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6 THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BUDGET

7 TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

8 House of Representatives,

9 Subcommittee on Environment,

10 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

11 Washington, D.C.

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15 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:15 a.m.,

16 Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Morgan

17 Griffith [chairman of the subcommittee], presiding.

18 Present: Representatives Griffith, Crenshaw, Carter of

19 Georgia, Palmer, Joyce, Weber, Pfluger, Miller-Meeks, Lee,

20 Evans, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex-officio); Tonko, Schakowsky,

21 Ruiz, Peters, Barragan, Soto, Auchincloss, Carter of

22 Louisiana, Menendez, Landsman, and Pallone (ex-officio).

23 Also present: Representatives Balderson, Houchin,

24 Obernolte; Castor, Dingell, Fletcher, McClellan, and Mullin.

25

26 Staff Present: Ansley Boylan, Director of Operations;

27 Byron Brown, Chief Counsel; Clara Cargile, Professional Staff

28 Member; Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Andrew Furman,  
29 Professional Staff Member; Sydney Greene, Director of Finance  
30 and Logistics; Emily Hale, Staff Assistant; Christen Harsha,  
31 Senior Counsel; Annabelle Huffman, Clerk; Calvin Huggins,  
32 Clerk; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Sophie Khanahmadi,  
33 Deputy Staff Director; Sarah Meier, Counsel and  
34 Parliamentarian; Joe Miller, Chief Counsel; Kaitlyn Peterson,  
35 Policy Analyst; Jackson Rudden, Staff Assistant; Chris  
36 Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director; Kaley Stidham,  
37 Press Assistant; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director;  
38 Katharine Willey, Senior Counsel; Giancarlo Ceja, Minority  
39 ENV Fellow; Timia Crisp, Minority Professional Staff Member;  
40 Austin Flack, Minority Professional Staff Member; Waverly  
41 Gordon, Minority Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel;  
42 Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff Director; Anthony  
43 Gutierrez, Minority Professional Staff Member; Caitlin  
44 Haberman, Minority Staff Director, ENV; Will McAuliffe,  
45 Minority Chief Counsel, OI; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff  
46 Assistant; Kylea Rogers, Minority Policy Analyst; and Maxwell  
47 Stern, Minority Intern.

48

49           \*Mr. Griffith. The subcommittee will come to order.

50           And let me first say I apologize for the late start. It  
51 drives me crazy. But the President was speaking with the  
52 conference this morning, very engaging. I did leave a few  
53 minutes -- I don't know how long before he finished, but I  
54 felt I needed to get here at least with some semblance, but I  
55 do apologize to you, Mr. Administrator, and to all the  
56 members who were here on time. Please forgive me. I will  
57 try not to let it happen again, but it is rare that the  
58 President comes to talk to the conference.

59           All right. I now recognize myself for five minutes for  
60 an opening statement.

61           I am glad to have the Environmental Protection Agency  
62 administrator, Lee Zeldin, a friend and former colleague,  
63 back in the House today.

64           Welcome back, Mr. Administrator. Is that the proper way  
65 to refer to you?

66           \*Mr. Zeldin. Call me Lee.

67           \*Mr. Griffith. All right, Lee, it is good to have you  
68 back to testify before the Subcommittee on Environment on  
69 President Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget request. This is  
70 certainly an important time for the EPA.

71           After four years of economically disastrous, legally  
72 questionable, and expensive policies of the Biden-Harris  
73 Administration, it is a welcome sight to see President Trump

74 and Administrator Zeldin focused on the rebuilding of the  
75 American economy and fixing the problems of the previous  
76 Administration.

77 I remember when Administrator Zeldin was in the House  
78 representing the eastern part of Long Island. He was willing  
79 to work across the aisle in pragmatic -- in a pragmatic way  
80 to try and address environmental issues like protecting the  
81 Long Island Sound or addressing emerging contaminants like  
82 PFAS. It is great to see him bringing these same problem-  
83 solving skills to the EPA, and there are a lot of problems  
84 there to solve, as we all know.

85 I am pleased to see that the administrator recognizes  
86 that there is a middle ground to tread, where environmental  
87 protection does not need to come at the expense of good jobs  
88 and a strong economy. I know that the administrator is  
89 already working to closely examine the previous EPA spending  
90 spree on Green New Deal-style programs that provided  
91 unprecedented levels of taxpayer funds to environmental  
92 groups and consultants, and to undue burdensome regulations  
93 that increased energy costs and made it more difficult to  
94 make things in America.

95 The reconciliation bill passed out of this committee  
96 last week is an important step in saving taxpayers' money and  
97 redirecting EPA -- the EPA to focus on its core mission of  
98 cleaning up the environment and protecting human health.

99           In February Administrator Zeldin announced the broad  
100 pillars that the agency will focus on under his plan,  
101 Powering the Great American Comeback. In March Administrator  
102 Zeldin announced 31 regulatory actions to support greater  
103 energy production, a more robust auto manufacturing sector, a  
104 more predictable permitting process, and a more state-based  
105 enforcement system. I am glad to see that the EPA is taking  
106 another look at a lot of the rulemakings from the last  
107 administration, particularly those regarding air pollution,  
108 as many of those rulemakings didn't take into account  
109 industry's ability to meet compliance timelines on which  
110 pollution mitigation technologies would be able to be  
111 installed.

112           EPA has a duty to enforce the statutes that Congress  
113 passed, though I do believe encouraging cooperative  
114 compliance with industry will lead to better environmental  
115 outcomes and less economic disruption -- and as I have often  
116 said, one of the problems we have is if we push beyond what  
117 industry can do, they just pick up and move to another  
118 country, and many of those pollutants, according to a NASA  
119 study, come right back to us because the NASA study showed a  
120 number of years ago, following a sandstorm, that it takes  
121 about 10 days for the air to get from the middle of the Gobi  
122 Desert in China to the eastern shore of Virginia -- as many  
123 of those rulemakings that the EPA did previously didn't take

124 into account industry's ability to meet compliance timelines  
125 -- that is what we are talking about -- of which pollution  
126 mitigation technologies were able to be installed.

127         In recent years the EPA's budget has been about \$10  
128 billion per year. However, under the so-called Inflation  
129 Reduction Act, the EPA received an astounding \$41.5 billion,  
130 or more than 4 times its historical budget, to spend on  
131 electric vehicles, environmental justice, and renewable  
132 energy programs. From its founding and up until the past few  
133 years, EPA mostly operated as a scientific investigator and  
134 regulatory agency and, with the exception of the water  
135 infrastructure and Superfund programs, it did not administer  
136 lots of large grants. President Trump's proposed budget  
137 would reduce EPA spending to a more sustainable level after  
138 years of out-of-control spending on programs and rules that  
139 bore little relation to the EPA's traditional mission of  
140 regulating pollution, setting science-based standards for  
141 potentially hazardous substances, and cleaning up waste  
142 sites. It seems the goal of the EPA in the last few years  
143 was an attempt to force change that Americans are not willing  
144 to buy.

145         I look forward to hearing more details from  
146 Administrator Zeldin about the reorganization reform efforts  
147 he is making.

148         The Environment Subcommittee stands ready to work with

149     you, Administrator Zeldin, to help get the EPA back on track.

150             At this subcommittee's first hearing of Congress we  
151     examined the implementation of the 2016 amendments to the  
152     Toxic Substances Control Act, often referred to as TSCA. We  
153     heard how the process for reviewing new and existing  
154     chemicals are in need of reform, particularly the ways in  
155     which the EPA evaluates potential chemical risks. We also  
156     held a hearing in March on ways to maximize brownfield  
157     cleanups. As we work on brownfield reauthorization, I hope  
158     to collaborate with the EPA on ways to possibly set up some  
159     sort of pre-clearance permitting pilot program.

160             Our national security, our economic competitiveness, the  
161     health of our families, and the strength of our communities  
162     all depend on an EPA led by you that is working hard and  
163     efficiently for the American people. So I thank you again  
164     for appearing before us today and forgiving me for being  
165     late, and I look forward to your testimony.

166             [The prepared statement of Mr. Griffith follows:]

167

168     \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

169

170           \*Mr. Griffith. I now yield five minutes to the ranking  
171 member, Mr. Tonko of New York.

172           \*Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

173           And Administrator Zeldin, welcome to the committee -- to  
174 the subcommittee. And I have to acknowledge that as a former  
175 student you were a constituent of New York's 20th  
176 congressional district, and so we welcome you back in that  
177 capacity.

178           President Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget request for  
179 EPA has been called problematic, an unserious proposal, and  
180 may be a bridge too far to be achievable. Now, these were  
181 the reactions of Republican appropriators last week, and I  
182 expect you will hear even less charitable reviews from  
183 Democrats on this subcommittee today.

184           This proposal includes a 55 percent reduction from  
185 fiscal year 2025 levels, resulting in agency funding levels  
186 not seen since the mid 1980s. If enacted, this would  
187 fundamentally dismantle the EPA as we know it, and cripple  
188 the agency's ability to carry out its core mission of  
189 protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink. The  
190 request includes devastating cuts that will undermine states'  
191 efforts to protect public health and carry out their  
192 obligations, including the \$2.46 billion reduction to the  
193 state revolving funds for water infrastructure and the \$1  
194 billion reduction for categorical grants which are critical



195 to supporting staffing of state environmental agencies.

196 I do believe this is a part of a disturbing trend we are  
197 seeing to force more costs on to state governments, as is  
198 being done with the proposed cuts to Medicaid in the  
199 majority's reconciliation bill.

200 Similar to these funding cuts, earlier this year the  
201 Administration expressed the desire to reduce EPA staffing  
202 levels by 65 percent, which would return the agency to 1971  
203 personnel levels, the agency's second year in existence. It  
204 is not credible to suggest that the agency can fulfill its  
205 statutory requirements, including all of the major  
206 environmental laws and amendments to those laws that have  
207 been enacted since the 1970s with these proposed staffing  
208 levels. Cuts of this magnitude would not only hollow out the  
209 agency's expertise and capacity, but they are insensitive to  
210 the public servants who have dedicated their lives to  
211 supporting this agency's mission.

212 And it is worth reminding everyone of what that mission  
213 is: to protect human health and the environment. In just a  
214 few short months, I believe, the agency under Administrator  
215 Zeldin's leadership has lost sight of this mission. Mr.  
216 Zeldin launched the Powering the Great American Comeback  
217 Initiative focused on American energy, auto manufacturing,  
218 and artificial intelligence dominance. Broadly speaking, I  
219 am not necessarily opposed to aspects of that agenda, but I

220 also do not believe it is the appropriate role for our  
221 nation's environmental regulator to be leading this effort  
222 because EPA's contributions to those goals more or less  
223 translate to how we can reduce environmental protections and  
224 enforcement of those protections for the benefit of energy  
225 producers, the auto industry, and big tech, even if ordinary  
226 Americans will pay the price by breathing harmful air  
227 pollution, drinking contaminated water, and being exposed to  
228 dangerous chemicals.

229         We have already seen a slew of agency actions that will  
230 result in greater pollution and reduce our scientific  
231 capacity to understand just how that pollution will impact  
232 Americans' health and their well-being. This includes  
233 reconsidering rules that protect Americans from pollution,  
234 from power plants, from vehicles, and from industrial  
235 facilities, and weakening standards to keep PFAS out of our  
236 drinking water. Each of these public health protections up  
237 for reconsideration went through robust rulemaking processes  
238 and economic analyses which found that every one of these  
239 rules delivers greater benefits to the American people in  
240 public health and in economic benefit terms than they cost.

241         I am also concerned by EPA's efforts to terminate  
242 previously-awarded grants without producing any evidence of  
243 fraud, waste, or abuse. For each of these awards the  
244 previous administration carried out competitive selection

245 processes based upon requirements enacted by Congress.

246 [The prepared statement of Mr. Tonko follows:]

247

248 \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

249

250           \*Mr. Tonko. And with that, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

251           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I am now  
252 going to recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr.  
253 Pallone, for his five-minute opening statement.

254           \*Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

255           President Trump's budget is a blueprint for disaster.  
256 Trump doesn't believe in government, and his budget continues  
257 his relentless assault on the Federal agencies whose mission  
258 it is to protect the health and well-being of the American  
259 people. This budget would cut funding for the EPA by 55  
260 percent, the largest cut in EPA's history. The proposed cut  
261 would seriously threaten public health and the environment.  
262 It also fails to deliver on many of the promises the Trump  
263 Administration has made to deal with dangerous toxins like  
264 lead and PFAS, and prioritize polluters over public health  
265 and the environment.

266           While we only have the skinny budget to review at this  
267 stage, it does not give me confidence that anything more  
268 comprehensive will tell a different story. The budget calls  
269 categorical grants to states a "crutch," flying in the face  
270 of the cooperative Federalism that has made EPA so successful  
271 in cleaning up toxic pollution and providing healthier  
272 futures for Americans. EPA is deserting the states to deal  
273 with serious climate and pollution issues on their own, while  
274 EPA focuses on giving polluters free passes to poison our

275 communities with reckless abandon.

276         And the skinny budget outlines major cuts to  
277 historically bipartisan programs that provide a lifeline to  
278 communities across the nation. It cuts \$250 million from the  
279 Superfund program, undermining our ability to clean up toxic  
280 waste sites throughout the nation. It seeks to decimate the  
281 drinking water and clean water state revolving funds, which  
282 are the primary funding sources for water infrastructure  
283 projects. These state revolving funds are critical to  
284 ensuring communities have safe, reliable drinking water and  
285 wastewater services. This comes after EPA recently announced  
286 plans to rescind and delay the historic PFAS drinking water  
287 standard, raising serious questions about the Trump  
288 Administration's commitment to safe, clean, and affordable  
289 water for all.

290         EPA is also walking away from its commitments by  
291 canceling competitively-awarded grants where work is already  
292 underway in communities across the country with little or no  
293 explanation. And I have to say to the administrator I am  
294 outraged by Administrator Zeldin's illegal freeze of  
295 obligated funds under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.  
296 This fund is meant to make energy more affordable, foster  
297 economic development, boost supply chains, and create good-  
298 paying jobs, all the things that the Trump Administration  
299 says it supports, yet the administrator has engaged in a

300 smear campaign where he is spreading false and misleading  
301 statements about the program in an attempt to undermine it  
302 and strip away these funds. And I firmly believe the  
303 administrator's actions are a violation of the law, and I am  
304 hopeful that these funds will be released soon so that our  
305 communities can benefit from these investments.

306       It is clear to me that under Administrator Zeldin's  
307 leadership EPA is becoming an unreliable partner and  
308 illegally withholding congressionally-directed funds. I am  
309 also concerned about troubling activities that will endanger  
310 the health and safety of American families, children, and  
311 workers. The Trump Administration has made it clear that EPA  
312 cares more about polluters' bottom line than the communities  
313 and American children who will bear the brunt of these  
314 foolhardy decisions.

315       What is potentially most egregious is the attempt to  
316 roll back EPA's landmark endangerment finding. It is  
317 absolutely shocking that anyone in the year 2025 could look  
318 around and honestly say that climate change is not already  
319 harming Americans. It is.

320       And I am also troubled by EPA's recent reorganization  
321 plan. The effectiveness of the agency hinges on EPA having  
322 the career staff necessary to fulfill its mission. They are  
323 the backbone of the agency. Unfortunately, Administrator  
324 Zeldin's actions to indiscriminately fire hundreds of

325 employees with plans to release thousands more shows a  
326 blatant disregard for the critical work career staff conduct  
327 on behalf of the American people every day. He continues to  
328 disingenuously claim to be fighting government waste while  
329 simultaneously eviscerating EPA's ability to appropriately  
330 manage programs and oversee -- issue grants.

331 Finally, Administrator Zeldin is thumbing his nose at  
332 Congress's ability to conduct important oversight of this  
333 Administration. Committee Democrats have sent several  
334 letters to the administrator demanding answers about certain  
335 actions he has taken. We have received very few answers,  
336 some coming just late yesterday, and this is unacceptable.  
337 The Energy and Commerce Committee is your authorizer, and we  
338 are tasked with conducting oversight. As the administrator  
339 of EPA, you don't just owe Congress an explanation, but you  
340 also owe the American people an explanation.

341 You know, I -- my Republicans on this committee  
342 constantly talk about how great this committee is, and how  
343 they want to continue the great work of this committee, but  
344 we are not going to be a great committee if we can't actually  
345 conduct oversight over the EPA, which is one of the major  
346 agencies that we have oversight or jurisdiction over. We are  
347 not going to be a great committee if we can't have effective  
348 oversight, and Administrator Zeldin has made that impossible.  
349

350           [The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

351

352       \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

353



354           \*Mr. Pallone. And with that I yield back the balance of  
355 my time, Mr. Chairman.

356           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I thank the  
357 gentleman. We now conclude with member opening statements.

358           The chair would like to remind members that, pursuant to  
359 the committee rules, all members' opening statements will be  
360 made a part of the record.

361           Although it is not the practice of this subcommittee to  
362 swear in witnesses, I would remind our witness that knowingly  
363 and willfully making material false statements to the  
364 legislative branch is against the law under title 18, section  
365 1001 of the United States Code.

366           We will give you an opportunity to give an opening  
367 statement followed by questions.

368           Today's witness, I think, is known to all of us, a  
369 former Member of the House, the Honorable Lee Zeldin,  
370 administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

371           Mr. Zeldin, you are now recognized for a five-minute  
372 opening statement.

373

374 STATEMENT OF THE HON. LEE ZELDIN, ADMINISTRATOR, U.S.  
375 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

376

377       \*Mr. Zeldin. Thank you, Chairman Griffith, Ranking  
378 Member Tonko, and members of the subcommittee. Chairman  
379 Griffith, thank you for being such a great partner in  
380 ensuring that this committee is able to work closely with the  
381 EPA. That is very important. Thank you for the great work  
382 and leadership. It is an honor to appear before you today to  
383 discuss the President's fiscal year 2026 budget request for  
384 the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

385       Since day one, EPA has swiftly moved to advance  
386 President Trump's directive to deliver clean air, land, and  
387 water for all Americans while restoring common-sense  
388 accountability and cooperative Federalism to environmental  
389 policy. We are fulfilling our core mission of protecting  
390 human health and the environment, while powering the great  
391 American comeback and removing unnecessary barriers that have  
392 burdened American families and businesses for far too long.

393       Since being sworn in as administrator, my team has hit  
394 the ground running. I have now traveled to 17 states across  
395 the country, engaging with our dedicated regional staff and  
396 scientists, visiting Superfund sites and brownfields, and  
397 listening to farmers, business owners, and community  
398 residents who have had fantastic ideas on how the EPA can

399 better work on their behalf.

400       Immediately upon President Trump's inauguration, EPA  
401 completed the largest wildfire cleanup in agency history in  
402 less than 30 days after the catastrophic Los Angeles  
403 wildfires. We have taken bold steps to combat PFAS  
404 contamination and have advanced redevelopment at 21 Superfund  
405 sites across 13 states, delisting all or parts of 4 sites  
406 from the National Priorities List. We have also completed 25  
407 state implementation plans, 16 of which were backlogged from  
408 the prior administration.

409       With this renewed focus and commitment, EPA is working  
410 for the American people. We are revising the definition of  
411 Waters of the United States to align with the Supreme Court  
412 decision in Sackett, and have issued immediate action items  
413 for Mexico to permanently and urgently end the Tijuana River  
414 sewage crisis that has plagued southern California for  
415 decades. Following my trip to Saint Louis we cut nearly two  
416 years from the cleanup timeline at the West Lake Superfund  
417 site, which has been contaminated by nuclear waste from the  
418 Manhattan Project. In fact, to mark the 100th day of the  
419 Trump presidency, EPA released a list of 100 environmental  
420 actions we took during those first 100 days, a pace that  
421 motivates us to keep up each and every day.

422       Together, these actions reflect the Administration's  
423 commitment to environmental stewardship, cooperative

424 Federalism, and delivering results that make a real  
425 difference in people's lives.

426 In lockstep with the President's agenda, EPA is also  
427 helping to unleash American energy, pursue permitting reform,  
428 make America the AI capital of the world, and bring back  
429 American auto jobs. We have eliminated waste and abuse in  
430 areas like the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, reversed  
431 unlawful overreach like the so-called Good Neighbor Rule, and  
432 begun reconsidering many overreaching rules, including power  
433 plant and EV-related regulation that threaten grid  
434 reliability, energy affordability, and consumer choice.

