



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

House Committee on Appropriations

FY 2018 Budget Hearing: Environmental Protection Agency
June 15, 2017
Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time and I also want to welcome Administrator Scott Pruitt to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on the many issues.

Today's hearing is an important part of the oversight duties of this Committee. After all, the "power of the purse" lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

I firmly believe that we all have the responsibility to be proper stewards of our air, land and water, and to protect the beauty of our nation for generations to come. It will certainly be a challenge for EPA, as the main government agency whose mission it is to protect human health and the environment, to do that under a proposal that reduces its budget by \$2.4 billion.

While New Jersey has many natural treasures in our backyard, we also have the distinction of having more Superfund sites than any other state – 10 alone in my Congressional district. Each year, joined by EPA officials, I personally visit and evaluate clean-up progress at these sites. Thanks to the work of many EPA employees, approximately 70% of the clean-up work at sites is paid for by responsible parties. Whenever possible, polluters should pay for cleanup of Superfund sites.

In your budget proposal, the Superfund program is reduced by 31%. While I have taken note from your testimony that you have established a Superfund task force to provide recommendations on how the EPA can streamline and improve the Superfund program, I hope to learn more about the proposed funding reduction for the program as we cannot neglect ongoing cleanups or target cleanups that have not even begun.

On the other hand, I was pleased to see that like so many of us here, the Administration sees the value of the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving funds. These funds are vital to local communities throughout our districts.

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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