

COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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DIGITAL COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION  
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Chairman John Shimkus  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on the Environment  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Paul Tonko  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on the Environment  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shimkus and Ranking Member Tonko:

Thank you for holding a hearing on clean water, an issue that touches the lives of all Americans. This is an issue which we can all agree is of great importance. Moving forward, we should work together to draft and improve legislation that addresses the public health need to supply clean drinking water. We also need to boost water infrastructure projects to dismantle structures that feed toxins into our drinking supply and replace them with sustainable, modern infrastructure.

I would like to highlight that while clean water is essential for the health of all Americans, it is crucial for our most vulnerable—our children. As we know from the Flint disaster, we continue to see unsafe levels of lead in drinking water. According to a recent report in Reuters, in Los Angeles, more than 17 percent of small children tested had elevated levels of lead in their blood, far exceeding the 5 percent rate of children tested in Flint, Michigan. Lead poisoning can produce serious health and behavioral issues, particularly in young children. No family should fear that their children are ingesting elevated levels of lead, only one of various contaminants that federal, state and local agencies, as well as the water industry have to contend with. We need thoughtful legislation that ensures that states have the ability to safely and effectively manage their water supply. The issue is one of resources—more and more states are unable to compensate for the federal funding gap.

While we work on legislation to improve our water supply, I have grave concerns about the future of the Environmental Protection Agency and the current safeguards it is charged with establishing, overseeing, and enforcing.

My questions are directed at the EPA:

1. How will the sudden removal of members of the Board of Scientific Counselors affect the research into lead in drinking water and other such research used to develop national standards to ensure our public health?
2. How will the Administration's budget cuts and staffing shortages affect the EPA's ability to carry out its duties required by statute, such as its programs to ensure safe drinking water?
3. How will the budget cuts and staffing shortages affect the oversight and testing of water systems?
4. How will budget cuts affect the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund?

I look forward to hearing the EPA's answers to these questions and hope that Administrator Pruitt will fully meet EPA's statutory responsibilities to the American people.

To my colleagues, I hope that we can sit at the table together and work on bipartisan legislation so we can ensure clean drinking water for every American family.

Sincerely,



TONY CÁRDENAS  
Member of Congress