435 I am proud of the monumental steps we took earlier this  
436 year towards energy dominance and expanding cooperative  
437 Federalism. We are giving West Virginia and Arizona the  
438 primacy authority they have sought to protect groundwater and  
439 regulate themselves, as other states have had for years. It  
440 is no secret that the best innovative solutions are often  
441 found by working with those most familiar with the challenges  
442 faced.

443 These historic actions will reduce regulatory costs,  
444 which act as invisible taxes on Americans, making it more  
445 affordable to own a car, heat homes, operate a business, and  
446 bring manufacturing back to local communities. By reducing  
447 the EPA's budget by billions of dollars, the President's  
448 fiscal year 2026 budget demands maximum efficiency from the

449 EPA, while we continue to fulfill all of our statutory  
450 obligations.

451 Also included in the President's proposal is an  
452 additional \$9 million above fiscal year 2025-enacted levels  
453 to equip EPA with funds to respond to drinking water  
454 disasters. There is also a \$27 million increase in funding  
455 for tribes to address drinking water and wastewater  
456 infrastructure on their lands.

457 At the Trump EPA we will not view the status quo as a  
458 sacred cow that is untouchable. We will not consider the  
459 Biden-era regulations we inherited to be etched in stone, and  
460 we absolutely refuse to waste even a penny of tax dollars.  
461 With President Trump's leadership and the partnership of  
462 Congress, we will deliver measurable and real results,  
463 greater accountability, and a stronger environmental return  
464 on investment per dollar spent.

465 I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

466 [The prepared statement of Mr. Zeldin follows:]

467

468 \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

469

470           \*Mr. Griffith. Thank you, Administrator Zeldin, a.k.a.  
471 Lee. We will now begin the questioning.

472           I would ask that members not begin a new question to our  
473 witness as their five minutes expire. Because we have a  
474 number of members who wish to waive on -- and that is the  
475 practice in this subcommittee and in this committee -- I am  
476 going to be fairly aggressive on the five-minute deadline on  
477 both sides of the aisle, and so I would encourage you all to  
478 be ready to submit -- if you see you only have 10 seconds  
479 left, don't ask the question, just submit it for questions  
480 asked after the hearing, which we are permitted to do.

481           With that said, I will now recognize myself for five  
482 minutes of questioning.

483           Administrator Zeldin, I understand why the agency  
484 terminated all environmental justice grants to align with  
485 President Trump's executive order. I recognize those in many  
486 cases were spurious. But as often happens when you do this,  
487 there are some things in there that you think, wait a minute,  
488 that was pretty good.

489           And so in my district we had some flood mitigation --  
490 and these are not huge dollars, 50,000 -- in flood mitigation  
491 planning for the town of Clinchco; 50,000 in engineering for  
492 a former bank building demolition, the building is going to  
493 collapse into the road, and it is a problem; and riverwalk  
494 design in the town of Pound; and 70,000 demolition of a

495 building in Pennington Gap, which flooded again in February.  
496 All of these are issues that are significant, and I don't  
497 know what they did to be put into environmental justice, this  
498 is just something right to do. And I am just asking you if  
499 you would be willing to help us work to see if we can't find  
500 some other ways to take care of some of those important  
501 projects that actually are meritorious.

502       \*Mr. Zeldin. I would love to work with you, Chairman,  
503 have my team work with yours.

504       And the same message goes to other members of this  
505 committee. There are some cases of grants where the entire  
506 grant had major issues. There are other grants where there  
507 were smaller issues. And there is appropriated funding that  
508 is going to continue to go out the door. We are having this  
509 conversation in the middle of a fiscal year. So while we are  
510 going from one administration to the next, we might go from  
511 one administration's priorities to the current  
512 administration's priorities. We, I think, have plenty of  
513 opportunities to be able to work together to get this funding  
514 out responsibly.

515       \*Mr. Griffith. All right. Now I am going to turn to  
516 the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Awards.

517       I know that you -- that is all tied up in litigation,  
518 but it is interesting to me. And I talked about it last  
519 week, as well. One of the awardees is technically

520 headquartered in my district in southwest Virginia --  
521 actually in Christiansburg, the Appalachian Community  
522 Capital. And I understand it is a bank, and a financial  
523 institution, and it is a pass-through. The problem is that  
524 this organization received -- underscore -- \$500 million.  
525 Previously, in 2023, their entire budget was \$4.3 million, of  
526 which 2.8 was from a Federal grant. In 2024 they suddenly  
527 received \$500 million.

528         Now, when I found out about this and I went and looked  
529 at their legal address where they are supposed to be  
530 headquartered in Christiansburg, Virginia, I went up to the  
531 building. It was after hours. There is no sign. There is a  
532 financial institution there, but it is not the Appalachian  
533 Community Capital. Now, whether they have a person assigned  
534 in there, whether or not they have a cubicle, I don't know.  
535 Not saying they don't. Not saying they are not functioning  
536 out of that building, but there is no indication to the  
537 public that this institution which received \$500 million to  
538 hand out from the EPA is doing anything there.

539         Now, again, they very well could have a cubicle inside.  
540 They could have somebody in there working. But the sign on  
541 the door was for a different financial institution. The CEO  
542 has an address in Washington, D.C. So if we are trying to  
543 get these monies out, even if you accept that they are trying  
544 to get these monies out into the various communities, it



545 raises all kinds of questions in my mind.

546 I am assuming that raised questions in your mind, as  
547 well. Am I correct? That type of thing.

548 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Chairman. And to that point, it is  
549 important to point out Appalachian asked for a billion, and  
550 they ended up receiving 500 million, even though the year  
551 that they asked for the funding, in 2023, they spent less  
552 than 4.5 million. One of many issues.

553 And one more thing to point out, Chairman. A reviewer  
554 noted that Appalachian plants used \$215 million to finance  
555 600 zero-emission vehicles and 105 million to finance 700  
556 charging stations. This is \$358,333 per EV vehicle, \$150,000  
557 per charging station.

558 So it is important to get into the weeds and understand,  
559 and I think the example that you brought up is one of many  
560 fantastic ones to talk about.

561 \*Mr. Griffith. Well, and I would love to know where the  
562 charging stations are, if they exist.

563 That being said, and my time running out, I will yield  
564 back and now recognize the ranking member from New York, Mr.  
565 Tonko.

566 \*Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

567 And again, welcome, Mr. Zeldin. You previously  
568 committed to following the law, and stated your belief that  
569 science should be left to the scientists. So I would like to

570 focus on just how well you have been fulfilling those  
571 commitments.

572 To start, you initiated an effort to reconsider the 2009  
573 endangerment finding that greenhouse gas emissions threatened  
574 the public health and welfare of current and future  
575 generations. Now, I have no doubt we may disagree about just  
576 how to appropriately regulate sources of climate pollution,  
577 but I am frankly shocked that there is a question of whether  
578 or not climate pollution harms the Americans' health and  
579 welfare. The endangerment finding is based on science, and  
580 scientists both within and without the Federal Government  
581 have continually reaffirmed that climate pollution does in  
582 fact harm our health and our welfare. So can you cite any  
583 peer-reviewed research that calls into question the science  
584 used to make the initial 2009 endangerment finding?

585 \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, first off, Ranking Member Tonko, it  
586 is important to note, to follow the law, to follow our  
587 obligations under the law, I am not allowed to pre-judge  
588 outcomes. We are going to go through a rulemaking process.  
589 We will follow the Administrative Procedures Act. There will  
590 be a public comment period.

591 To your point more specifically, it is important to note  
592 that when the 2009 endangerment finding was done, they didn't  
593 review carbon dioxide alone. It is carbon dioxide when mixed  
594 with five other well-mixed gases, which was called the

595 "greenhouse gases.'" Even though they were supposed to do it  
596 specifically on mobile sources, some of those greenhouse  
597 gases -- some of those other well-mixed gases aren't even  
598 emitted from motor vehicles. But they didn't study each of  
599 these six individually, they studied all six collectively.

600 They had multiple other mental leaps that were done.  
601 They didn't say that carbon dioxide endangers public health.  
602 They say that carbon dioxide, when mixed with five other  
603 well-mixed gases, contribute to climate change. How much,  
604 you might ask? They don't say. But the numbers north of  
605 zero they say contribute, not causes.

606 And then they say climate change endangers public  
607 health. So it is just important to follow the multiple  
608 mental leaps. But as far as peer-reviewed studies, it is  
609 important when that -- to note when that 2009 endangerment  
610 finding was reached, they didn't study any of these six gases  
611 individually.

612 \*Mr. Tonko. Reclaiming my time, I hear the pre-judged  
613 statement, but I don't think major regulatory processes are  
614 launched on a whim. So can you not point to any scientific  
615 evidence to warrant a reconsideration in the first place?

616 \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, in addition to what I just stated,  
617 they also didn't factor in any of the -- obviously -- the  
618 scientific developments since over the last 16 years, there  
619 has not been any public comment period over the course of the

620 last 16 years, they haven't factored in innovation.  
621 Emissions have been down over the course of the last 20  
622 years.

623 But getting back to the heart of your initial question,  
624 not even when they did the 2009 endangerment finding did they  
625 ever conduct reviews of each emission individually.

626 \*Mr. Tonko. Well, in addition to the elimination of  
627 atmospheric research, I am very concerned by the public  
628 reporting around the future of the Office of Research and  
629 Development. ORD conducts independent research, and this  
630 independence is critical to both informing regulatory  
631 decision-making and ensuring high levels of scientific  
632 integrity at the agency. The Office of Inspector General  
633 identified -- and, I quote -- "promoting ethical conduct and  
634 protecting scientific integrity" as a top management  
635 challenge in fiscal year 2024. How do you plan to address  
636 this challenge if ORD is significantly reorganized or, in  
637 fact, eliminated?

638 \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, for one, we will fulfill all  
639 statutory obligations. Two, it is important to note that  
640 inside of program offices science and research is done.  
641 Additionally, as part of the reorg that was announced a  
642 couple of weeks back, science and research are being elevated  
643 inside of all different program offices. There is a new  
644 office inside of the Office of Air and Radiation focusing on

645 state air partnerships, advancing cooperative Federalism, and  
646 working on state implementation plans. There is a new Office  
647 of Applied Sciences and Environmental Solutions.

648 The scientific work that we do in fulfilling our  
649 statutory obligations is important.

650 \*Mr. Tonko. Okay, let me reclaim my time here. Has EPA  
651 evaluated how closing or significantly reducing ORD would  
652 affect its ability to fulfill statutory obligations while  
653 ensuring scientific integrity across the agency?

654 \*Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely.

655 \*Mr. Tonko. And will you share that evaluation with  
656 members of the subcommittee?

657 \*Mr. Zeldin. Sure, we could talk about it here today.

658 \*Mr. Tonko. Okay. Well, my time has expired, so I will  
659 yield back, but thank you for your response.

660 \*Dr. Joyce. [Presiding.] Thank you. The ranking member  
661 yields back. The chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio,  
662 Mr. Latta, for his five minutes.

663 \*Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

664 And Mr. Administrator, welcome back to the House. It is  
665 good to see you today.

666 You know, for far too long the EPA has ballooned well  
667 beyond its original scope. Over time the agency has amassed  
668 sweeping regulatory powers that increasingly bypass  
669 legislative oversight. What does that leave us with? High

670 cost for the taxpayer; burdensome, unworkable regulatory  
671 conditions for industry; stifled innovation and  
672 manufacturing; and energy insecurity with decreased domestic  
673 production, high costs, and Federal overreach for our energy  
674 mix.

675       We heard extensive testimony from industrial leaders  
676 across the board that the Biden Administration's EPA  
677 standards were technologically unfeasible. President Trump's  
678 proposed discretionary budget decreases the EPA budget by  
679 over half of last year's budget, making many common-sense  
680 reforms to spend American taxpayer dollars in thoughtful ways  
681 to effectively improve our environment.

682       And one of the things that we have heard so many times  
683 is -- well, you know, what are your thoughts, especially when  
684 we hear from the industry that the EPA would come up with  
685 some kind of a standard that there was no existing technology  
686 to even meet it, but they were demanding that it be done. In  
687 a lot of cases, it was just going to put businesses out of  
688 business because they couldn't meet the standard. So how do  
689 you see the EPA dealing in the future on issues like that?

690       \*Mr. Zeldin. We inherited a lot of regulations that  
691 were enacted in 2023, 2024 seeking to stimulate the economy,  
692 choosing to suffocate the economy as if it is a binary choice  
693 between protecting the environment and growing the economy.  
694 The Trump EPA chooses both. We want to protect the

695 environment and grow the economy. This isn't a binary  
696 choice. These regulations would cause all sorts of companies  
697 and entire industries to have to go out.

698         The concerns end up impacting the American economy, the  
699 American national security, and our environment, as it is  
700 important to point out that we tap into our own supply safer  
701 than so many other countries do elsewhere around the world.  
702 And it is important to look at the ability of American  
703 companies to be able to hit the compliance with these  
704 regulations that are put into place.

705         \*Mr. Latta. Thank you. You know, I read with interest  
706 your Powering the Great American Comeback. And you know, in  
707 this committee we have been talking about two things in  
708 particular. We have to have more energy produced in this  
709 country and, at the same time, we have to really make sure  
710 that we are looking at permitting, we have got to get the  
711 permitting reform done to be able to move forward. Because  
712 especially when we look at our data centers that are coming  
713 online, that -- the amount of -- more energy is going to have  
714 to be produced in this country.

715         So could you share how the Powering the Great American  
716 Comeback Initiative is going to help, especially in these two  
717 areas that you talk about on the energy side and also on the  
718 permitting?

719         \*Mr. Zeldin. Sure. There is five pillars. Number one,

720 clean air, land, and water for all Americans. Number two is  
721 unleash energy dominance. Pillar three, advanced cooperative  
722 Federalism and permitting reform. Four, making America the  
723 AI capital of the world. Five, bringing back American auto  
724 jobs.

725         Why are we doing this? Because the American public is  
726 demanding it. The core mission of EPA is protecting human  
727 health and the environment. So one might ask, well, why  
728 would you be working on helping to unleash energy dominance?  
729 Well, because we were paying attention to the American public  
730 last fall when they were demanding that we heed their  
731 concerns as it relates to their struggle to be able to afford  
732 to make ends meet; because we heard from Americans who had to  
733 choose between whether or not to put groceries in their  
734 refrigerator, heat their home, or get prescription drugs they  
735 need to survive. They had to choose between the three.

736         So we could say, you know, listen, we are not going to  
737 do anything to help with this other stuff, it is not part of  
738 the core mission of EPA, and we can thumb our nose to the  
739 American public. But instead, the Trump EPA chooses to heed  
740 the call of the American public. That is what we are going  
741 to do. We are going to do it proudly.

742         Now, as it relates to the two that you might be  
743 referencing as far as unleashing energy dominance, make  
744 America the AI capital of the world, this is a partnership.



745 In working with other agencies, the President created the  
746 National Energy Dominance Council. These agencies are going  
747 to work together.

748 And when you talk about permitting reform, here is an  
749 idea. Those who want to invest in America, that they don't  
750 have to go through 15 months of a permitting process before  
751 some other agency comes in and tells them, here is an issue  
752 that is going to stop your project. The person who is making  
753 the investment scratching their head, saying, well, why don't  
754 you tell us that 15 months ago? Well, that is because the  
755 government was being its normal self, and not working  
756 efficiently, and not collaboratively. And as a result, the  
757 permitting process might require more time, more cost, less  
758 certainty.

759 So EPA is going to do our part, and one of the ways that  
760 we can help with permanent reform actually doesn't even  
761 require an act of Congress. We can just stop gumming up the  
762 works with all sorts of different processes that we inherited  
763 where we realized the EPA was just trying to slow things down  
764 to slow things down. Well, we don't feel good about taking  
765 away, stripping away that investment in this country. And I  
766 am glad that you are asking, Congressman, and I look forward  
767 to working with you on it.

768 \*Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

769 My time has expired and I yield back, and I will submit

770 my other questions to the administrator in writing. Thank  
771 you.

772 [The information follows:]

773

774 \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

775

776           \*Dr. Joyce. The gentleman yields. The chair recognizes  
777 the ranking member of the committee, Mr. Pallone, for his  
778 five minutes of questioning.

779           \*Mr. Pallone. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

780           And I have to disagree with the administrator's vision.  
781 I don't think anyone in America voted last November to harm  
782 -- to ask the government to harm their health and safety.  
783 And if you are talking about grocery prices, they are not  
784 lower, they are higher. And if you talk about our energy  
785 dominance, that has to be linked to clean energy, which you  
786 and the Trump Administration just are completely getting rid  
787 of. And if you talk about getting a permit, well, under the  
788 reconciliation bill -- which is the reason I think most of  
789 our colleagues aren't here on the other side of the aisle, is  
790 because the President is here trying to convince them to vote  
791 for that garbage -- and under that bill, if you just pay \$1  
792 million -- I guess that is for the LNG permit -- or you pay  
793 10 million for a pipeline permit, then you automatically get  
794 the permit, and you don't have to go through any kind of EPA  
795 review whatsoever because the permit and the payment of the  
796 check is deemed in the public interest.

797           So, you know, you have undertaken multiple waves of  
798 utterly arbitrary and harmful cuts to important programs and  
799 grants. Thankfully, courts have recognized that your actions  
800 are illegal, and have ordered a hold on these mass

801 terminations and withholding of funds unless you could show  
802 that grants were only terminated after an individual review.

803 And EPA officials have attempted to exploit that  
804 loophole by asserting that grants have been individually  
805 reviewed, without offering evidence to support such claims.  
806 Fortunately, the courts have not been falling for it. One  
807 judge recently wrote that, even after reviewing thousands of  
808 pages of documents produced by the EPA, there was not a  
809 single document demonstrating an individual review of any  
810 individual grantee.

811 In another case, an EPA official submitted a sworn  
812 declaration stating that -- and I am quoting now -- EPA  
813 leadership conducting an individualized grant by grant review  
814 to determine which grants should continue, which should be  
815 modified, and which should be terminated. But a declaration  
816 in a separate case indicates that another Trump appointee in  
817 a single day conducted a review and determined that nine  
818 entire programs constituting hundreds of grants should be  
819 terminated.

820 And I would ask unanimous consent to enter the  
821 declarations of Daniel Coogan and Travis Voyles into the  
822 record. Mr. Chairman, these are actually court records.  
823 They are two EPA Trump employees that have contradicted each  
824 other, in my opinion, on the individual review issue.

825 In any case, if -- I will hold them so I can reference

826       them if necessary, and then give them to you, Mr. Chairman.

827           \*Mr. Griffith.   [Presiding.]   And is it the complete  
828 transcript of their testimony, or just an affidavit?

829           \*Mr. Pallone.   A transcript of their testimony.

830           \*Mr. Griffith.   Oh, if it is the complete transcript,  
831 then --

832           \*Mr. Pallone.   All right.

833           \*Mr. Griffith.   -- it will be acceptable.

834           [The information follows:]

835

836       \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

837

838           \*Mr. Pallone. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but  
839 I want to clear this up with a question.

840           Administrator, please explain what, if any, process EPA  
841 has undertaken to individually review grants prior to their  
842 termination, who was involved in that process, and what  
843 records exist documenting the supposed process of this review  
844 for each individual terminated grant, if you could.

845           \*Mr. Zeldin. That has been an extensive process.

846           First, it is important to point out that one of the two  
847 employees you mentioned are actually a career EPA employee,  
848 it is not a Trump political appointee.

849           When we came in, we started working with the career  
850 staff that was here previously. That includes career staff  
851 involved with oversight, or lack thereof, of the Greenhouse  
852 Gas Reduction Fund.

853           \*Mr. Pallone. But Mr. Zeldin -- I know, because I am  
854 going to be cut off by the chairman, not that he is, you  
855 know, trying to do it, but the time is there -- I would like  
856 what records exist documenting the supposed process of this  
857 review for each individual terminated grant. If you can't  
858 give that to me today, then I would ask that you submit it  
859 through the chairman in the future, as soon as possible.  
860 Would that be okay?

