excessive hunting and fishing. PEER works with public employees to identify problems in agencies to ensure that our public lands, air, and water are effectively restored and protected.
- **Helping address public health concerns.** Air pollution, water pollution, and toxic chemicals adversely impact public health. Under-regulation, under-enforcement, industry capture, and the absence of regulatory standards are to blame. PEER aims to expose government failures, provide constructive solutions to problems, and litigate action to ensure the proper protection of public health across all facets of society. We partner with impacted communities to elevate public health issues of importance to them.

- **Reducing toxic chemicals and improving chemical safety.** Government regulatory agencies allow toxic chemicals and dangerous use of pesticides to be released into the environment, negatively affecting communities, public health, and natural spaces. PEER works to expose wrongdoing and challenge the industry capture of our regulatory agencies through litigation and by working alongside public employees to protect our health and the environment.
- **Addressing the climate crisis.** PEER works to ensure the implementation of ambitious climate actions that increase clean energy and preserve nature and biodiversity. We are a watchdog for hidden dangers and scams that result from any new climate programs and advocate for systems to evaluate the effectiveness of climate and energy programs.
- **Protecting wildlife.** PEER supports government programs that protect species from extinction, restore habitats, and foster biological diversity. We recognize that habitat loss, the exploitation of wildlife, the introduction of harmful organisms, environmental pollution, and the spread of diseases pose serious threats to wildlife.
- **Supporting environmental laws.** PEER works to improve the effectiveness of environmental laws and programs and supports the enforcement of environmental and natural resource laws. Polluters should be accountable for breaking environmental laws, and agencies need sufficient staffing and support to uphold their conservation and environmental protection mandates.

Whistleblower and Employee Protection

- **Defending and advising whistleblowers.** PEER supports public employee whistleblowers by providing specialized no-cost attorney representation. We aim to make governments accountable to the public and protect employees who protect the environment.
- **Protecting the rights of civil servants.** PEER works to protect a professional, public-oriented civil service where individuals are hired and fired based on merit. We support the free speech rights of civil servants and their right to dissent.
- **Supporting anonymous advocates.** PEER works anonymously with public employees who come to us with environmental issues in government or who wish to seek legal advice, including discussion of options to report wrongdoing without formal whistleblowing.

Governance and the Rule of Law

- **Defending the Rule of Law.** PEER is committed to building and protecting a durable system of laws, institutions, norms, and community commitment that delivers accountability, just law, open government, and accessible and impartial justice.
- **Advancing scientific integrity.** PEER works to improve laws and policies addressing scientific integrity and supports agency scientists who suffer from political interference and suppression of their work. We do this by filing scientific integrity complaints, seeking administrative and legal redress, and shining a light on improper government actions.
- **Fighting for government transparency.** PEER works relentlessly to bring visibility to government actions by using freedom of information laws, filing complaints with oversight bodies, informing the press, and engaging in litigation.

Building a Better Tomorrow

- **Building our federal reform agenda.** We will build a civil service and environmental reform agenda that recognizes that the United States needs a competent, professional, and non-political federal civil service and a system of checks and balances on the Executive Branch to protect people and the environment.
- **Recognizing the importance of state and local actions.** Our reform agenda will recognize the important role state and local governments play in addressing environmental issues, the importance of federal-state partnerships, and the need for a strong federal presence on environmental, public lands, and public health issues.
- **Engaging the public to make a difference.** Although PEER engages primarily with current and former public employees and the entities that support them, we recognize that building a better tomorrow requires great public involvement in our work and the work of government to help deepen trust in and understanding of the civil service and the environmental issues we face.