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ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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March 21, 2025

Mr. J. Alfredo Gomez
Director, Natural Resources and Environment Team
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Gomez:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, to testify at the hearing entitled “Examining the Biden Administration’s Energy and Environment Spending Push.”

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Friday, April 4, 2025. Your responses should be mailed to Calvin Huggins Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed to Calvin.Huggins1@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Palmer", with a stylized, flowing script.

Gary Palmer
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

cc: Yvette Clarke, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachment

Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Russ Fulcher

1. In our discussions in the hearing, you noted the lack of technical expertise and financial reporting when it came to local water districts in their reporting of programs from the IIJA, such as the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water Revolving Fund. Can you drill down on that, highlighting suggested ways we can help them work through those challenges? You also noted problems of “duplicative reporting” requirements in water program applications. Can you cite anything specific or where are areas we can look at to save money and reduce the reporting workload to especially smaller rural water districts?
2. As I noted in the hearing, it is not that these municipalities don’t want monitoring. It is more clarity, given they also work with the state’s DEQ. These local municipalities seek clear monitoring partly because they have to watch for lawsuits by environmental groups over inconsistent compliance requirements that require sampling of a specific set of chemicals that need to be cleared to meet Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

Can you expound on ways the EPA can work more closely with state DEQs when it comes to grants monitoring, along with “improving financial indicators for the SRFs, and address workforce challenges affecting grants management,” along with other recommendations that would particularly be helpful for small, rural municipal water treatment management entities? I understand EPA has implemented 24 out of 29 of these recommendations.

Local municipalities have also sought some kind of “good faith” or “grace period” from litigation as they try to navigate the compliance, needing to coordinate with both the EPA and their state DEQs. For example, local municipalities worry about getting hit if a particular PFAS-related chemical becomes subject to CERCLA requirements on top of Safe Drinking Water requirements, having been designated a “hazardous waste” versus being designated as a “contaminant.” In short, I am looking for clarity in compliance, using the money properly and efficiently.