861           \*Mr. Zeldin. Whatever explanation that you are looking  
862 for --

863           \*Mr. Pallone.   Okay.

864           \*Mr. Zeldin.   Again, we have a process --

865           \*Mr. Pallone.   Okay, you said you will provide it.

866           \*Mr. Zeldin.   -- every individual --

867           \*Mr. Pallone.   Now, let me ask you one more question,  
868   and then I will close.

869           Do you think that one EPA official deciding in a single  
870   day that nine separate programs with hundreds of grants  
871   should be terminated constitutes an individualized review?

872           That is what one of the employees said in -- to the  
873   court.   Do you think that that --

874           \*Mr. Zeldin.   I was the one who made the decision, and I  
875   made the decision after doing an individual review of every  
876   grant specifically.   I personally --

877           \*Mr. Pallone.   Did not --

878           \*Mr. Zeldin.   -- reviewed every single grant that I  
879   canceled.

880           \*Mr. Pallone.   Okay.   Now, in the time -- in my opinion,  
881   you know, in the time that you have led this agency you have  
882   decimated the critical work that EPA does.   You have left  
883   communities across the country scrambling with few answers.  
884   Your polluter-first agenda will have a damaging impact on  
885   American workers, families, and children for years to come.  
886   And if this is the great American comeback, then I pray for  
887   the country.

888           And with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

889           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
890 recognizes gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Joyce, for five  
891 minutes.

892           \*Dr. Joyce. Thank you, Chairman Griffith and Ranking  
893 Member Tonko for holding this important hearing.

894           And thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for testifying here  
895 today.

896           The Biden Administration's EPA championed the worst  
897 tendencies of bureaucracy, unleashing a slew of burdensome  
898 rules that were often unrealistic or impossible for U.S.  
899 businesses, U.S. farmers, or U.S. communities to address.  
900 Now, with the Trump Administration and your leadership, we  
901 have seen a return to a more common-sense approach that seeks  
902 to realize our shared goal of a cleaner and a healthier  
903 environment by prioritizing engagement with all stakeholders,  
904 and leveraging something that we recognize to be so  
905 important, and that is American innovation.

906           We have also seen the benefits of this approach, as the  
907 relief provided from these burdensome regulations has been  
908 accompanied by a multitude of environmental winds.

909           I would ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a  
910 release detailing these clean environmental actions.

911           \*Mr. Griffith. Without objection, so ordered.

912



913           [The information follows:]

914

915       \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

916

917           \*Dr. Joyce. Administrator Zeldin, how has streamlining  
918 the EPA's workforce and creating a more efficient agency  
919 helped you better accomplish your mission of protecting human  
920 health and the environment simultaneously?

921           \*Mr. Zeldin. One of the beauties of how we have  
922 approached this process is that we solicited feedback from  
923 people who had been inside of the agency for a very long time  
924 inside of each of the program offices. And we asked them,  
925 what do you need in order to be able to do your job better?

926           With regards to all statutory obligations, we inherited  
927 so many backlogs. The pesticides review was something like  
928 14,000. New chemical review, several hundred. State  
929 implementation plan backlog, small refinery exemption  
930 backlog, and the list goes on. All these backlogs we  
931 inherited. We show up on day one, it is like, hey, here you  
932 go. That is okay. We don't mind getting a big mess to fix.  
933 We are happy to do it.

934           So what happens when we have this 14,000 pesticide  
935 review backlog, or the -- a 500 or so new chemical backlog?  
936 How do we fix it? So we go to the Office of Chemicals. I  
937 speak not just to the political staff, I speak to the career  
938 staff. What do you need?

939           There is primarily two needs. One is they need -- they  
940 could use more scientists. Great. That is part of the  
941 reorg, we get them more scientists. And two, they need help

942 in updating their infrastructure. Now, Congress helped with  
943 that. It was part of an anomaly in a CR, \$17 million to  
944 update the infrastructure. Thank you. And we are putting it  
945 to good use. And we are going to be able to get down that  
946 backlog. With the pesticide review we have already gotten it  
947 down over 2,300 coming into this, and we are going to keep  
948 going.

949       \*Dr. Joyce. Thank you for that hard work. I appreciate  
950 the EPA providing a path to regulatory relief for companies  
951 impacted by the EPA's HON rule, which imposed new regulations  
952 on ethylene oxide. As you know, ethylene oxide is critical  
953 in many sectors, including the use of sterilization of  
954 medical equipment. Over 50 percent of medical devices in the  
955 United States utilize ethylene oxide for that sterilization.

956       When can we expect decisions on the request made under  
957 the relief pathway to ensure companies are not spending  
958 millions of dollars in an effort to comply with the flawed  
959 Biden rule?

960       \*Mr. Zeldin. Thank you, Congressman, for raising this,  
961 and we are working to get it done this year. We are doing a  
962 lot at once, and that is okay. I know that it is a lot that  
963 is on our plate, but we are going to get it done.

964       We received a lot of concerns and, you know, for the  
965 sake of time I -- you know, I could either go through some of  
966 them or not. It is up to you, Congressman.

967           \*Dr. Joyce. Well, thank you. I look forward to that  
968 answer.

969           Administrator Zeldin, at the start of this month the  
970 House passed my CRA, which would overturn the EPA's rule that  
971 granted a California waiver, allowing them to more  
972 effectively utilize what consumers want. You talked about  
973 that in your statement, listening to what the consumer, what  
974 America wants. America wants to be able to choose what type  
975 of engine is under the hood of their car.

976           Can you speak on the importance of consumer choice and  
977 how free-market innovation, not unattainable government  
978 mandates, are the most effective way to lower emissions in  
979 the auto industry?

980           \*Mr. Zeldin. Congressman, the Trump EPA believes that  
981 if you want to go out and purchase a gas-powered vehicle, you  
982 should be able to go out and purchase a gas-powered vehicle.  
983 If you want to go out and purchase an electric vehicle, you  
984 should go out and be able to purchase an electric vehicle.  
985 Consumer choice is very important.

986           The ranking member of the full committee made a  
987 reference to clean energy without referencing baseload power  
988 and the need for it as if wind, an intermittent source, is  
989 going to be a substitute for all of these forms of baseload  
990 power. So consumer choice is important, and being realistic  
991 is incredibly important. Common sense is something the

992 American public demands.

993 \*Dr. Joyce. Thank you. My time is expired. Thank you  
994 for the realistic, common-sense approach that you are  
995 directing the EPA.

996 Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

997 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
998 recognize the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Schakowsky.

999 \*Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank  
1000 you, Administrator.

1001 Illinois has about one million lead pipes, and these are  
1002 very dangerous for our communities. It is the second highest  
1003 number of lead pipes in the nation, and it presents a real  
1004 threat to our children, our children at school, our families,  
1005 our businesses, and we need help.

1006 And it seems to me that the EPA, who has cut a lot of  
1007 money out of things that could go to addressing the lead pipe  
1008 issue -- and I would hope that when you think about what that  
1009 really means, we are talking about very dangerous chemicals  
1010 that then get in the water that get in our children. And I  
1011 am asking you, if you think this is a serious issue, and if  
1012 there is a way that the Environmental Protection Agency would  
1013 take a sense of responsibility and help us in our state, the  
1014 second highest in the country of lead pipes, to help us  
1015 create more safety for our community, for all aspects of our  
1016 communities. We need you to take some responsibility with

1017 us. We are not asking just for a handout. We are doing work  
1018 ourselves. But isn't there some way that this would be a  
1019 priority for the Environmental Protection Agency?

1020 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Congresswoman, that is -- it is an  
1021 important issue, and EPA fulfills all of our statutory  
1022 obligations. If there is a desire of Congress to create a  
1023 new statutory obligation from EPA, we will make sure that we  
1024 get it done. We do offer technical assistance to states on  
1025 this, and we also are working with states as it relates to  
1026 lead replacement.

1027 \*Ms. Schakowsky. Well, with that, then, I am going to  
1028 keep your word, I know, and come back to you and talk about  
1029 what you can do to make sure that all the families and the  
1030 children and the businesses that are suffering now [sic]. I  
1031 look forward to working with you on that.

1032 I yield back.

1033 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back now  
1034 recognizes the recognize the gentlelady of Florida, Ms. Lee,  
1035 for five minutes.

1036 \*Ms. Lee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1037 And welcome to you, sir. We appreciate you being with  
1038 us today. I would like to start by acknowledging that we  
1039 appreciate your commitment to returning the EPA to its  
1040 intended and appropriate mission.

1041 You touched on something just a few moments ago that is

1042 so important, and that is that we can both protect the  
1043 environment and grow the economy simultaneously. So your  
1044 commitment and your vision that the EPA needs to get back to  
1045 that function and focus on finding efficiencies whether it  
1046 relates to permitting, application review, or any of the  
1047 other compliance standards that have operated as an  
1048 inhibition to productivity and economic growth, that you are  
1049 committed to doing that responsibly is very important.

1050       Among other things, you have emphasized a return to the  
1051 EPA's core statutory responsibilities. Basing regulatory  
1052 decisions on sound science is essential, whether the issue is  
1053 air, water, or chemicals. We have seen repeated reliance on  
1054 the Integrated Risk Information System, or IRIS, a program  
1055 that was not authorized by Congress and has long been  
1056 criticized for a lack of transparency and scientific rigor.

1057       Can you speak to how you intend to restore confidence in  
1058 EPA chemical assessments and ensure greater transparency for  
1059 those who are engaging with the agency?

1060       \*Mr. Zeldin. Number one, it is important to follow the  
1061 science, to follow sound science, to consider all science in  
1062 making -- to making the best decision possible.

1063       \*Ms. Lee. Now, one thing you touched on a moment ago  
1064 that I think is really important on the subject of Powering  
1065 the Great American Comeback and the five pillars, the  
1066 American energy dominance, you referenced not just permitting

1067 reform but that one essential component of that was  
1068 interagency coordination so that people who are engaged in  
1069 that process don't go through years of review only to then  
1070 get to the end and encounter a different government agency.  
1071 Share with us a little bit more about how you are working on  
1072 that, and why you think it is important.

1073       \*Mr. Zeldin. There are equities that different agencies  
1074 have in a permitting process, and it would be a much better  
1075 idea going forward when Congress is considering possible ways  
1076 to do it legislatively or agencies are figuring out ways to  
1077 do it in the meantime, to work with those who are applying  
1078 for the permit in a simultaneous, efficient process.

1079       I have heard from Members of Congress where there is a  
1080 company over in Europe that does 70 percent of their business  
1081 in China, and they want to bring a multi-billion-dollar  
1082 investment into the United States. But the reason why they  
1083 are not going into that state here in the U.S. is because  
1084 they feel like it will take too much time, that years down  
1085 the road and after they spend a fortune they may still not  
1086 get an approval at the end of the process. And if there is  
1087 more certainty, less time, less cost, that decision for that  
1088 business in Europe will be to come to bring their dollars  
1089 here.

1090       It doesn't make sense to me that 20 months down the  
1091 road, out of nowhere, you know, Fish and Wildlife might be



1092 giving them a complaint of something that they need to deal  
1093 with that you could have just told them a year-and-a-half  
1094 earlier.

1095         And the same thing on EPA's front. If there is any EPA  
1096 equity in permitting reform where we need an applicant to do  
1097 something, we don't want to wait two years down the road and  
1098 then gum up the works. Just be forthcoming with those  
1099 applying for the permit out of the gate, and let them know  
1100 what EPA is going to need so that they can address it. And  
1101 that is what we have been doing with permit applicants all  
1102 across the country since I was confirmed.

1103         \*Ms. Lee. Similarly, one of the things that is of great  
1104 interest to many of us here in Congress is ensuring that the  
1105 United States does remain the artificial intelligence capital  
1106 of the world. I would love to hear more about your  
1107 perspective on how the EPA can be part of ensuring that we  
1108 achieve that objective.

1109         \*Mr. Zeldin. For one, it is going to require more  
1110 baseload power. It is going -- what is interesting, when I  
1111 was going through the confirmation process, meeting with  
1112 Senate Republicans and Democrats, everyone was agreeing that  
1113 we need to make America the AI capital of the world. And at  
1114 least privately, everybody was agreeing that we are going to  
1115 need more power in order to be able to do that. And I think  
1116 that there is a -- there is room here for Congress and for

1117 the Administration to heed the call of the American public to  
1118 help get that investment to win this race. And there are  
1119 some people who might be your constituents who might be a bit  
1120 spooked by how powerful AI is and what it might become. But  
1121 if we don't lean into it we are going to lose, and China will  
1122 eat our lunch.

1123 \*Ms. Lee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

1124 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back. Now I  
1125 recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Peters, for  
1126 five minutes of questioning.

1127 \*Mr. Peters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1128 Thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here. I am  
1129 going to begin with thank you because I represent San Diego,  
1130 and I want to just thank you for your recent visit to the  
1131 South Bay and for your work -- your tour of the Tijuana  
1132 Valley International Water -- Wastewater Treatment Plant.  
1133 That contamination issue remains what I believe is one of the  
1134 catastrophes, environmentally, of the hemisphere, and we were  
1135 so encouraged by your commitment to working on 100 percent  
1136 solution. Even today I got your release as if it was written  
1137 for me, that you are advancing the timeline from -- to get to  
1138 35 MGD, million gallons a day, within 100 days. So I can't  
1139 say anything, but thank you for that. That is really a  
1140 welcome thing.

1141 We have all worked really hard to get resources here,

1142 Republicans and Democrats. Democrats, we are all committed,  
1143 but I will tell you some of my best advocates were the seven  
1144 Republican Navy Seals who had to train in that water. So  
1145 again, thank you very much. You have a partner here, and we  
1146 are happy to have a partner with you.

1147 I will say, you know, I do -- I appreciate the need for  
1148 energy here, and I know that that may be Secretary Wright  
1149 more than you, but I would just say I think that is all-of-  
1150 the-above energy -- I don't think it is just oil and gas --  
1151 to achieve American energy dominance. And to the extent we  
1152 do permit reform, which I am very interested in, I hope we  
1153 are talking about all kinds of energy, and we are not  
1154 selecting out some things for fast-tracking and other things  
1155 for slow-tracking. I don't think that is what industry  
1156 wants. I don't think that serves the country.

1157 But I want to talk to you about something along those  
1158 lines that I hope we can agree on, and that is methane. You  
1159 know, we had -- in 2016 President Obama issued administrative  
1160 rules to limit fugitive methane emissions. The Trump  
1161 Administration repealed them, the first Trump Administration.  
1162 The Biden Administration issued new rules to limit methane  
1163 emissions, and now we are looking at a repeal or partial  
1164 repeal or a total relook. And I would just suggest to you  
1165 that that is not good for the environment, and it is not good  
1166 for business.

1167           What we are hearing from industry, actually, is they  
1168   wanted a partial reconsideration of methane rules that would  
1169   preserve the majority of the rule structure. And either --  
1170   places like Exxon, Total Energy, Cheniere, AXP, which  
1171   represents 60 percent of U.S. production of oil and gas -- or  
1172   gas, they want strong rules on methane and they want  
1173   bipartisan and durable regulation. I think we have to do  
1174   that with Congress because when the Trump Administration  
1175   leaves you are going to have a potentially another  
1176   administration that takes a whole different tack.

1177           And what we are hearing again and again is these  
1178   producers need certainty. And I know you worked here, I know  
1179   how frustrated you must have been from time to time when you  
1180   couldn't get engagement from the administration on working  
1181   out a rule. So I would suggest to you that if we could come  
1182   up with a rule that regulated emissions -- it could be  
1183   emission-specific, not technology-directed, which the last  
1184   two Democratic administrations have put out there -- let  
1185   industry figure out how to achieve an emissions target, give  
1186   them an emissions target, give folks who have a hard time to  
1187   comply assistance -- we tried to do that in the IRA -- give  
1188   enough time to do it, but put enforceability in so that  
1189   everybody is in the tent.

1190           I think we could come up with something that both  
1191   protects the environment to the extent we are using oil and

1192 gas, but also helps business achieve what you say, unleash  
1193 energy abundance or dominance, because they can't do that  
1194 without certainty. Is that something that you think we could  
1195 work together on? I would just hope that we could do that  
1196 together.

1197       \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Congressman, I would be happy to sit  
1198 down with you and to be able to hear your concerns and  
1199 requests. We are at an early stage of the process that will  
1200 include a public comment period. As we are going through the  
1201 rulemaking I have not pre-judged outcomes of that rulemaking.  
1202 If you would like to sit down at this early part of that  
1203 reconsideration, I would love to do it.

1204       \*Mr. Peters. Well, here is the advantage of legislation  
1205 is we don't have to go through that. We could come up with a  
1206 deal within 30 days and put it into legislation and not have  
1207 to go through the rulemaking process that takes so long.

1208       And I would just say, too, that to the extent you are  
1209 going to -- I think you suggested you are going to wholly  
1210 reconsider the methane rules quad O and subpart W -- the  
1211 industry has no idea what that entails, and then there is  
1212 even more uncertainty. And they have invested billions of  
1213 dollars in compliance. And when Exxon tells you, you know,  
1214 hey, leave the rules in place, we would rather have the rules  
1215 than have you repeal the rules and, you know, jerk us back  
1216 and forth again -- and this is, you know, this is on both

1217 parties -- maybe it is better for us to do that here, without  
1218 the incredible drag of the regulatory process which, again,  
1219 can be reversed by the next administration.

1220         So I would suggest we -- if you want to do the  
1221 rulemaking, that is fine. But simultaneously, why don't we  
1222 see if we can't come up with a deal that this committee could  
1223 put before the full committee and then on the President's  
1224 desk? Would you be willing to work on that?

1225         \*Mr. Zeldin. As far as the legislation piece, I am  
1226 happy to work with the committee to the extent that they are  
1227 asking for any technical assistance or answers. From the  
1228 regulatory standpoint, that is where the agency has the lead.  
1229 As far as legislation crafting, that is something for you all  
1230 to let me know if there is any way I can assist.

1231         \*Mr. Peters. We would love your help.

1232         Thank you, I yield back.

1233         \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
1234 recognizes the vice chairman of this subcommittee, the  
1235 gentleman from Texas, Mr. Crenshaw.

1236         \*Mr. Crenshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for  
1237 holding this important hearing.

1238         And most of all, thank you to you, Administrator Zeldin.  
1239 It is good to see you in this position. I can't express my  
1240 appreciation for, I think, bringing this agency back to a  
1241 sense of pragmatism and away from ideological endeavors and -

1242 - because I think we all want clean air, we want clean water,  
1243 and we care about the environment. We care about being good  
1244 stewards of the environment. And I look forward to working  
1245 with you more on getting us back on track.

1246 One question that is -- I have for you important to my  
1247 district. You know, being -- my district being the hub of  
1248 many energy companies, but also many chemical companies and  
1249 chemicals, the word "chemical" even seems to have a bad  
1250 connotation to it these days, but it is vital for our modern  
1251 way of life. And we are coming up on review of the Toxic  
1252 Substances Control Act, TSCA.

1253 What actions is the agency taking to address this  
1254 backlog for reviewing new -- for reviewing -- sorry -- the  
1255 backlog that -- reviewing under section five of TSCA, what  
1256 actions is the agency taking to address that backlog and  
1257 fulfill the obligations to review new chemical applications  
1258 within 90 days? This is something that hasn't happened under  
1259 the last administration.

1260 \*Mr. Zeldin. Congressman, there are two key aspects of  
1261 how we have attacked this. One, on the personnel side, we  
1262 want to and are adding more scientists towards this effort.  
1263 There is an ability to get through more of the backlog if we  
1264 can increase the bandwidth inside of that office. And the  
1265 second piece of it is with technology. It is outdated  
1266 technology. There is a lot of new technology, including AI,

1267 that we are able to successfully tap into. You add those  
1268 pieces, the expanded bandwidth of personnel plus the  
1269 advancements in technology, and we are confident that we are  
1270 going to be able to tackle the backlogs that we inherited.

