

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials Ranking Member
Paul D. Tonko

Hearing on “Fiscal Year 2025 Environmental Protection Agency Budget Request”

May 15, 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Administrator, thank you for being here, and thank you for all you are doing to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. I truly believe you will go down as one of the agency’s greatest leaders. And that is not only because you are implementing historic funding opportunities provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Undoubtedly, these laws are playing a critical role in getting the lead out of our drinking water, protecting us from PFAS, cleaning up brownfields and Superfund sites, and deploying fleets of zero-emission buses. But these are not the only reasons why these laws are transformational. It is how these resources are reaching people. For the first time ever, many disadvantaged communities, tribal communities, and community-based organizations are able to access funding that had previously been unreachable.

There has been an increased emphasis by EPA on building capacity and providing technical assistance to these communities to better address historic environmental injustices. And you have led these efforts with great sensitivity and commitment. I know that was the case when you worked with former Subcommittee Chairman Bill Johnson in East Palestine. And I saw it firsthand when you met with community leaders from Albany’s South End neighborhood in my district.

A robust EPA budget is critical to communities like these. The President’s Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request will continue to enable EPA to fulfill its core mission while ensuring that these historic investments are administered effectively and efficiently. And based on the agency’s proposed agenda and statutory requirements, it is clear that the additional resources and personnel called for in the budget request are necessary.

During the Biden Administration, there has been a concerted effort to rebuild the agency’s capacity to administer and oversee funding opportunities, as well as carry out the agency’s regulatory and enforcement agendas.

This regulatory agenda has included finalizing important environmental and public health protections to address threats posed by traditional and climate pollutants from power plants and vehicles, lead and PFAS in drinking water, and asbestos and other dangerous chemical substances in commerce.

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Simply put, each of these rules will save lives and deliver significant benefits to the American people. Not only will these efforts protect public health, but many of them are also critical to the Biden Administration's Investing in America agenda, which supports the reshoring of domestic manufacturing in key, strategic industries.

Newly finalized standards for power plants, light-duty vehicles, and heavy-duty vehicles will drive innovation and deployment of pollution controls and clean energy technologies, many of which will be made in America. I believe we can compete with China and other nations. And we can do that in a way that does not require us to race to the bottom and undermine our critical environmental and labor protections.

These rules are part of that effort. Mr. Administrator, I also want to recognize and express my appreciation for EPA's efforts to update and strengthen its Scientific Integrity Policy. Ensuring that EPA's career public servants are able to do their work guided by science and free from political and special interests is imperative.

And I believe once finalized, EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy will become the gold standard among Federal agencies. This is just one part of the efforts to recruit, retain, and develop the workforce necessary to carry out the agency's mission while being guided by the best available science.

Administrator Regan, thank you again for joining us. I look forward to working with you as EPA carries out its responsibilities to address our nation's greatest environmental challenges, including climate change, clean air, clean water, chemical safety, and environmental justice.

And I hope Congress will deliver the resources necessary in Fiscal Year 2025 to ensure that agenda stays on track.

With that, I yield back.