1271 \*Mr. Crenshaw. I am glad to hear it is a priority.  
1272 Again, these companies need some consistency and some  
1273 understanding of what they -- what kind of timelines they can  
1274 adhere to.

1275 Related to that question, I think in the past we have  
1276 seen some unreasonable assumptions while conducting risk  
1277 evaluations under section 6 of TSCA. So that includes  
1278 failing to differentiate between different conditions of use  
1279 for chemicals, assuming workers don't have appropriate  
1280 personal protective equipment, making very, very outlandish  
1281 assumptions in order to deny certain chemicals and, you know,  
1282 despite existing regulations from the Occupational Safety and  
1283 Health Administration, OSHA, that require PPE. So they would  
1284 assume that, you know, this chemical is unsafe because, well,  
1285 what if somebody just drank it? Well, I mean, that is an  
1286 unreasonable assumption.

1287 So what -- you know, what steps is the EPA now taking to  
1288 ensure that these risk evaluations for existing chemicals  
1289 follow the best available science, properly evaluate risks,  
1290 and I think just take common sense into account?

1291 \*Mr. Zeldin. We have to make sure that the decisions



1292 are tethered to actual science, to be considering the best  
1293 available science, and making sure that that process is also  
1294 more efficient inside of the agency. Rather than having the  
1295 agency in conflict with each other where there is different  
1296 opinions and different program offices, to have more  
1297 consistency with that process is also key.

1298       \*Mr. Crenshaw. Yes, we will send you some of those  
1299 strange stories that we have heard, too, where just common  
1300 sense was thrown out the window, and I think you would be a  
1301 bit surprised by it. Thank you for taking that on.

1302       And again, as we work through the reauthorization of  
1303 user fees under TSCA, are there additional implementation  
1304 challenges for the agency with TSCA in the 2016 Lautenberg  
1305 Amendment that the committee should address?

1306       \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, I would say, as far as durability  
1307 goes, any type of challenges, lessons learned that you lived  
1308 through in the last administration, while we are addressing  
1309 it now.

1310       Pendulums swing, and you can write legislation thinking  
1311 about where you want this process to be, where things look 5  
1312 years down the road or 10 years down the road, and if you  
1313 have an opportunity to legislate a fixed based off of a  
1314 lesson learned, we shouldn't be inheriting backlogs when we  
1315 come in. We should be using the best available science. It  
1316 should be tethered to actual science. So we are fixing it

1317 right now on our own at the agency. There could be an  
1318 opportunity through legislation to make sure that it is more  
1319 durable with whoever would be in charge of the agency in the  
1320 future.

1321 \*Mr. Crenshaw. Yes, your feedback on that would be  
1322 great.

1323 And I am out of time. I yield back, thank you.

1324 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
1325 recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragan, for  
1326 five minutes.

1327 \*Ms. Barragan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1328 The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund is a transformative  
1329 program that will leverage private capital to support  
1330 community-led projects that reduce pollution, create good-  
1331 paying jobs, and lower energy costs. Now, several  
1332 organizations applied and were competitively awarded funding  
1333 to deploy to these economic development projects, just to  
1334 have their money frozen.

1335 You, Mr. Administrator, have made several accusations at  
1336 awardees of the fund and former employees at EPA, but EPA's  
1337 attorneys have not presented these accusations in court. A  
1338 judge in a case brought by an award recipient asked EPA's  
1339 lawyer from DoJ -- and I am quoting -- "Can you proffer to me  
1340 the evidence of commission of a violation of Federal criminal  
1341 law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or

1342 gratuity violations?''

1343           And any one of those things -- and the EPA lawyer  
1344 responded -- and I am quoting -- "I cannot, Your Honor. ''

1345           Just last week, The New York Times reported that the  
1346 Department of Justice's investigation into the program is  
1347 coming up empty, as well, stating that the investigation has,  
1348 quote, "so far failed to find meaningful evidence of  
1349 criminality by government officials. ''

1350           Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter a recent  
1351 New York Times article entitled, "Investigators See No  
1352 Criminality by EPA Officials in Case on Biden-Era Grants, ''  
1353 as well as the transcript from the Climate United versus  
1354 Citibank court hearing into the record.

1355           \*Mr. Griffith. Is that the full transcript?

1356           \*Ms. Barragan. It is.

1357           \*Mr. Griffith. All right. Without objection?

1358           So ordered.

1359           [The information follows:]

1360

1361           \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

1362

1363           \*Ms. Barragan. Okay, so I want to know what actual  
1364 evidence you have of any fraud or wrongdoing. And I am  
1365 talking about actual evidence of fraud or criminality, you  
1366 know, documents or statements, hard proof, not just theories  
1367 or hunches or policy disagreements.

1368           So Administrator Zeldin, what evidence is there of any  
1369 fraud or criminality, if it exists?

1370           And why have you not provided it to us or to the  
1371 Department of Justice?

1372           \*Mr. Zeldin. That is a great question, Congresswoman.  
1373 So I will start with a Biden political appointee saying, "Now  
1374 it is how to get the money out as fast as possible before the  
1375 Trump Administration comes in. It is like we are on the  
1376 Titanic and we are throwing gold bars off the edge.'"

1377           \*Ms. Barragan. Okay, Mr. Zeldin --

1378           \*Mr. Zeldin. In 2024, a watchdog organization --

1379           \*Ms. Barragan. -- I am going to stop you for a second.

1380           \*Mr. Zeldin. Congresswoman --

1381           \*Ms. Barragan. I am going to stop you for a second.

1382           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- do you want me to go through the  
1383 evidence or not?

1384           \*Ms. Barragan. I am going to reclaim my time. You  
1385 mentioned gold bars.

1386           \*Mr. Zeldin. Do you want me to go through the evidence?

1387           \*Ms. Barragan. You mentioned gold bars. That structure

1388 -- one former employee that was secretly recorded, and it was  
1389 not even talking about the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, is  
1390 not evidence of fraud or wrongdoing.

1391 So do you have something else, something better than  
1392 that that is actual fraud or criminality?

1393 \*Mr. Zeldin. So, Congresswoman, I don't know -- if you  
1394 are going to allow me to go through the list, that is the  
1395 first --

1396 \*Ms. Barragan. I am talking about the Greenhouse --

1397 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- evidence. The second is in June of  
1398 2024 --

1399 \*Ms. Barragan. It is very specific.

1400 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- a watchdog organization revealed that  
1401 David Hayes, a Biden Administration climate adviser  
1402 previously on the board of the Coalition for Green Capital,  
1403 rejoined the board as --

1404 \*Ms. Barragan. Mr. Administrator, did you say the  
1405 name --

1406 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- in 2023 --

1407 \*Ms. Barragan. Hold on. I want to clarify the name.  
1408 Did you say the name Jahi Wise? Is that who we are talking  
1409 about?

1410 \*Mr. Zeldin. I did not.

1411 \*Ms. Barragan. What is the name you said?

1412 \*Mr. Zeldin. David Hayes.

1413           \*Ms. Barragan. David Hayes. Okay. Can you repeat  
1414 that? I was trying to get the name.

1415           \*Mr. Zeldin. Okay. I wish you --

1416           \*Ms. Barragan. The name David Hayes.

1417           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- had about 30 minutes for me to go  
1418 through the list.

1419           But in June 2024, a watchdog organization revealed that  
1420 David Hayes, a Biden Administration climate advisor  
1421 previously on the board of Coalition for Green Capital,  
1422 rejoined the board in 2023 while the organization was  
1423 applying for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which it  
1424 ultimately received.

1425           A March 4, 2025 media article identified a number of  
1426 potential conflicts of interest regarding personnel at  
1427 several grantees: Beth Bafford, Climate United Fund --

1428           \*Ms. Barragan. Mr. Zeldin, I am going to reclaim my  
1429 time, because I want to make sure that we can have a  
1430 meaningful exchange about some of the things that you are  
1431 citing to.

1432           You just mentioned two examples. Have you or EPA  
1433 lawyers actually given that to the court, or used that or  
1434 cited that as fraud or criminality?

1435           \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, first off, the standard --

1436           \*Ms. Barragan. It is a yes or no.

1437           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

1438           \*Ms. Barragan. Have you -- you are a lawyer.

1439           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

1440           \*Ms. Barragan. They have mentioned this? Which hearing  
1441 was it at, because I don't see it in the transcript of that  
1442 happening in the United Climate conversation. As a matter of  
1443 fact, I am going to read to you the court transcript.

1444           "Can you proffer any evidence that there was illegal or  
1445 evidence of abuse or fraud, that any of this was improper or  
1446 unlawful?'"

1447           EPA lawyer, "I am certainly not suggesting any of that  
1448 was illegal or improper.'"

1449           Okay. Just yesterday, an EPA lawyer at the hearing  
1450 suggested, "We are not accusing anybody of fraud.'"

1451           \*Mr. Zeldin. Did you understand --

1452           \*Ms. Barragan. So --

1453           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- that the evidence for EPA --

1454           \*Ms. Barragan. So --

1455           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- is not to establish criminality at the  
1456 agency?

1457           \*Ms. Barragan. Well, you are alleging criminality. You  
1458 did so in a Fox News interview, and you said that --

1459           \*Mr. Zeldin. But do you understand --

1460           \*Ms. Barragan. -- is what this Greenhouse Reduction  
1461 Fund was.

1462           \*Mr. Zeldin. In order to --

1463           \*Ms. Barragan. You shouldn't be doing that if you  
1464 cannot proffer the evidence.

1465           \*Mr. Zeldin. But Congresswoman --

1466           \*Ms. Barragan. This is not Fox News. We are not going  
1467 to just allow you --

1468           \*Mr. Zeldin. But Congresswoman, you --

1469           \*Ms. Barragan. -- just make allegations here without  
1470 that evidence.

1471           \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, if this isn't a media interview, you  
1472 should allow me to go through the entire list, rather than  
1473 just going through --

1474           \*Ms. Barragan. Well, fortunately, I only have five  
1475 minutes, and I don't have time for you to filibuster.

1476           \*Mr. Zeldin. If you are truly interested in the entire  
1477 list of all --

1478           \*Ms. Barragan. I am asking for very --

1479           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- the evidence --

1480           \*Ms. Barragan. -- specific fraud --

1481           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- cutting me off and allow me to get  
1482 through the list.

1483           \*Mr. Carter of Georgia. Mr. Chairman?

1484           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady's time has expired. The  
1485 gentlelady yields back. Now I recognize the gentleman from  
1486 Georgia, Mr. Carter, for five minutes.

1487           \*Mr. Carter of Georgia. Thank you, Administrator, for



1488 being here. We are really glad to see you, and thank you,  
1489 and we are just delighted to have you in the position you are  
1490 in, my friend.

1491 I want to briefly mention a company in my district.  
1492 Carbonade USA, a company I have met with that is on the  
1493 cutting edge of turning carbon waste and PFAs [sic] into  
1494 usable products, getting them out of our environment and into  
1495 products such as sustainable aviation fuel.

1496 Administrator, I personally delivered a letter to you  
1497 and -- from this company, and -- with some questions  
1498 surrounding EPA policies on PFAs [sic], coal ash, et cetera.  
1499 Can you commit, please, that you will take a look at this  
1500 letter?

1501 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Congressman.

1502 \*Mr. Carter of Georgia. Thank you very much, and thank  
1503 you.

1504 And now moving on, under the Biden Administration the  
1505 EPA received over \$100 billion in new supplemental funding  
1506 through the IIJA and the IRA, the largest investment in the  
1507 agency's history. The funding created or greatly expanded,  
1508 one or the other, programs such as environmental justice  
1509 grants under the Office of Environmental Justice and External  
1510 Civil Rights, an office that was immediately tasked with  
1511 managing a \$3 billion grant portfolio.

1512 In 2023 EPA Inspector General Sean O'Donnell testified

1513 here that the newly-created office could be at particular  
1514 risk for misspent funds, and that the IRA did not allocate  
1515 sufficient oversight funding. Thankfully, President Trump  
1516 and yourself are hard at work, clawing back funding and  
1517 exposing waste, fraud, and abuse in the system. We cannot  
1518 thank you enough for this, and American people cannot thank  
1519 you enough for this. We are all taxpayers, regardless of  
1520 which side of the aisle you are on. Calling back this waste,  
1521 fraud, and abuse is important to all of us.

1522         We have received pushback regarding EPA's right to  
1523 terminate many of the grants awarded under the previous  
1524 administration, particularly under environmental justice  
1525 programs funded by the IRA. Again, I know that litigation  
1526 about these decisions is ongoing, but is there anything you  
1527 would like to clarify or share with Congress at this point in  
1528 your understanding of EPA's authority to terminate these  
1529 awards?

1530         \*Mr. Zeldin. We refuse to waste a penny of tax dollars.  
1531 We are going to ensure that the zero tolerance policy is  
1532 implemented.

1533         For some of the grants that have been terminated, it is  
1534 important to note, as I stated earlier, that we are in the  
1535 middle of a fiscal year. So as Congress has appropriated  
1536 top-line numbers for different programs, EPA will fulfill our  
1537 obligations under the law in making sure that money goes out

1538 that has to go out unless we hear otherwise from Congress as  
1539 we are going through that fiscal year. But one thing that we  
1540 have zero tolerance for is that there will be zero waste and  
1541 abuse of even a penny of your constituents' tax dollars.

1542 \*Mr. Carter of Georgia. Not only do I applaud you for  
1543 that, Administrator, but I commit to you that we will back  
1544 you up in everything -- way we can in that effort. So thank  
1545 you for that.

1546 As you know, members of this committee have expressed  
1547 serious concerns about the previous administration's attempts  
1548 to stand up the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, such as giving  
1549 billions of dollars to organizations led by Democratic  
1550 political allies to further hand out as they see fit.  
1551 Initially, the previous administration also decided to use a  
1552 financial agent to hold these funds, something that EPA has  
1553 never done before.

1554 To your knowledge, has that been done before?

1555 \*Mr. Zeldin. EPA has never done that before.

1556 \*Mr. Carter of Georgia. Has the way the Greenhouse Gas  
1557 Reduction Fund programs been executed or structured made it  
1558 more difficult to investigate these programs or to monitor  
1559 the use of the funds in these programs?

1560 \*Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely, \$20 billion sent to the bank  
1561 to give to 8 pass-through entities, many of those entities  
1562 were brand new. In one case -- Power Forward Communities,

1563 for example -- received \$100 in 2023. They got \$2 billion in  
1564 2024. In fact, EPA decided to put into the grant agreement  
1565 that they would have 90 days to complete a training called,  
1566 "How to Develop a Budget.'" The Biden EPA felt like the  
1567 recipient needed to complete a training on how to develop a  
1568 budget -- 90 days to complete the training, yet they could  
1569 start spending the \$2 billion as that timeline was going on,  
1570 even before they have learned how to develop a budget,  
1571 intentionally reduced oversight in the way that the financial  
1572 agent agreement was drafted, the grant agreement, the account  
1573 control agreement. And when the money goes through the first  
1574 pass-through, in many respects it goes through other pass-  
1575 throughs, and EPA isn't even a party to any of those sub-  
1576 grantees.

1577       So we are just starting to scratch the surface. There  
1578 was a congresswoman who just asked the question, said, what  
1579 evidence do you have? So we started going through the list,  
1580 and they didn't want -- I guess the other side of the aisle  
1581 doesn't want me to go into any real list, one, two, three,  
1582 four. Do you want me -- I mean, how much time do you have?  
1583 Because if you want to yield a full 20 minutes, I am happy to  
1584 go through all the specifics, and we are right here going  
1585 through more. And I appreciate you asking, Congressman.

1586       \*Mr. Carter of Georgia. Well, and thank you again,  
1587 Administrator, for being here today, and thank you for your

1588 work, and know that the American people support you and  
1589 appreciate all of your efforts at the EPA. Thank you, my  
1590 friend.

1591 And I yield back.

1592 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
1593 recognize the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Soto, for five  
1594 minutes.

1595 \*Mr. Soto. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr.  
1596 Secretary, for being here today.

1597 You know, the Energy Star program is a popular program.  
1598 It is there to make sure that we have energy efficiency  
1599 certifications for dishwashers, for refrigerators, dryers,  
1600 and home appliances. It has been around since 1992. You and  
1601 I are in our mid-forties, so you were probably an early  
1602 teenager in Long Island when this was coming out, and a lot  
1603 of our parents over the years were able to buy those  
1604 appliances, and then now we get to do that. It saved about 5  
1605 trillion kilowatt hours of electricity, about 500 billion in  
1606 energy costs, and achieved 4 billion metric tons of  
1607 greenhouse gas reductions. This is merely providing info for  
1608 consumers and encourages innovation. But it is not a  
1609 mandate, right?

1610 And we have -- I have read some articles from the New  
1611 York Times and others that the EPA plans to shut down this  
1612 program. Is this true? Do you -- is it your intention to

1613 ask Congress to shut down this program?

1614       \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, Congress never created the program,  
1615 so it -- as far as the future of the program, you know, I  
1616 start thinking of a program like LEED. And there is other  
1617 examples of programs that are run outside of government.  
1618 This program is an example of one that can be run outside of  
1619 the government, and I have actually had multiple entities  
1620 reach out to EPA over the course of the last few weeks  
1621 because they want to take over Energy Star, which is a  
1622 program that requires a big staff, a big taxpayer-funded  
1623 staff, and a whole lot of tax dollars, a lot of tax dollars.

1624       \*Mr. Soto. Mr. Secretary, have you proposed any  
1625 rulemaking to try to adjust this program yet, or do you have  
1626 any drafts of that, of what your proposal would look like?

1627       \*Mr. Zeldin. It doesn't require rulemaking.

1628       \*Mr. Soto. Okay. So you believe you could do it just  
1629 by an administrative order, then?

1630       \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, again, Congress -- this is not a  
1631 statutory obligation set by Congress.

1632       \*Mr. Soto. And then, you know, you served here for  
1633 eight years in Congress, a lawyer, you know this place really  
1634 well. So when we are talking about funds like the Greenhouse  
1635 Gas Reduction Fund, let's take you at your word. Let's say  
1636 there are programs and funds that you want to claw back to  
1637 examine and look at to make sure that tax dollars are being

1638 spent well. There is a distinct possibility those programs  
1639 are going to be around for the next couple of years and not  
1640 actually pulled out under this reconciliation package.

1641 So I am trying to understand. What do you think the  
1642 full extent of your power is to pull these back before it  
1643 becomes impoundment, before it becomes unlawful? Can you  
1644 give this committee some idea of what you intend over this  
1645 next couple months to a year? When does it become  
1646 impoundment and unlawful, versus reviewing programs that have  
1647 already been funded by Congress?

1648 \*Mr. Zeldin. There are programs appropriated by  
1649 Congress. We are in the middle of the fiscal year, and we  
1650 are going to get money out that we are required to get out.

1651 \*Mr. Soto. And so -- and you understand you have the  
1652 power to be able to propose a budget, right? And if you want  
1653 to cut programs, isn't that the proper way to do that, to --  
1654 in your skinny budget and then in other budgets -- like, you  
1655 had proposed initially a 55 percent cut in the EPA budget.  
1656 Isn't that the proper way to try to cut programs as you are  
1657 reviewing to make sure money is being spent well?

1658 \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, if we are -- and here, we are here  
1659 talking about the fiscal year 2026 budget. If it is  
1660 something with regards to the current fiscal year, it  
1661 wouldn't be part of the skinny budget for next year.

1662 \*Mr. Soto. I understand, but we are talking about -- I

1663 am trying to understand your role as you see it, as  
1664 Secretary, of where you can work with Congress on this,  
1665 rather than doing things unilaterally, which you know from  
1666 being here for many years, is not the way we are supposed to  
1667 do things.

1668         You were a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus when  
1669 you were here in Congress, and that was a bipartisan group  
1670 that came together to try to develop bipartisan ways to deal  
1671 with climate change. So I just want to make sure we are  
1672 still on the same page here. Do you believe that climate  
1673 change exists, and that it is human-caused, and that we have  
1674 some obligation to do some things about it in a bipartisan  
1675 fashion?

1676         \*Mr. Zeldin. Humans have contributed to it, but humans  
1677 are not the only cause of it. Climate change has been around  
1678 for a very long time, including pre-industrialization. You  
1679 could go back looking thousands, tens of thousands of years,  
1680 and you will have the Earth at different temperatures.

1681         \*Mr. Soto. I understand, Mr. Secretary. So do we have  
1682 an obligation to do something about the human-caused parts of  
1683 it that you just recognized occurs?

1684         \*Mr. Zeldin. I think that there are individual  
1685 responsibilities and collective responsibilities to be good  
1686 stewards of the environment.

1687         \*Mr. Soto. And I yield back.



1688           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
1689 recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Weber, for five  
1690 minutes.

1691           \*Mr. Weber. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1692           Mr. Administrator, it is nice to see you again. I am  
1693 glad to hear you got accolades for being a very well versed  
1694 lawyer and having spent eight years here. I am surprised you  
1695 would even set foot on this place again.

1696           But listen, if you would like, Mr. Administrator, I can  
1697 give you time to go back through that list where she was  
1698 asking, actually, for some of those. Would you like to  
1699 reiterate those for us?

1700           \*Mr. Zeldin. Sure. Thank you, Congressman. And this  
1701 is one of the things that might not come as a shocker to you,  
1702 but not everything the New York Times says is always true.

1703           \*Mr. Weber. Say it isn't so.

1704           \*Mr. Zeldin. So, you know, we have seen from the New  
1705 York Times, Washington Post, Politico, they will write a  
1706 story and they will say that there is no evidence of any  
1707 wrongdoing, anything wrong with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction  
1708 Fund. No evidence?

1709           We have expressed concern with regards to self-dealing  
1710 and conflicts of interest, unqualified recipients, and  
1711 reduced oversight. I started to get into some of the  
1712 examples of self-dealing and conflicts of interest, which --

1713 by the way, the list is long of the leadership of a lot of  
1714 these NGOs as former Biden and Obama officials, including  
1715 prominent Democratic donors.

1716 We have individuals who are serving in leadership  
1717 capacities helping to create these programs, giving it to  
1718 their former employers in some of the examples.

1719 A government reviewer for Justice Climate Fund awarded  
1720 \$940 million, noting that only 3 of the non-profit's 12 board  
1721 members are independent from the organization and its  
1722 coalition members. No mention of conflict of interest like  
1723 if a family member benefitted from an entity receiving  
1724 greenhouse gas reduction funding through the GCF.

1725 Unqualified recipients. Power Forward Communities had  
1726 reported a total of \$100, even -- in 2023. They get 2  
1727 billion in 2024.

1728 CGC expended only 1.42 million in 2023 before receiving  
1729 a \$5 billion award.

1730 Earlier we were talking to the chairman about  
1731 Appalachian Community Capital receiving \$500 million, and  
1732 they never managed anywhere near that much money.

1733 Concerns about the lack of oversight. You can ask me  
1734 all sorts of basic questions about where the money goes once  
1735 it goes to those eight prime recipients, and I should have an  
1736 answer, but we don't. As was pointed out with one of your  
1737 colleagues, it is the first time that EPA is using a

1738 financial agent agreement in connection with one of these  
1739 programs, the first time, actually, that it was ever used as  
1740 a non-exchange grant program administered by the Federal  
1741 Government across all agencies. Last-minute modifications to  
1742 the grant agreement in ACA appeared intentional to reduce  
1743 oversight, including amending the Account Control Agreement  
1744 January 13th of 2025, just one week before the inauguration.  
1745 Those amendments limited EPA's contractual rights to  
1746 terminate for misconduct, short of a Federal crime, and  
1747 limited EPA's contractual rights to assert exclusive control  
1748 over funds in the Citibank accounts.

1749 EPA determined that the amendments left EPA with  
1750 insufficient authority to retain control of funds short of  
1751 outright termination. Former EPA IG testifying to this  
1752 subcommittee says the EPA's "pace of spending GGRF funds  
1753 escalates not only the risk for fraud, but also the urgency  
1754 for oversight.'" He said that the EPA's OIG would need to  
1755 hire oversight professionals with specialized expertise to  
1756 conduct sufficient oversight regarding the NCIF grants, in  
1757 particular, not only to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, but  
1758 also to ensure that the IRA funds deliver the real  
1759 environmental and human health benefits the public is paying  
1760 for.

1761 EPA's Acting IG, Nicole Murley, testified to the House  
1762 Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. The EPA was

1763 particularly concerned the GGRF program, including because  
1764 the grant structure makes providing effective oversight  
1765 challenging, and that EPA is concerned that there will be  
1766 critical gaps in monitoring, accountability, and compliance  
1767 in the GGRF.

1768         Now, here is the thing. We are just scratching the  
1769 surface. And I see your time is now running short, and I  
1770 appreciate you allowing me to spend many minutes, but here is  
1771 the catch. If you had 20 minutes that you were yielding to  
1772 me right now, I would just keep going through the list. And  
1773 no matter how much further down that list we get, the New  
1774 York Times and the Washington Post and Congressional  
1775 Democrats will dig in even deeper, saying there is no  
1776 evidence of anything. The more time that you all give me to  
1777 go further down the list, the more dug-in Democrats will say  
1778 with their hands and their ears saying there is no evidence  
1779 of any misconduct, there is no evidence of any way that there  
1780 is anything wrong with any of this.

1781         But we have a zero tolerance policy for any waste and  
1782 abuse, and we are not going to apologize.

1783         \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman's time --

1784         \*Mr. Weber. Thank you, Mr. Administrator, and thank  
1785 you, Mr. Chairman. And so the sky is falling. So we  
1786 appreciate you, Administrator.

1787         \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now

1788 recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Auchincloss,  
1789 for five minutes.

1790 \*Mr. Auchincloss. Thank you, Chairman.

1791 Welcome back, Administrator. I want to talk about PFAS.  
1792 When you were a member here, you were on the PFAS Action  
1793 Force, yes? And I believe you voted for PFAS legislation,  
1794 yes?

1795 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, sir.

1796 \*Mr. Auchincloss. My inclination is to think that is  
1797 because you represent -- you represented New York. And like  
1798 Massachusetts, which I represent, both states have a pretty  
1799 significant PFAS challenge: contaminated soil, contaminated  
1800 water. You have contaminated DoD site in Calverton, right,  
1801 former -- in your former district, which I know you advocated  
1802 for, and advocated to reduce PFAS levels there. So I was  
1803 hopeful, and remain hopeful, that you can be a partner on  
1804 PFAS remediation as administrator.

1805 Last week you announced that the EPA would rescind the  
1806 drinking water standard for four PFAS chemicals, and extend  
1807 the compliance deadline for PFOA and PFOS by an additional  
1808 two years, giving water systems seven years to comply. I  
1809 know you had indicated in previous testimony that for those  
1810 two -- that for PFOA and PFOS -- you may actually consider  
1811 lowering it from four to two parts per trillion, yes?

1812 \*Mr. Zeldin. For PFOA and PFOS we are maintaining the

1813 four parts per trillion MCL.

1814 \*Mr. Auchincloss. So you won't consider lowering it to  
1815 two?

1816 \*Mr. Zeldin. With regards to the other four, we are  
1817 going to be going through a rulemaking where, at the end of  
1818 that process, that number will be determined. It could be it  
1819 could be four --

1820 \*Mr. Auchincloss. Right --

1821 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- it could be two, it could be something  
1822 else.

1823 \*Mr. Auchincloss. Not the other four. I am talking  
1824 about the two, PFOA and PFOs. I am just asking because you  
1825 had said in previous testimony you could potentially bring it  
1826 down to two, but it sounds like you are going to keep it at  
1827 four. Okay, extending the timeline to seven years.

1828 So now let's talk about the other four PFAS chemicals:  
1829 PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and then the hazard index mixture. So  
1830 the EPA has its own science, as well as up-to-date peer-  
1831 reviewed science that says that these four PFAS have been  
1832 linked to serious human health harms, even at very low  
1833 levels. Why, instead of just retaining the MCLs for those  
1834 four PFAS in accordance with the no-backsliding provision,  
1835 why would you just rescind it?

1836 \*Mr. Zeldin. One of the things that I understand as  
1837 administrator of EPA is that every single decision that I

1838 will ever make I will probably get sued for, whether I say  
1839 yes or no on anything. I have inherited some litigation, as  
1840 well, including litigation on that rule that was finalized  
1841 before I got there. There was a procedural error in the way  
1842 in which they moved through the process on those four. I  
1843 inherited that procedural error, and I am going to fix it.

1844 \*Mr. Auchincloss. All right, so just reclaiming my  
1845 time, then, so you are not contesting that there is good  
1846 science that those for PFAS that you rescinded the rule for  
1847 had been linked to serious human health harms. What you are  
1848 asserting is that there are procedural error under the APA?

1849 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

1850 \*Mr. Auchincloss. Under the APA. That means that you  
1851 have to rescind -- but you are committing that you are going  
1852 to reissue a rule for those four PFAS.

1853 \*Mr. Zeldin. We are going to go through the rulemaking  
1854 process on those four.

1855 \*Mr. Auchincloss. I see. Okay. Moving towards the  
1856 budgeting aspect of this, the skinny budget proposal has a 90  
1857 percent reduction for the drinking water state revolving  
1858 fund. Is that accurate?

1859 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

1860 \*Mr. Auchincloss. How is New York and the 1.3 million  
1861 New Yorkers who have PFAS in their water above the MCLs by  
1862 the former rule, how are they going to get water treatment

1863 plants with a 90 percent cut? That is the primary funding  
1864 mechanism for water infrastructure.

1865       \*Mr. Zeldin. So great news, and it is something that  
1866 Members of Congress who care about this issue would be very  
1867 happy to hear. I would say the right word would be inundated  
1868 of how many -- how much outreach I have received over the  
1869 course of the last few months from companies that have  
1870 acquired new technology that they are very proud of in ways  
1871 to far more efficiently than ever before be able to remove  
1872 PFAS.

1873       \*Mr. Auchincloss. Can you name those new technologies?  
1874 Because I have been doing this research, as well, and all of  
1875 it costs money. So you are talking about, like, carbon  
1876 filters? You are talking about electrochemical --

1877       \*Mr. Zeldin. -- companies, and I am happy to share with  
1878 this committee the names of whoever has reached out to --

1879       \*Mr. Auchincloss. Just give me a broad sense -- just,  
1880 like, the technology broadly. Like, give me an example of a  
1881 technology that is going to be cheaper, faster, better that  
1882 is not going to require money to update the water treatment  
1883 facilities.

1884       \*Mr. Zeldin. It is going to cause a -- it would require  
1885 a small fraction, but we are in the process -- I am not going  
1886 to --

1887       \*Mr. Auchincloss. Can you name a technology, though?



1888           \*Mr. Zeldin. What is that?

1889           \*Mr. Auchincloss. Just the technology, broadly.

1890           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes. So these are ideas that are being  
1891 pitched that we are vetting right now. And I am not going to  
1892 endorse any of it, but I would say that it is important to  
1893 us --

1894           \*Mr. Auchincloss. You don't have to endorse it.

1895           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- and the agency --

1896           \*Mr. Auchincloss. Just name a technology that you have  
1897 heard about.

1898           \*Mr. Zeldin. It is a treatment that breaks down the  
1899 forever chemicals so that it is no longer a forever chemical.  
1900 It is a treatment of the water that breaks down the chemical.

1901           \*Mr. Auchincloss. If you are talking about  
1902 electrochemical oxidation, you can do that for the very, very  
1903 condensed landfill, but you can't do that at the scale of  
1904 municipal water treatment facilities. It is way too diffuse.  
1905 If that is what you are talking about, that is not the  
1906 answer, which is why I am asking about other technologies,  
1907 which you don't seem to be able to name.

1908           I am going to yield back my time.

1909           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
1910 recognize the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie,  
1911 for five minutes of questioning.

1912           \*The Chair. Thank you.

1913           Thank you, Administrator Zeldin. Thanks for being back  
1914 here amongst your colleagues. We welcome you back here to  
1915 the -- to Capitol Hill, and so happy you are in the position  
1916 you are.

1917           Last night you talked about new technologies moving  
1918 forward. We had -- last night we had a rule -- a CR,  
1919 Congressional Review Act that -- before Rules, and it was if  
1920 you are a major source and you had new technology or new  
1921 operational procedures that lowered your standard, your  
1922 emissions, then you could go into the area source. And we  
1923 were accused of doing everything, of giving kids asthma and  
1924 things like that, which is unfortunate, because what we want  
1925 to do is we see new technology coming and we see the  
1926 opportunities for people to improve, and that is what we  
1927 want.

1928           And I went to college in your home state, and right down  
1929 the river from the ranking member. And when I was in the  
1930 Hudson River in the 1980s, you couldn't swim in it -- at  
1931 least around 50 miles up from Manhattan at West Point --  
1932 because it was contaminated. And the first time I remember  
1933 hearing of the HHS Secretary -- of course I had heard of his  
1934 family -- was he was the leader of Clean Up the Hudson River,  
1935 the Riverkeepers, which was a group that I kind of followed  
1936 because I was dismayed that such a beautiful piece of our  
1937 country was in the position it was in because of industry.

1938 And we all agree, and there is nobody saying anywhere on our  
1939 side of the aisle -- and you are in the Administration --  
1940 that those types of things absolutely cannot happen. And so  
1941 we are all there.

1942 So now we are getting on to things you are trying to  
1943 fix, where the small regulatory -- it seems like small  
1944 regulatory -- that costs a fortune that you were talking  
1945 about with PFAS and some other things we are seeing with our  
1946 water plants.

1947 But getting back to the Greenhouse Gas Fund, could you  
1948 kind of just walk us through again? There was a at least  
1949 one, if not many, agents, non-profit, that essentially was  
1950 formed after the IRA, had \$100 in his checking account, got  
1951 \$2,000 -- I mean \$2 billion grant. So it seems like here is  
1952 the money, go form your thing, and get -- instead of trying  
1953 to invest, they talk about investing in known technologies to  
1954 improve the environment. People were creating businesses who  
1955 were politically connected to chase the money.

1956 Could you talk about -- you said if you had 20 minutes.  
1957 You have, like, 2:45 if you want to talk more about it.

1958 \*Mr. Zeldin. Great, Chairman, I appreciate the  
1959 opportunity to be able to continue to go through the list,  
1960 and I would encourage anyone at home who doesn't want to hear  
1961 it to put their finger in their ear, because we will keep  
1962 going through specific examples that the New York Times says

1963 doesn't exist.

1964           An EPA panel -- this is the Biden EPA -- the Biden EPA  
1965 panel, reviewing the application for Power Forward  
1966 Communities -- that is the one that you referenced, they  
1967 received \$100 in 2023, and then they get 2 billion in 2024.  
1968 The Biden EPA panel was questioning the salaries it planned  
1969 to pay its executives, the salary structure for top officers.  
1970 This is a quote from the Biden EPA. "The salary structure  
1971 for top officers seems high for a non-profit. Wondering if  
1972 this could be a problem with public perception," the  
1973 reviewer noted.

1974           Another comment on a part of Power Forward  
1975 Community's --

1976           \*The Chair. I hate to interrupt you, Secretary -- I  
1977 mean Administrator. Do you know what the top salary was?

1978           \*Mr. Zeldin. Thank you for asking.

1979           Another comment, which was part of the application, a  
1980 reviewer writes, "For such an important section, it was  
1981 pithy, though not always in a good way. Many of the costs  
1982 were just presented, but little or no explanation as to why  
1983 they are reasonable. I would have preferred they omitted the  
1984 travel discussion, explained why they need to pay the CEO  
1985 \$800,000, growing to \$948,000 in year 7, and chief operating  
1986 operations officer \$455,000 per year. It was reported that  
1987 22 of Power Forward Communities' employees were slated to

1988      earn more than \$150,000.'

1989           Reviewers also criticized Power Forward Communities --  
1990      this is the Biden EPA. The Biden EPA criticized Power  
1991      Forward Communities for its lack of planning for "proactive  
1992      oversight.'" So the Biden EPA is giving this entity that  
1993      made \$100 in 2023, \$2 billion in 2024. And the Biden EPA is  
1994      concerned that this entity isn't going to be able to conduct  
1995      proper oversight. That is just an example of going down the  
1996      list a bit more on one of the eight NGOs.

1997           \*The Chair. So the group didn't exist. They came into  
1998      being in 2023, had \$100 in their checking account, gets a \$2  
1999      billion grant, and the CEO gets almost \$900,000, and over a  
2000      year will get over \$900,000.

2001           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Chairman.

2002           \*The Chair. That is what your testimony is today.

2003           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Chairman.

2004           \*The Chair. Thank you.

2005           Well, we have about six seconds left, so I will yield  
2006      back.

2007           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
2008      recognize the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Carter.

2009           \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2010           And thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here. I  
2011      represent the State of Louisiana, a state that knows  
2012      intimately the cost of inaction and indifference when it

2013 comes to environmental protection. In Louisiana the  
2014 environment is not some abstract policy issue; it is a matter  
2015 of life and death, survival, and displacement, health and  
2016 chronic illness.

2017       You mentioned in your opening statement -- or in one of  
2018 your statements, and I really appreciate it. I want to zero  
2019 in on the fact that you said that you believe in coexistence,  
2020 and ensuring that industry and healthy communities are able  
2021 to work together. It is a message that I often send. But I  
2022 also add to that the importance of making sure for industry  
2023 to ever survive, you have to have healthy communities. Would  
2024 you agree with that?

2025       \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

2026       \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. We have to make sure that  
2027 individuals have clean water, clean air, and they are being  
2028 listened to because they are the ones who are frontline.  
2029 Would you agree with that, as well?

2030       \*Mr. Zeldin. Of course.

2031       \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. And the past few years, under  
2032 the previous administration, the previous administrator took  
2033 my invitation seriously and visited with me in Louisiana to  
2034 meet with industry and individuals, to meet with people like  
2035 Rise St. James, to meet with people like the Bucket Brigade,  
2036 to meet with communities like the Concerned Citizens for a  
2037 Better St. John, and industry, as well. Sir, would you be

2038 willing to accept such an invitation to work closely, to  
2039 listen, and to be a part of solutions?

2040       \*Mr. Zeldin. I love any good excuse to come to  
2041 Louisiana.

2042       \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. I will take you up on it. We  
2043 got lots more, too, so thank you. Thank you very much. That  
2044 is important, because we need to demonstrate not just in  
2045 word, but also in deed that coexistence begins with and is  
2046 paramount with having safe communities because industry can't  
2047 survive if it doesn't have people to work in these  
2048 facilities. So I thank you for that.

2049       I want to jump to just -- let's talk a little bit about  
2050 resilience and disaster preparedness, specifically the grant  
2051 your agency canceled that was designed to increase in my  
2052 district resiliency, flooding, and extreme heat. One such  
2053 was the community organization Stay Ready Nola, for creating  
2054 a solar-powered resilience facility in New Orleans to house  
2055 linemen and other first responders in the aftermath of  
2056 hurricanes. It would also provide the surrounding  
2057 communities a safe place to cool off, charge their phones,  
2058 and receive supplies.

2059       This project is a direct response to lessons learned  
2060 from Hurricane Ida in 2021, where parts of my district lost  
2061 power for several weeks. The deaths that occurred from  
2062 Hurricane Ida were not just because of flooding or storm

2063 surge, but the elderly and sick residents overheating without  
2064 power, without air conditioning during the scorching summer  
2065 days in following the storm.

2066 Stay Ready Nola executive director Neil Morris is here  
2067 today. I want to take a moment to recognize him and the  
2068 incredible work that he does in our community to build this  
2069 vital facility.

2070 When these grants were pulled, you didn't just cancel  
2071 paperwork, you undermined lifesaving mitigation efforts in  
2072 vulnerable communities. Dillard University is another one of  
2073 those perfect examples of an HBCU that had funding to  
2074 retrofit its facilities to serve as community resilience hubs  
2075 during emergencies -- was also terminated. Mr.  
2076 Administrator, do you commit to restoring these grants after  
2077 review?

2078 \*Mr. Zeldin. So -- well, that commitment I am not going  
2079 to make. However, I am happy to work with you to be able to  
2080 identify any portion of the grant where there would be  
2081 alignment with the administration. We can work together, our  
2082 teams can work together.

2083 As far as the entire grant, one of the differences of  
2084 opinion in administration priorities and policies from the  
2085 Biden Administration to the Trump Administration is that we  
2086 believe that money should get spent -- if there is a dollar  
2087 to get spent in the name of remediating an environmental



2088 issue, the dollar should get spent on directly remediating  
2089 the environmental issue, not giving money to --

2090 \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Okay, I hate to cut you off.  
2091 I got 36 seconds. I want to ask you one final question.

2092 Your office's termination letter to Stay Ready Nola and  
2093 their project to build a hub for first responders stated,  
2094 "Objectives of the awards are no longer consistent with EPA  
2095 funding priorities.'" How is assisting linemen and other --  
2096 providing others -- providing lifesaving services in the  
2097 aftermath of a natural disaster no longer consistent with  
2098 your agency's priority?

2099 \*Mr. Zeldin. So the difference is that the -- at the  
2100 Trump EPA we do not agree with spending the money by giving  
2101 it -- a pass-through grant to an entity where even a portion  
2102 of the funding is used to prop up an NGO, as opposed to  
2103 spending it on directly remediating an environmental issue.

2104 So, again, I am happy to sit down with you. I know that  
2105 there are a number of grants --

2106 \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Yes, sir.

2107 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- on top of just the two that you  
2108 referenced inside of your district. I am happy to go through  
2109 the entire list with you.

2110 \*Mr. Carter of Louisiana. I would love to visit with  
2111 you. Thank you for being here today. And I am going to  
2112 accept your offer to come to Louisiana to visit with these

2113 stakeholders to talk about these individual grants, whether  
2114 it is Dillard University or any other that is out there that  
2115 have been so critically important to the people of Louisiana,  
2116 both Republican and Democrat and the like.

2117       Environmental issues, environmental justice,  
2118 environmental concerns don't have color, don't have race,  
2119 don't have party. They only have people. So thank you very  
2120 much.

2121       And my time is up, and I yield, Mr. Chairman.

2122       \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
2123 recognize the gentlelady from Iowa, Mrs. Miller-Meeks, for  
2124 her five minutes.

2125       \*Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Thank you, Chairman Guthrie and  
2126 Ranking Member Tonko, for holding this important hearing  
2127 today. And I also want to thank Administrator Zeldin for  
2128 appearing before the subcommittee.

2129       Wonderful to see you again, sir.

2130       The EPA under past administrations took a one-size-fits-  
2131 all approach that buried farmers, energy producers, and small  
2132 businesses in red tape. The result was not necessarily  
2133 better environmental outcomes, but delayed projects,  
2134 increased costs for consumers, and real harm to rural  
2135 communities like those in Iowa.

2136       This administration has rightly set a new tone focused  
2137 on cutting unnecessary regulations, streamlining permitting

2138 processes, and rolling back out of touch, impractical,  
2139 unworkable, and expensive climate mandates that ignored  
2140 energy demand and local economic realities.

2141         As we consider the EPA's budget, I want to see a shift  
2142 in focus, fewer dollars spent on expanding Federal control  
2143 and more on empowering local solutions, science-based policy,  
2144 and regulatory certainty. That is how we deliver real  
2145 environmental progress without sacrificing economic  
2146 opportunity.

2147         Your Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative  
2148 emphasizes permitting reform as a key pillar. Given the  
2149 lengthy environmental reviews that have delayed critical  
2150 infrastructure projects across the country, what specific  
2151 steps is EPA taking to streamline permitting processes while  
2152 maintaining appropriate environmental safeguards?

2153         \*Mr. Zeldin. There are some in government who are  
2154 trying to get to the answer of no, looking for any excuse to  
2155 say no and to gum up the works. We want to be able to get to  
2156 yes. We want to be able to work with people and companies  
2157 out there, want -- that want to invest in communities, that  
2158 want to invest in the American economy.

2159         Right now, for example, in Arizona, Taiwan  
2160 Semiconductors [sic] are trying to get a permit through to  
2161 make a major investment inside of Maricopa County. When I  
2162 meet with elected officials in Arizona, ranging from the

2163 Democrat governor or the two Democratic Senators or  
2164 Republican Members of the House, it doesn't matter what side  
2165 of the aisle you are on. Their ask of EPA is that we work  
2166 with them and TSMC to try to get that approval done as  
2167 quickly as possible.

2168         And there are so many examples all across the entire map  
2169 where there were applications that were stalled that we have  
2170 been able to implement permitting reform without waiting for  
2171 a bill from Congress. Just do it ourselves. Where we were  
2172 gumming up the works, we are no longer gumming up the works.

2173         \*Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Thank you. Biofuel production  
2174 helps us meet our growing energy needs, supports our farmers  
2175 and it creates, most importantly, American jobs with  
2176 American-made energy, and supports our America first agenda,  
2177 helping to create manufacturing jobs that can't be offshored.

2178         The proposed 2026 Renewable Volume Obligation, or RVO  
2179 rule, was due last November and just went to OMB last week.  
2180 Every day of delay creates unnecessary uncertainty for Iowa's  
2181 farmers, biofuel producers, and workers. Industry and ag  
2182 leaders have asked for at least 5.25 billion gallons for  
2183 biomass-based diesel and 15 billion gallons for ethanol. We  
2184 can produce it, we can make it homegrown, and it fits in with  
2185 energy dominance.

2186         When do you expect the EPA to release the proposed RVO  
2187 rulemaking?

2188           \*Mr. Zeldin. Very soon.

2189           \*Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Great, thank you. We look forward  
2190 to that.

2191           Iowa leads in E15 retail availability, yet we still face  
2192 unnecessary barriers each summer due to the outdated  
2193 volatility rules. Consumers lose access to lower-cost,  
2194 cleaner-burning fuel just when gas prices rise. Can you  
2195 provide a timeline for EPA's final action to ensure  
2196 permanent, year-round E15 access nationwide, voluntary?

2197           And will you support this fix?

2198           \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, Congress almost passed this last  
2199 December. That is the most durable, simplest way to answer  
2200 your question and to resolve it.

2201           To leave it to EPA, you have all sorts of different asks  
2202 and steps in the process as you go throughout the entire  
2203 year. We have made a number of decisions since I was  
2204 confirmed at the end of January, heeding the asks from you  
2205 and your colleagues in Congress, as well as the governors.  
2206 We are currently -- we are in the middle of the summer  
2207 driving season, where the emergency waiver that was issued  
2208 before May 1 is something that we have to revisit every three  
2209 weeks or so, and I just did that again yesterday. And that  
2210 process is not as simple. It is not as quick, and it is  
2211 going to require more bandwidth for you, it is going to  
2212 require more bandwidth for me at the agency until and unless

2213 there is any type of statutory change.

2214       \*Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Okay, Mr. Chair, I have some  
2215 questions that I am going to submit for the record on the  
2216 Clean Power Plan 2.0 and on WOTUS and small refinery  
2217 exemptions that I will be submitting for the record.

2218       [The information follows:]

2219

2220       \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

2221

2222           \*Mrs. Miller-Meeks. And I yield back. Thank you.

2223           \*Mr. Griffith. Thank you very much. The gentlelady  
2224 yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from New Jersey,  
2225 Mr. Menendez, for five minutes.

2226           \*Mr. Menendez. Thank you, Chairman.

2227           As many others have emphasized today, the EPA's main  
2228 purpose as established by Congress is to protect the  
2229 environment and public health. Today I want to talk to you  
2230 about the importance of managing contaminated sites.

2231           As you may know, New Jersey's industrial legacy presents  
2232 environmental challenges in our communities. That is why the  
2233 brownfields program is particularly important in my district.  
2234 Just a few weeks ago this committee held a bipartisan hearing  
2235 on its successes, and Mayor Bollwage from the City of  
2236 Elizabeth testified to the program's importance. Elizabeth  
2237 leveraged brownfields funding to convert formerly  
2238 contaminated sites into affordable housing and other projects  
2239 that enhance community well-being and economic development.  
2240 And we heard from Republican witnesses at that hearing that  
2241 this program has a significant return on investment. For  
2242 every Federal dollar spent there is an average \$20 return in  
2243 economic activity. So we are really proud of the work that  
2244 Elizabeth has done, and all my colleagues here have success  
2245 stories from their districts, as well.

2246           So Mr. Zeldin, yes or no, given the success of and

2247 bipartisan support for the brownfields program, can you  
2248 commit to this committee that it will not be impacted by  
2249 budget cuts?

2250       \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, ultimately, the funding level is  
2251 going to be something that is decided between Congress and  
2252 the Administration. The brownfields program, as you point  
2253 out, is a very amazing, great, successful program that should  
2254 be a source of strong bipartisan support and pride. And the  
2255 success stories all across America are overwhelming.

2256       \*Mr. Menendez. Correct, and it is a bipartisan success  
2257 story that, as we heard in that hearing, so many good  
2258 projects across the country. So funding is part one.

2259       Part two -- again, yes or no -- can you commit to me  
2260 that the program staff will be maintained, as it is a  
2261 bipartisan priority for this committee?

2262       \*Mr. Zeldin. You said the program staff?

2263       \*Mr. Menendez. That is correct.

2264       \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, the -- it is important to make sure  
2265 that the brownfields program is fully staffed to be able to  
2266 extraordinarily accomplish its mission.

2267       \*Mr. Menendez. Okay. And while I hope that is true, I  
2268 am concerned about some recent EPA actions. My office has  
2269 heard from Groundwork Elizabeth, a non-profit promoting  
2270 environmental resilience, education, and youth leadership in  
2271 Elizabeth, that a \$500,000 brownfields grant was paused



2272 without clarity on when it -- when that -- it might be  
2273 reinstated. That was a job training grant to help students  
2274 access stable, good-paying environmental work while also  
2275 giving back to their community. And we have heard numerous  
2276 stories about grant cancellations at other EPA programs in  
2277 addition to the ongoing layoffs of staff at EPA who provide  
2278 technical assistance across EPA programs.

2279         So while we are addressing industrial pollution, I would  
2280 like to discuss the Superfund program. There are over 100 of  
2281 those sites in New Jersey, including six in the district that  
2282 I represent. My constituents in the Ironbound section of  
2283 Newark live near a former factory that manufactured 700,000  
2284 gallons of Agent Orange, and reportedly dumped bad batches  
2285 directly into the Passaic River. Ensuring that sites like  
2286 this one are robustly monitored, managed, and remediated is  
2287 integral to the well-being of families in my district and a  
2288 priority for me and the people that I represent. That is why  
2289 I am profoundly concerned that you are proposing to cut  
2290 Superfund's budget by over \$250 million.

2291         So my question to you is, for a family that lives in the  
2292 Ironbound section and in close proximity to a Superfund site,  
2293 what would you say to a mother who is concerned for her  
2294 family's health and well-being to justify why you are cutting  
2295 funding that could protect her children from carcinogens and  
2296 other health risks associated with contaminated sites?

2297           \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, with regards to Superfund, which is  
2298 another very successful, important program, I have had the  
2299 opportunity to visit Superfund sites inside of New Jersey  
2300 since becoming administrator, and I look forward to coming  
2301 back.

2302           Our goal is to be able to successfully delist all or  
2303 parts of these sites. As it relates to your question,  
2304 Congress imposed large taxes in the IIJA and the IRA to  
2305 finance the Superfund program. As it says inside of the  
2306 skinny budget, between these 1.6 billion in taxes estimated  
2307 to be available in 2026 and litigation recoveries from  
2308 responsible parties, that is why there is a need for an  
2309 additional funding for the Superfund cleanup, as reflected in  
2310 the skinny budget.

2311           \*Mr. Menendez. Correct, and -- but that -- those funds  
2312 were intended to supplement and accelerate Superfund  
2313 remediation, right?

2314           Because what I always talk about is today there are  
2315 families living near these Superfund sites, right, and they  
2316 don't have the luxury of waiting. And so we need to do this  
2317 work as quickly as possible. But between the funding cuts  
2318 and staffing cuts, we are concerned that the work is not  
2319 going to get done in a timely manner or as fast as it could  
2320 if we had a whole-of-government approach. And that is why I  
2321 really hope that the EPA will continue to partner with

2322 Congress so we can make sure that all of our communities have  
2323 the healthy outcomes that they deserve.

2324 With that I yield back.

2325 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I thank him  
2326 for being efficient with his time. We are running out of it.  
2327 And I now recognize the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Palmer,  
2328 for five minutes.

2329 And I will remind everybody that the witness has to  
2330 leave at approximately 12:30, so we are trying to hurry  
2331 through.

2332 Mr. Palmer.

2333 \*Mr. Palmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you,  
2334 Administrator Zeldin, for being here.

2335 I am, like some of my colleagues, concerned about some  
2336 of the decisions that the EPA has made, but I am looking at  
2337 it from a little different perspective. For instance, there  
2338 was a rule on lime dust emissions that was put forward by the  
2339 EPA last summer. Even though their own -- EPA's own  
2340 scientific assessment said that emissions from lime  
2341 manufacturing industry were already acceptable with an ample  
2342 margin of safety, this rule would have -- would impose \$2  
2343 billion on the industry, which gets passed on in multiple  
2344 ways. Most people think of lime in the context of the  
2345 manufacturer of cement products, but it is also used to  
2346 enhance soil quality. There are a number of other uses for

2347 it.

2348 Administrator Zeldin, are -- is the EPA now taking a  
2349 look at some of these rules that I think have gone outside of  
2350 what is necessary, and imposing an unnecessary cost on our  
2351 economy and on people?

2352 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Congressman. Yes, we have received  
2353 various concerns regarding NESHAPs, including regulations not  
2354 squarely grounded in the statutory authority compliance  
2355 costly to industry deadlines for compliance with some  
2356 requirements might be too short. Some of the rules may  
2357 disproportionately impact small businesses. Questions exist  
2358 regarding the science underlying certain standards. Test  
2359 data used in calculating standards may not fully reflect  
2360 variability and/or real-world operations. Questions exist  
2361 regarding the appropriateness of setting certain technology-  
2362 based standards, rather than health-based standards. And  
2363 questions exist regarding the appropriateness of setting  
2364 certain numeric emissions limits, rather than work practice  
2365 standards.

2366 \*Mr. Palmer. I am glad you mentioned the technology-  
2367 based standards, because it is -- also involves the  
2368 particulate matter standards.

2369 Now, some of the things that EPA has imposed on people  
2370 require what I jokingly refer to as black box technology.  
2371 And people say, well, what is in the box? Nothing. That

2372 technology doesn't exist yet. And it imposes enormous costs  
2373 on the economy, but also on city governments that gets passed  
2374 on to consumers. So I am hoping that the EPA will take a  
2375 more scientific approach to some of these rules, and -- but  
2376 also go back and look at the science behind some of the rules  
2377 that have been imposed by the past administration and  
2378 possibly consider repealing those.

2379         There is something else that I want to talk with you  
2380 about that I think is really critical right now, and that is  
2381 our ability to have access to rare Earth elements. China  
2382 controls 94 percent of the rare Earth refining. They have  
2383 the largest deposit of rare Earth elements in the world. The  
2384 United States, I think, is seventh on that list. And we are  
2385 finding ourselves in a position where there is not a single  
2386 major refinery for rare Earth elements in the Western  
2387 Hemisphere. There is only nine in the world. Eight are in  
2388 China, one is in Malaysia.

2389         I think that we are at a point where we are going to  
2390 have to look at permitting, look at the regulations in order  
2391 for the United States to catch up, to secure the supply chain  
2392 that we need. And there are multiple opportunities to do  
2393 this. You can find rare Earth elements in coal ash, you can  
2394 find them in things like discarded hard drives. But we need  
2395 to be able to mine, process, and refine our own rare Earth  
2396 element supply because it is not just important for our

2397 economy, it is important for our national security. I would  
2398 like your comments on that.

2399 \*Mr. Zeldin. Congressman, this is one of the issues  
2400 that are on the plate, the priority list, for the National  
2401 Energy Dominance Council. EPA has some equities. The  
2402 Department of the Interior has equities. The Department of  
2403 Energy has equities, the Department of Commerce.

2404 There is an opportunity here for us to be able to not  
2405 just benefit economically, but I would also look at it as a  
2406 matter of national security for us not to have to rely on  
2407 other nations at a moment where it would matter most in the  
2408 future to make sure that we are prepared here domestically.  
2409 So I think it is an important -- it is a very important  
2410 priority for the National Energy Dominance Council and for  
2411 the Trump Administration at large.

2412 \*Mr. Palmer. Well, I am very grateful to have you in  
2413 the position that you are in, Administrator Zeldin.

2414 Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

2415 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
2416 recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Landsman, for five  
2417 minutes of questioning.

2418 \*Mr. Landsman. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to jump  
2419 into waste, fraud, and abuse. It is very important to you,  
2420 yes?

2421 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

2422           \*Mr. Landsman. Okay. The Government Accountability  
2423 Office lays out a whole host of changes that would get at  
2424 waste, fraud, and abuse, and I ask unanimous consent to enter  
2425 into the record the GAO reports for the EPA.

2426           \*Mr. Griffith. Do you have a date on it, or --

2427           \*Mr. Landsman. I think --

2428           \*Mr. Griffith. -- all of them?

2429           \*Mr. Landsman. Yes, I think we are submitting all of  
2430 the reports.

2431           \*Mr. Griffith. All right. If you can, give me the  
2432 specific reports, because I think there is thousands of GAO  
2433 reports over the years on the EPA. But just give me the  
2434 date, and we will --

2435           \*Mr. Landsman. Yes, we will get you the dates.

2436           \*Mr. Griffith. Thank you.

2437           \*Mr. Landsman. We went back and forth, but I think it  
2438 was --

2439           \*Mr. Griffith. Okay, that is fine.

2440           \*Mr. Landsman. No problem.

2441           \*Mr. Griffith. Give us the date, so we can get that  
2442 into the record properly.

2443           Without objection.

2444

2445

2446

2447           [The information follows:]

2448

2449       \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

2450



2451           \*Mr. Landsman. To the chair's point, there are so many,  
2452 and so I am going to mention a few: strengthen controls over  
2453 the EPA administrators and associates' travel -- obviously,  
2454 there is the possibility -- in fact, they found waste, fraud,  
2455 and abuse there; implement controls to prevent unauthorized  
2456 access to the EPA facilities; implement comprehensive fraud  
2457 risk management framework.

2458           Have all of the GAO report recommendations on waste,  
2459 fraud, and abuse been implemented?

2460           \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, the ones that you are referencing I  
2461 have had meetings on all. We have been addressing all. For  
2462 example, when we were doing the COVID-era return to work  
2463 inside of our headquarters here in D.C., it was easier to  
2464 know who was coming into the building because they have to  
2465 badge in. But in regions there are regional offices where  
2466 they didn't have to badge in or, in some cases, one person is  
2467 badging in on an elevator and there is seven other people on  
2468 the elevator. So we have been working on addressing that  
2469 with all the regional offices.

2470           Travel contracts, vending, real estate consolidation --

2471           \*Mr. Landsman. But all the GAO report -- the  
2472 recommendations you have implemented, yes or no?

2473           \*Mr. Zeldin. As the chair points out -- pointed out  
2474 that there is -- that there are a lot of reports, I would --  
2475 we have been implementing a ton.

2476           \*Mr. Landsman. It is just -- it is so important to me  
2477 because the GAO reports focus entirely on waste, fraud, and  
2478 abuse, and it is a huge issue for you, it is a huge issue for  
2479 me, and my frustration has been why the focus hasn't been at  
2480 least significantly on the GAO reports.

2481           To that end, are you currently under investigation by  
2482 the GAO, is the EPA?

2483           \*Mr. Zeldin. I am not aware of an investigation by the  
2484 GAO.

2485           \*Mr. Landsman. The GAO is currently investigating the  
2486 EPA.

2487           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, I -- when you say "investigating,"  
2488 what are you referencing?

2489           \*Mr. Landsman. The GAO has opened up an investigation  
2490 on the EPA that was public. That is my understanding. But  
2491 you are saying no?

2492           \*Mr. Zeldin. No, no, I am not aware of an  
2493 investigation --

2494           \*Mr. Landsman. Okay, the --

2495           \*Mr. Zeldin. -- by the GAO.

2496           \*Mr. Landsman. The \$5 billion that you have cut from the  
2497 EPA, 55 percent, that is not included in GAO reporting,  
2498 correct?

2499           \*Mr. Zeldin. This is a -- we are talking about a fiscal  
2500 year 2026 number that is now going through the legislative

2501 process. I wouldn't anticipate that that would be something  
2502 GAO would be looking at, but I can't speak for GAO.

2503 \*Mr. Landsman. Yes. So again, the GAO focuses on  
2504 waste, fraud, and abuse. The \$5 billion cut in the EPA does  
2505 not go under that category.

2506 We have in southwest Ohio the second-largest research  
2507 and development facility. The administration has proposed  
2508 cutting 75 percent of ORD, putting at risk about 400 jobs in  
2509 our district. Would you be willing to either come to the  
2510 district or sit down with me and let us make the argument to  
2511 keep these jobs over the course of the next couple of weeks?  
2512 I mean, it is just so -- it is so many people.

2513 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, there is -- so I have been visiting  
2514 all the regions, all of the labs. I have been to 17 states,  
2515 and we are going to keep going. So if -- are you saying that  
2516 you have a lab in your district?

2517 \*Mr. Landsman. Yes.

2518 \*Mr. Zeldin. I am happy to come visit that lab.

2519 \*Mr. Landsman. Yes or no, did the ORD play an important  
2520 role in determining that the air was okay to breathe in East  
2521 Palestine?

2522 \*Mr. Zeldin. The EPA has multiple programmatic offices  
2523 that were involved --

2524 \*Mr. Landsman. They played a huge role. Did the ORD  
2525 play a big role in Deepwater Horizon; Flint, Michigan; water

2526 crisis, California water fires?

2527       \*Mr. Zeldin. Again, the -- we have multiple  
2528 programmatic offices, and the scientific and research --

2529       \*Mr. Landsman. They played a huge --

2530       \*Mr. Zeldin. -- functions, and the statutory  
2531 obligations are all going to be fulfilled --

2532       \*Mr. Landsman. They played a huge role. Cutting ORD so  
2533 significantly will be devastating.

2534       With that I yield back.

2535       \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
2536 recognize the long-suffering gentleman from Texas, Mr.  
2537 Pfluger.

2538       \*Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2539       Good to see you, Administrator. Congratulations. What  
2540 a breath of fresh air. And to my colleague's question, will  
2541 you come visit? Thank you for saying yes to -- whether it is  
2542 the gentleman from Louisiana or any other state. We couldn't  
2543 get a single visit in west Texas from the previous  
2544 administrator, and we desperately needed it because of the  
2545 overreach.

2546       And what you saw was the Supreme Court of the United  
2547 States struck down the overreach of agencies like the  
2548 previously-run EPA in their Loper Bright decision. That was  
2549 so important when you are talking about quad O, B, and C.  
2550 And what the other side told me for four straight years is,

2551 oh, we are working with industry. No, there was no  
2552 collaboration with industry. And I want to thank you for  
2553 saying yes and agreeing to go visit a lab or whatever it is.

2554 And by the way, the money laundering scheme that we saw  
2555 in the previous administration that sent \$2 billion to that  
2556 company, who was the CEO of that company?

2557 \*Mr. Zeldin. Power Forward Communities? I will get  
2558 that for you.

2559 \*Mr. Pfluger. Not meant to be a trick question. I just  
2560 thought it might have been a gentle lady from Georgia.

2561 \*Mr. Zeldin. Sure. The CEO of Power Forward Committee  
2562 -- Communities was Tim Mayopoulos, who was also CEO of Fannie  
2563 Mae during the Obama Administration.

2564 \*Mr. Pfluger. Okay. Moving to what I want to talk  
2565 about, quad O, B, and C, and the subpart W reporting included  
2566 in your 31 points, thank you for that. We have to compete  
2567 with China.

2568 We want the EPA to make sure that our environment is  
2569 protected. There is no argument whatsoever there. Can you  
2570 give us a status on what the quad O series for new and  
2571 existing and also the subpart W will get to? Because this is  
2572 not workable for our producers that are especially small  
2573 scale.

2574 \*Mr. Zeldin. Both reconsiderations were announced on  
2575 March 12. We will be following the Administrative Procedure

2576 Act on both, working to get this work finalized this year.  
2577 It will include a public comment period. I will not pre-  
2578 judge outcomes of either rulemaking before, and we will  
2579 follow our obligations under the law in going through that  
2580 rulemaking, Congressman.

2581       \*Mr. Pfluger. Thank you. And I will advocate for  
2582 reality. We were very pleased that Mr. Mason, the region 6  
2583 director, came and visited the Permian Basin just before your  
2584 visit. I would like to invite you again. But one of the  
2585 things we talked about was, especially with regards to  
2586 methane, the monitoring that is being done. And to  
2587 incentivize that good behavior we have reduced the intensity  
2588 of methane in the Permian Basin by almost 30 percent, and  
2589 that has happened in the last 10 to 15 years while also  
2590 increasing the amount of barrels produced from 1 million  
2591 barrels a day back in 2010 to 6 million barrels a day. And  
2592 that -- the complexity that goes on to reduce that intensity  
2593 we want to work with you. I encourage that work.

2594       Do you have any ideas on where -- the previous  
2595 administrator was looking at the Permian Basin in general to  
2596 place into a state of non-attainment with regards to the  
2597 ozone reporting. Are there any updates on that for us? This  
2598 was something that interjected a lot of chaos into that  
2599 region.

2600       \*Mr. Zeldin. It is a very important pillar. It is a

2601 very important pillar of the Powering the Great American  
2602 Comeback Initiative to advance cooperative Federalism. Part  
2603 of that with the reorg is creating an Office for State Air  
2604 Partnerships inside of the Office of Air and Radiation. We  
2605 have approved 25 state implementation plans, including 16  
2606 that were backlogged from the last administration. We are  
2607 working through.

2608         These non-attainment requests and issues, including  
2609 inside the Permian Basin, we want to be a partner at EPA for  
2610 Texas and the local community.

2611         \*Mr. Pfluger. Well, thank you. It was very apparent to  
2612 my constituents that the EPA had become weaponized. And  
2613 working in partnership is exactly the key word. We  
2614 appreciate that.

2615         And again, I will say it very clearly. Not a single  
2616 person in my district wants -- in fact, we are true  
2617 conservationists, we have lived there for a long time. Water  
2618 is something that is very important to us.

2619         I will yield the last 30 seconds to you for any  
2620 rebuttals or follow-ups that you needed to make from previous  
2621 questioning.

2622         \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, a couple days after our regional  
2623 administrator, Scott Mason, was with you in your district, I  
2624 was there and we -- I thought it was a very productive,  
2625 helpful visit meeting with the community.

2626 I think it is important for whoever is the EPA  
2627 administrator to come, for them to include that as part of,  
2628 you know, being familiar with how EPA regulations out of  
2629 Washington, D.C. end up impacting realities on the ground.  
2630 So it was an important early stop to make. I was happy to do  
2631 it, and I am grateful for your invite and Senator Cruz's  
2632 invite for that trip.

2633 \*Mr. Pfluger. Well, thank you. We want to work in  
2634 partnership. We have to compete with China. We have to  
2635 compete around the world, which means that we can't have a  
2636 weaponized agency. Thank you for your leadership.

2637 And I yield back.

2638 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. Now I  
2639 recognize the gentlelady from North Dakota, Mrs. Fedorchak,  
2640 for her five minutes of questioning.

2641 \*Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2642 And Mr. Zeldin, it is great to meet you and to have you  
2643 here. I represent the entire state of North Dakota, and  
2644 North Dakota feeds and fuels the world. And we -- so your  
2645 agency has a huge impact on the people of my state.

2646 So first I want to say thank you for what you are doing  
2647 already. One of the first actions I took in this role was to  
2648 write the President and Secretary Burgum to ask them to  
2649 repeal 20 burdensome rules and regulations from the previous  
2650 administration, and you are well on your way to doing that.



2651           You have outlined a number of grave abuses from the last  
2652 administration, and I would say one of the gravest abuses was  
2653 the impact the past administration had on our power sector.  
2654 I come from the regulatory side of things. I was most  
2655 recently the president of the National Utility Regulators  
2656 Association. And in that role I worked hard to get the last  
2657 administration to be reasonable on their 111(d) rules. They  
2658 completely ignored everything we said. They ignored the  
2659 power -- the grid operators. And that rule was completely  
2660 disconnected from reality. And even though it is being  
2661 pulled back, it had grave consequences on our power grid and  
2662 today we are short -- are dangerously short -- of having  
2663 enough power to meet demand because of that agency's  
2664 overreach in the last administration. So thank you for your  
2665 commitment to correcting that and getting us back on track.

2666           \*Mr. Zeldin. Now, Congresswoman, first off I want to  
2667 congratulate you and the people of North Dakota for what was  
2668 a massive upgrade in their representation here in the House.  
2669 Congratulations on your election.

2670           We inherited a lot. I often get asked what the biggest  
2671 surprise -- or what was most shocking once I was confirmed as  
2672 administrator, and I would say it is -- it was surprising how  
2673 much we were able to do at once. And we have heard your  
2674 calls for action at the agency, and we want to tackle it all  
2675 at the same time. We don't even want to pace ourselves.

2676           \*Mrs. Fedorchak. Good. A couple of things. There is  
2677 about three things I wanted to mention that are really  
2678 important to my state that you are already working on.

2679           You announced last week that you proposed to approve my  
2680 state's proposal to manage the Coal Combustion Residuals  
2681 Permit Program in lieu of the Federal CCR. That is a huge  
2682 decision. Thank you for that. When -- any sense of when  
2683 that -- what the timeline will be to finalize that?

2684           \*Mr. Zeldin. As quickly as possible, following the law.  
2685 As last week's letter indicated, the application that was  
2686 submitted is complete, and we are moving through that process  
2687 over the course of these next couple months.

2688           \*Mrs. Fedorchak. Excellent. Thank you for that.

2689           The farmers across my state are really significantly  
2690 impacted by Waters of the U.S. In North Dakota we have  
2691 something somewhat unique. It is called the Prairie Pothole  
2692 Region, and that area creates a lot of uncertainty for our  
2693 farmers and producers, particularly as it relates to the kind  
2694 of whiplash of changing regulations. So will you commit to  
2695 working with North Dakota farmers and ranchers to make sure  
2696 that your WOTUS rule rewrite accurately reflects the unique  
2697 wetlands in my state?

2698           \*Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely, Congresswoman. It is  
2699 imperative that we get it right. And we don't believe it is  
2700 going to be hard to get it right. We are going to follow the

2701 simple, prescriptive, straightforward decision in Sackett.  
2702 We want a definition that all 50 states are able to get  
2703 behind. Right now that is not the case. And we want to make  
2704 sure that everyone in your state knows whether or not what is  
2705 on their land is a water of the United States subject to  
2706 Federal regulation or not. We want them to be able to know  
2707 that without having to hire an attorney or a consultant,  
2708 without having to pay somebody in order to tell that to them.

2709 \*Mrs. Fedorchak. Excellent. And let's hope it is not a  
2710 trickle of water that is only there at certain parts of the  
2711 year.

2712 I hope -- I have heard from our electric utilities  
2713 throughout the state about the negative impacts of the Biden  
2714 MATS rule. This regulation targets critical coal units  
2715 across the country -- again, threatening grid reliability,  
2716 one of our most important issues that we must address. I was  
2717 pleased to learn that EPA is considering a two-year  
2718 compliance exemption while you write the MATS rule. This  
2719 goes at something I am working on legislatively, that we  
2720 can't be forcing generation offline at a time when demand is  
2721 increasing. As you work on that rule, will you work with me  
2722 and this committee to get it right?

2723 \*Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely, Congresswoman. And it is  
2724 important to note that there was a -- there were mercury and  
2725 air toxic standards before this most recent rule was put into

2726 place. So some people tried talking about it as if this  
2727 recent MATS rule, if it went away, that there is just no  
2728 mercury and air toxic standards, and that is just -- that is  
2729 not accurate.

2730 As we go through the reconsideration we want to get it  
2731 right. We want to -- we will have a public comment period.  
2732 We want to work with Members of Congress. We want to reach  
2733 the right decision.

2734 \*Mrs. Fedorchak. Excellent. Yes, the rule had already  
2735 been complied with, and at great expense. So thank you very  
2736 much. I appreciate it. I hope you will come visit North  
2737 Dakota this summer.

2738 \*Mr. Zeldin. I look forward to it.

2739 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back. Now we are  
2740 at waive-ons. We may have a member of the committee come  
2741 back. Administrator Zeldin has indicated he will give us  
2742 some additional time. But what we are going to do, by  
2743 agreement, is we are going to have three minutes per person  
2744 waive-on both sides, and we will try to get through everybody  
2745 with a three-minute rule for those who have waived on. We  
2746 appreciate it.

2747 Ms. Castor of Florida is now recognized for three  
2748 minutes.

2749 \*Ms. Castor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2750 Welcome, Mr. Administrator, to our committee. Thank you

2751 for being here.

2752       You know, working families and small business owners  
2753 across the country are really facing an affordability  
2754 squeeze, and I am very concerned with the actions out of EPA  
2755 and others across the administration on -- it is just you  
2756 have added on to their pain, and they are really feeling it  
2757 in their wallets. Utility companies in at least 19 states  
2758 have hiked rates as much as \$40 per month just over the past  
2759 few months.

2760       You know, one important way that families save money is  
2761 energy efficient appliances. In my neck of the woods  
2762 families are rebuilding after Hurricanes Helene and Milton.  
2763 They are replacing a lot of their appliances. And it was  
2764 just so painful to hear you announce that the Energy Star,  
2765 this popular program that certified energy efficiency of home  
2766 appliances for more than three decades, was coming to an end.  
2767 That distinct blue label that is recognized by Americans has  
2768 just been a godsend to them. And the data shows that this  
2769 voluntary program has saved \$500 billion in utility bills for  
2770 Americans, and prevented a whole lot of pollution.

2771       So this Energy Star was codified by Congress in 2005.  
2772 It is the law. So how do you justify an announcement that --  
2773 how do you justify that you have the authority to end this  
2774 and these important consumer savings?

2775       \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, for one, we don't believe that this

2776 -- that Energy Star would cease to exist if the government  
2777 wasn't propping it up. There are plenty of programs outside  
2778 of government. As I referenced to one of your colleagues  
2779 earlier, the LEED program is another example. Over the  
2780 course of the last couple of weeks we have had all different  
2781 kinds of outreach to EPA of different entities --

2782 \*Ms. Castor. But why take an anti-consumer --

2783 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- non-profits that want to run it.

2784 \*Ms. Castor. Why take an anti-consumer bent that is in  
2785 violation of the law at a time when people really need those  
2786 dollars back into their wallets?

2787 How can you -- let me ask it this way. Who has pressed  
2788 from outside the agency to end these consumer savings under  
2789 Energy Star? Which organizations and interest groups and  
2790 polluters have pushed for this?

2791 \*Mr. Zeldin. As you all know, Energy Star requires a  
2792 lot of taxpayer-funded salaried positions, as well as a lot  
2793 of tax dollars. And the government --

2794 \*Ms. Castor. What is the budget for Energy Star, do you  
2795 know?

2796 \*Mr. Zeldin. I believe about 19 million or so, on top  
2797 of --

2798 \*Ms. Castor. But if you measure that against the \$500  
2799 billion --

2800 \*Mr. Zeldin. -- the five --

2801           \*Ms. Castor. -- saved for American families, isn't that  
2802 an important investment, especially when it is consistent  
2803 with the law passed by Congress?

2804           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, I would happily and eagerly find out  
2805 from inside of the agency how they had previously calculated  
2806 that figure, because I anticipate that they are taking credit  
2807 for a heck of a lot more than they should.

2808           \*Mr. Griffith. All right, the --

2809           \*Ms. Castor. I yield back my time.

2810           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back. Now I  
2811 recognize Mr. Evans of Colorado, who is a member of the  
2812 subcommittee, so I recognize him for five minutes.

2813           \*Mr. Evans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2814           Thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for coming today. My  
2815 first question to you -- you know I come from Colorado.  
2816 Actually, the northeast part of the state, the Denver-  
2817 Julesburg basin area, Weld County. And one of the issues  
2818 that we are running into up there is we are in the front  
2819 range ozone non-attainment area for Colorado along the front  
2820 range. But when you look at the constellation of monitors in  
2821 some of the major oil and gas-producing areas, that county is  
2822 actually in ozone attainment. But geographically, we are  
2823 getting looped into the non-attainment area, which has a  
2824 really, really negative impact on the over 80 percent of oil  
2825 from Colorado that comes from my area and the 50 percent of

2826 natural gas that comes from my area.

2827         So I am curious on hearing your thoughts about how we  
2828 can work together to make sure that we are promoting energy  
2829 dominance and working in places like Colorado, where a lot of  
2830 our producers are facing some of those challenges from being  
2831 geographically looped into the non-attainment area, even  
2832 though they themselves are in attainment.

2833         \*Mr. Zeldin. I think that the Colorado example  
2834 highlights how there shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all Federal  
2835 answer; that we should be working closely with Colorado on  
2836 their state implementation plan; that the state  
2837 implementation plan shouldn't have any unnecessary pieces,  
2838 asks, demands from the Federal Government. It should be  
2839 simple and straightforward to allow Colorado to be able to  
2840 come into compliance and have that partnership with the EPA  
2841 and the Trump Administration. That is something I have  
2842 communicated to your governor.

2843         I also don't believe that Colorado should be a victim of  
2844 its own success in that so many businesses and people want to  
2845 move to Colorado. Anyone who flies into Denver airport, it  
2846 might look different than when you were there two weeks  
2847 earlier because there is that much activity of people and  
2848 businesses moving to the area, and you all shouldn't be  
2849 punished for that.

2850         \*Mr. Evans. Thank you. Kind of along those same lines,



2851 not being punished for some of those things, one of the other  
2852 areas where it really feels like we are being punished is  
2853 interstate transportation of a lot of these different  
2854 pollutants.

2855         For instance -- you know, we have satellites, we can  
2856 track this stuff -- there is pollution in Colorado that  
2857 originates from China. And if you took out just the  
2858 contribution of Chinese pollutants along the Colorado Front  
2859 Range, the entire Front Range would be an ozone attainment.  
2860 And so talking about programs like the 179(b) waiver for  
2861 international transport or exceptional events for things like  
2862 wildfires, what are ways that we can work together, to your  
2863 point about making sure that places like Colorado aren't  
2864 punished for events that are outside of their control and  
2865 that are pushing us over that attainment limit?

2866         \*Mr. Zeldin. I agree with you, Congressman. We have  
2867 taken down the 179(b) guidance. It is -- it shouldn't be on  
2868 our website anymore. This is an ask that has also come in  
2869 from Arizona, it has come in from Utah. These international  
2870 impacts are resulting in a situation where some are saying,  
2871 hey, listen, if we didn't have -- if we went zero emission,  
2872 if we took every car off the road, that -- we still would not  
2873 be able to come into attainment. And obviously, we are not  
2874 doing something right in a -- as a process if a state can  
2875 take every car off the road and go zero emission and still

2876 not be in attainment, and they -- there are serious  
2877 consequences for EPA determining that they are in that  
2878 serious non-attainment. So that is very important.

2879 As far as exceptional events, that was part of our March  
2880 12 announcement, to be reconsidering that rule. We need to  
2881 understand that Western states, in doing forest management,  
2882 need flexibility to be able to keep their people safe, and  
2883 shouldn't have fear that, by doing responsible practices of  
2884 forest management, that they are going to be penalized for  
2885 it.

2886 \*Mr. Evans. Thank you. And then one final question for  
2887 you along those same lines, not being penalized for things  
2888 outside of your control. State data from Colorado says 50  
2889 percent of the ozone along our Front Range does not originate  
2890 from things that are under Colorado's control. But one of  
2891 the impacts that being in a non-attainment zone has on  
2892 consumers in Colorado is we are mandated in the summer months  
2893 to be -- to buy reformulated gas.

2894 I just sat down with all of my gas station suppliers,  
2895 who said that that is a \$300 million impact on consumers  
2896 being forced to purchase a product that is \$0.40 more per  
2897 gallon, that has a 0.1 part per billion impact on Front Range  
2898 ozone. In the last 30 seconds can you just talk about how we  
2899 can work together to protect consumers from things like the  
2900 reformulated gas mandate?

2901           \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Congressman, thank you for raising  
2902 it. You are not the first, but -- the first one since I have  
2903 started these hearings. This is -- I had two last week, this  
2904 is my third, and I will have another one tomorrow. I am  
2905 happy to make sure that I am connected with you, our teams  
2906 are connected to be able to work through your asks, your  
2907 concerns, your questions, to be responsive.

2908           \*Mr. Evans. Thank you. I yield back.

2909           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
2910 recognize the gentlelady of Michigan, Mrs. Dingell, for three  
2911 minutes.

2912           \*Mrs. Dingell. Thank you. It is great to see you, my  
2913 fellow classmate. I am going to be short, but I have a lot  
2914 of questions.

2915           Brownfield sites -- southeast Michigan, like many places  
2916 in the country, has communities that have been left behind  
2917 for too long. They have got -- borne the brunt of toxic  
2918 waste, industrial pollution, and contaminated sites. We have  
2919 got a lot of legacy issues, as you know, not just in mine,  
2920 but other manufacturing states, from fighting to get PFAS and  
2921 lead out of our water to implementing funding and  
2922 strengthening the brownfield programs to working across all  
2923 levels of government. So I am going to hit three issues  
2924 quickly, and thank you for being here.

2925           I have to say that the announcement by EPA to roll back

2926 this -- roll back the PFAS drinking water standard really  
2927 worried me. Rescinding this standard means more Americans  
2928 will be poisoned and have harmful PFAS contamination. That  
2929 has been spreading, so too many people have already suffered  
2930 the adverse effects of PFAS exposure. You know it is a  
2931 forever chemical. It is in 98 percent of the people's blood.  
2932 And we got to do something. We got to do everything possible  
2933 to combat this dangerous things -- this dangerous -- for too  
2934 long Michigan, quite frankly, had a drinking water standard  
2935 that was more stringent under a Republican governor than the  
2936 guideline.

2937         How do we make sure people have clean and safe drinking  
2938 water?

2939         \*Mr. Zeldin. Congresswoman, we -- as you noted, we had  
2940 an announcement last week. The four parts per trillion MCL  
2941 on PFOA and PFOS are staying. There is a procedural error in  
2942 the way that the MCL was set on the other four. We are going  
2943 to fix that. It has been inaccurately reported that this is  
2944 a weakening of the MCL for those four. As I have noted since  
2945 that reporting started, as a result of this process the MCL  
2946 might be lower than four. We will see.

2947         \*Mrs. Dingell. That is good, I mean, just so we can  
2948 continue to work on safe drinking water.

2949         Let me -- yesterday it was announced that you had taken  
2950 Flint off the -- lifted the emergency order, which is good

2951 news for the people of Flint, and they reacted positively to  
2952 it. But we still have to make sure that people have access  
2953 to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water because it is  
2954 not a luxury. Can -- will you work with us to defend last  
2955 year's rule requiring all water systems remove lead from  
2956 pipes within the next decade so we don't poison any more  
2957 children?

2958       \*Mr. Zeldin. Congresswoman, I would like to have a  
2959 meeting with my staff, including the talented, dedicated  
2960 career staff inside the Office of Water on that topic, and  
2961 then huddle back up with you. We have spoken on the phone  
2962 since I was confirmed, I am happy to stay in touch and do it  
2963 again on -- with regards to this question.

2964       And I would just like to say, as far as Flint, Michigan  
2965 goes, it is a cause for celebration. As they pointed out to  
2966 me when I visited Flint after confirmation, they have worked  
2967 very hard for it. But it is important for them to know that  
2968 the state and the Federal Government isn't abandoning Flint  
2969 by lifting an emergency order.

2970       \*Mrs. Dingell. And I still need to talk to you about  
2971 the plume, but I will put it on record because we have too  
2972 many pollution problems in Michigan.

2973

2974

2975

2976 [The information follows:]

2977

2978 \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

2979

2980           \*Mrs. Dingell. So thank you.

2981           I yield back.

2982           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back. I now  
2983 recognize the gentlelady of Texas, Mrs. Fletcher, for her  
2984 three minutes.

2985           \*Mrs. Fletcher. Thank you so much, Chairman Griffith,  
2986 Ranking Member Tonko, and Administrator Zeldin, and thank you  
2987 for extending the time to hear from all of us who are waiving  
2988 on.

2989           With the limited time I do want to raise an issue for  
2990 you, Administrator. I represent the energy capital of the  
2991 world in Houston, and our region is home to the largest  
2992 petrochemical complex in the United States, the second  
2993 largest in the world. And we have the benefit of having the  
2994 EPA's region 6 lab located in Houston. This has been a  
2995 particularly important issue for us in the Houston region.

2996           As I am sure you know, we are right there on the Gulf  
2997 and subject to extreme weather events with too much  
2998 frequency, and so the region 6 lab plays a critical role in  
2999 helping us during these disasters. We had a hurricane last  
3000 summer, we have had just record hurricanes and flooding over  
3001 the last decade.

3002           In 2019 EPA announced that it was going to close the  
3003 region 6 lab in Houston and move the lab and all the  
3004 employees to Ada, Oklahoma. I believe you are familiar with

3005 that facility and testified about it last week in  
3006 Appropriations. But I have been fighting this move ever  
3007 since I got here, ever since the announcement, because it is  
3008 bad for our region to have to send those samples of air and  
3009 water in these -- potentially in disasters, but all the time  
3010 as we experience these things in our region. It is also bad  
3011 for EPA. I think the studies show that you will lose a lot  
3012 of really talented, experienced professionals who don't want  
3013 to move from Houston to Ada, Oklahoma. And so I think those  
3014 are huge challenges both for our region and for the agency.

3015 I have gotten several responses over the years that  
3016 people agree that we need to keep a region 6 lab in Houston,  
3017 and EPA leaders have confirmed multiple times that there will  
3018 be a region 6 lab presence in Houston. So can you confirm  
3019 for me today that we can work together to make sure that EPA  
3020 will keep a region 6 lab in the Houston region?

3021 \*Mr. Zeldin. I can tell you that at no point since I  
3022 was confirmed have I had any conversation with anyone about  
3023 closing the region 6 lab in Houston. It hasn't been broached  
3024 to me. I am not aware of conversations going on at the  
3025 agency on the topic. I am happy to be in touch with you or  
3026 work with you, and I will look into it and let you know if  
3027 anyone else has had any conversations that haven't been  
3028 brought up to me.

3029 \*Mrs. Fletcher. Well, and I can tell you it is being



3030 done pursuant to the 2015 law, the Federal asset sales  
3031 transfer from, I guess, 2017. And so that is the idea of  
3032 moving folks to Ada.

3033       It is critically important that we keep this lab in  
3034 Houston both for the agency and for our region. So I  
3035 appreciate your willingness to engage on this. Many people  
3036 have agreed at the agency that it is a problem, that we need  
3037 to keep this lab in Houston. And of course, we want to make  
3038 sure that we keep a qualified and talented workforce there,  
3039 too. So I appreciate the opportunity to raise this and to  
3040 work with you on this to ensure that we keep this lab in  
3041 Houston.

3042       \*Mr. Zeldin. I will --

3043       \*Mrs. Fletcher. Thank you.

3044       \*Mr. Zeldin. I will look into it as soon as the hearing  
3045 is over, and we will get back in touch.

3046       \*Mrs. Fletcher. Thank you.

3047       \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back. I now  
3048 recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Balderson, for three  
3049 minutes.

3050       \*Mr. Balderson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3051       Mr. Administrator, thank you for being here. And I know  
3052 that you have a hard stop. And guess what? I forgot my  
3053 cheater, so I am just going to ask you one question, and  
3054 hopefully get through this with being able to see.

3055           First I want to thank you and the Trump Administration  
3056   for bringing back some much-needed common sense back to the  
3057   EPA.

3058           Mr. Zeldin, I would like to discuss an issue specific to  
3059   my home state of Ohio. Ohio's nuisance rule was originally  
3060   instituted as part of the state's plan to enforce compliance  
3061   with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards after the  
3062   passage of the Clean Air Act. In 2020 the EPA correctly  
3063   removed this rule from the Ohio state implementation plan  
3064   following considerable procedure and removal of similar  
3065   provisions in other states. However, in the final days of  
3066   this of his term, President Biden moved to reinstate this  
3067   rule.

3068           As the rule does nothing to enhance air quality  
3069   protection and subjects Ohio businesses and manufacturers to  
3070   weaponize litigation and lawsuits, I introduced a resolution  
3071   under the Congressional Review Act to rescind this rule.  
3072   Senator Husted is also carrying it in the Senate. How will  
3073   your administration work to roll back unnecessary Federal  
3074   interference in state air pollution policies?

3075           \*Mr. Zeldin. Congressman, I have had many meetings  
3076   internally with our team at the Office of Air and Radiation  
3077   with regards to this request from the State of Ohio. I have  
3078   been in touch with Ohio officials. I appreciate your  
3079   advocacy on behalf of your state. Those conversations and

3080 meetings between EPA and Ohio EPA will continue, and with the  
3081 state, to go through this process with the state  
3082 implementation plan.

3083       As you pointed out, Senator Husted has also been  
3084 advocating on this. He has spoken to me. And our new  
3085 regional 5 regional administrator comes to that position  
3086 coming from being the head of the Ohio EPA. So at the  
3087 regional office there they are very intimately familiar with  
3088 this request. So at region 5 the regional administrator is  
3089 also a key asset in working through this ask from Ohio.

3090       \*Mr. Balderson. All right. Thank you very much. I  
3091 appreciate it, Mr. Administrator.

3092       I yield back.

3093       \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
3094 recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Mullin, for  
3095 three minutes.

3096       \*Mr. Mullin. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr.  
3097 Administrator, for being here.

3098       East Palo Alto is a vibrant community in my district on  
3099 the San Francisco Bay. The people there have an incredible  
3100 spirit and history of advocating for their community. It  
3101 also happens to be down the street from the Meta headquarters  
3102 and Stanford University. Despite being so close to such  
3103 wealth, East Palo Alto residents have struggled with a  
3104 history of heavy industries being sited next to residential

3105 areas. There are over 62 toxic waste sites within the city's  
3106 2.5 square miles.

3107 Not surprisingly, East Palo Alto faces challenges with  
3108 air pollution. The biggest highway in the district, Highway  
3109 101, runs right through the middle of that community. The  
3110 impacts of this pollution are undeniable. The community  
3111 experiences significantly higher rates of asthma and  
3112 respiratory disease. They have an average lifespan that is  
3113 13 years lower than the rest of San Mateo County. That is  
3114 why it was such a big deal for this community when your  
3115 agency last year awarded funding to a community organization  
3116 to address air pollution. One local leader noted that he had  
3117 "residents calling me in tears, saying how incredible it was  
3118 to see their struggle finally recognized." Pam Jones, a  
3119 resident of East Palo Alto for over 45 years, remarked that  
3120 the community had been "hopeful for a moment."

3121 As you know, it takes tremendous effort and organizing  
3122 just to pull together a grant application. This money would  
3123 have provided air purifiers to over 400 families for kids  
3124 with asthma and seniors, as well. This wasn't about ideology  
3125 or some slogan; this was about helping children and seniors  
3126 breathe easier. So Administrator Zeldin, you canceled this  
3127 grant, and I am just wondering why you made that decision.

3128 \*Mr. Zeldin. Yes, Congressman, I don't have the details  
3129 of that grant. I had for all of the subcommittee members of

3130 all the -- of all your colleagues on this committee, all the  
3131 grants in their district.

3132 I would say that 10 times out of 10 or 100 times out of  
3133 100, when I look at the details of every single one of the  
3134 grants that are canceled, there is something in it that  
3135 conflicts with this administration's priorities. However, if  
3136 you would like to work together on any aspects of the grant  
3137 where it is in alignment with the administration's priorities  
3138 to successfully resolve it for the community, I am happy to  
3139 work with you on that.

3140 \*Mr. Mullin. Thank you, sir. And do you believe the  
3141 EPA or the President can decide not to spend money that  
3142 Congress has appropriated?

3143 \*Mr. Zeldin. We have an obligation to spend money  
3144 appropriated by Congress. We are in the middle of a fiscal  
3145 year. We are not required to agree with the administration's  
3146 priorities of the last presidential administration, but we  
3147 will continue to get funding out the door before the end of  
3148 this fiscal year with those top-line appropriations from  
3149 Congress.

3150 \*Mr. Mullin. Thank you. I yield back.

3151 \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. Now, if you  
3152 can bear with us, Mr. Administrator, I recognize Mr.  
3153 Obernolte from California for three minutes.

3154 \*Mr. Obernolte. Thank you very much.

3155           Mr. Secretary, thank you for your service and thank you  
3156   for the work that you are doing to transform the EPA into an  
3157   agency that, instead of being an impediment, is helping  
3158   people comply with regulations and getting to a yes. I know  
3159   that means a lot to me and to the different air quality  
3160   management districts that I represent.

3161           I wanted to ask you specifically about a concern I have  
3162   about the -- some of the reductions in force that have been  
3163   occurring at EPA. And I understand this is out of a desire  
3164   to right-size the agency, and that is something I certainly  
3165   am very supportive of. However, many of my agencies rely on  
3166   the EPA to do things like issue permits or issue approvals or  
3167   review plans, and there has been concern expressed that the  
3168   reductions in force, even though we are transforming the EPA  
3169   into a more streamlined organization, will result in delays  
3170   in those approvals and permits getting issued. Can you give  
3171   us some assurances that that is not the intention?

3172           \*Mr. Zeldin. Congressman, yes, we are going to fulfill  
3173   all of our statutory obligations. And the way that the  
3174   reorganization was proposed a couple of weeks ago allows us  
3175   to better focus on those statutory obligations and reduce the  
3176   backlogs.

3177           So, for example, as I referenced earlier with a couple  
3178   of your colleagues, we inherited a massive backlog with the  
3179   pesticide review, a massive backlog with chemical review,

3180 with state implementation plans, with small refinery  
3181 exemptions, and much more. We are putting resources into  
3182 getting through those backlogs we inherited as quickly as  
3183 possible. And with the pesticide review backlog as one of  
3184 the examples, we have already worked through over 2,300 of  
3185 those backlogged cases. We will continue at that pace, and  
3186 we are taking measures to increase the pace of working  
3187 through the backlog we inherited.

3188       \*Mr. Obernolte. Thank you. And certainly, we all  
3189 support your efforts to do that, and let's work together to  
3190 make sure that we are turning the EPA into the type of agency  
3191 that is not an impediment to getting some of these projects  
3192 accomplished that we all prioritize.

3193       One of those projects that is very near and dear to me  
3194 is a project called the Barstow International Gateway. That  
3195 is going to shift some of our freight from the Ports of Los  
3196 Angeles and Long Beach onto rail, instead of being on the  
3197 highways. What can we do to -- at the EPA to assist in  
3198 advancing freight infrastructure that makes some of those  
3199 projects become a reality?

3200       \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, there is certain aspects of  
3201 permitting where an environmental assessment might be done,  
3202 our technical assistance may be requested. We are here  
3203 looking to help all members of this committee to help your  
3204 constituents. If there is a specific request that you have

3205 on how EPA can help you, please let us know so that we can  
3206 work through it.

3207       \*Mr. Obernolte. Okay. Well, thanks. You have got a  
3208 great regional administrator in Joshua Cook. He is an  
3209 amazing man, and we thank you for your service and his, and  
3210 let's work together on getting some of these projects across  
3211 the finish line.

3212       I yield back.

3213       \*Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I now  
3214 recognize the gentlelady from Virginia, Ms. McClellan.

3215       \*Ms. McClellan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3216       And thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for staying three  
3217 more minutes. As you know, this hearing follows a 26.5-hour  
3218 markup of a bill that is still moving its way through  
3219 Congress that sends a clear message to the states to do more  
3220 with less. And if members of the Freedom Caucus get their  
3221 way, states will have to do even more with even less,  
3222 depending on what the final cuts to Medicaid look like.

3223       But even though sometimes government governs in silos,  
3224 people don't live in silos, and state governments are dealing  
3225 with all of the impacts of the Trump Administration. So you  
3226 take a state like Virginia that has the second-highest number  
3227 of Federal employees, has already been hit hard by mass  
3228 layoffs as our labor market is cooling, our unemployment rate  
3229 is expected to reach its highest rate since 2021, bucking a



3230 national trend, and our GDP growth is looking to slow down,  
3231 and that is at the same time that the Commonwealth, like  
3232 other states, is going to have to look to fill severe budget  
3233 gaps due to Medicaid cuts, funding cuts, and the shifting of  
3234 more responsibility to the states.

3235         And so the proposed budget cuts more than \$1 billion  
3236 from categorical grants to the states, and these grants give  
3237 states a baseline capacity that they need to carry out  
3238 federally-mandated environmental protections. So slashing  
3239 them handcuffs the state's ability to continue to address  
3240 pollution.

3241         And earlier this month the Environmental Council of  
3242 States sent the EPA a letter highlighting how states carry  
3243 out more than 90 percent of the nation's Federal  
3244 environmental programs, and states, state legislatures, and  
3245 the business community depend on Congress to fund their  
3246 efforts through grants and partnerships with the EPA. This  
3247 letter warned that if Congress were to adopt the White House  
3248 recommendation for discretionary spending, states may be  
3249 required to terminate primary delegation or authorization  
3250 agreements and return full program implementation to the EPA,  
3251 which would overwhelm the APA [sic] and have detrimental  
3252 impacts to the economic development.

3253         So Mr. Chair, I would like to ask unanimous consent to  
3254 enter this letter into the record.

3255           \*Mr. Griffith. Without objection --

3256           \*Ms. McClellan. And --

3257           \*Mr. Griffith. -- so ordered.

3258           [The information follows:]

3259

3260           \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

3261

3262           \*Ms. McClellan. And I will get this question out, and I  
3263 know you are going to have to answer it later.

3264           [The information follows:]

3265

3266           \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

3267

3268           \*Ms. McClellan. But I really want to know how states  
3269 are supposed to implement critical environmental programs  
3270 under the drastic cuts proposed in the budget. And if the  
3271 states can't, and are forced to return those responsibilities  
3272 to the EPA, how do you plan to carry them out with the severe  
3273 staffing and funding cuts at the Federal level?

3274           \*Mr. Zeldin. Well, Congresswoman, I know we only have  
3275 eight seconds here, so we are happy to follow up.

3276           But we at the EPA are going to fulfill all of our  
3277 statutory obligations. We are receiving many requests for  
3278 additional primacy coming from states. I just signed off on  
3279 moving forward with class 1 through 6. The primacy request  
3280 coming from Arizona, we are dealing with one right now. A  
3281 request came in from Texas and elsewhere, and we have signed  
3282 off on 25 state implementation plans, 16 of which were  
3283 backlogged from the last administration. We want to advance  
3284 cooperative partnership with states. We want to hear their  
3285 concerns and try to figure out how to help them deliver clean  
3286 air, land, and water for their constituents, which is an  
3287 obligation with -- for all levels of government.

3288           I appreciate your concern and your interest on this  
3289 particular issue, and welcome the opportunity to work with  
3290 you on it.

3291           \*Ms. McClellan. Thank you. I yield back.

3292           \*Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back. Seeing no

3293 additional members, I ask unanimous consent to insert in the  
3294 record any documents not previously admitted into the record  
3295 included on the staff hearing documents list.

3296 Without objection, so ordered.

3297 [The information follows:]

3298

3299 \*\*\*\*\*COMMITTEE INSERT\*\*\*\*\*

3300

3301           \*Mr. Griffith. I remind members they have 10 business  
3302 days to submit questions for the record, and I ask the  
3303 witness to respond to the questions promptly.

3304           Without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

3305           [Whereupon, at 1:01 p.m., the subcommittee was  
3306 adjourned.]