

Chairman Morgan Griffith
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment
“The Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Budget”
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I’m glad to have Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin, a friend and former colleague, back in the House today to testify before the Subcommittee on Environment on President Trump’s fiscal year 2026 budget request.

This is certainly an important time for the EPA.

After four years of economically disastrous, legally questionable, and expensive policies of the Biden-Harris Administration, it is a welcome sight to see President Trump and Administrator Zeldin focused on rebuilding the American economy and fixing the problems of the previous administration.

I remember when Administrator Zeldin was in the House, representing the eastern part of Long Island, he was willing to work across the aisle in a pragmatic way to try and address environmental issues like protecting the Long Island sound or addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS.

It is great to see him bringing these same problem-solving skills to EPA, and to be frank, there are a lot of problems there to solve.

I’m pleased to see that the Administrator recognizes that there is a middle ground to tread, where environmental protection does not need to come at the expense of good jobs and a strong economy.

I know that the Administrator is already working to closely examine the previous EPA’s spending spree on Green New Deal-style programs that provided unprecedented levels of

taxpayer funds to environmental groups and consultants and to undo burdensome regulations that increased energy costs and made it more difficult to make things in America.

The reconciliation bill passed out of this Committee last week is an important step in saving taxpayer money and redirecting EPA to focus on its core mission of cleaning up the environment and protecting human health.

In February, Administrator Zeldin announced the broad pillars that the Agency will focus on under his “Powering the Great American Comeback” plan.

In March, Administrator Zeldin announced 31 regulatory actions to support greater energy production, a more robust auto manufacturing sector, a more predictable permitting process, and a more state-based enforcement system.

I’m glad to see that EPA is taking another look at a lot of the rulemakings from the last Administration, particularly those regarding air pollution.

As many of those rulemakings didn’t take into account industry’s ability to meet compliance timelines or which pollution mitigation technologies were able to be installed.

EPA has a duty to enforce the statutes that Congress passed, though I do believe encouraging co-operative compliance with industry will lead to better environmental outcomes and less economic disruption.

In recent years, EPA’s budget has been about \$10 billion per year.

However, under the so-called Inflation Reduction Act EPA received an astounding \$41.5 billion, or more than four times its historical budget, to spend on electric vehicles, environmental justice, and renewable energy programs.

From its founding and up until the past few years, EPA mostly operated as a scientific investigator and regulatory agency, and with the exception of the water infrastructure and Superfund programs, it did not administer lots of large grants.

President Trump's proposed budget would reduce EPA spending to a more sustainable level after years of out-of-control spending on programs and rules that bore little relation to EPA's traditional mission of regulating pollution, setting science-based standards for potentially hazardous substances, and cleaning up waste sites.

It seems that the goals of EPA in the last few years were an attempt to force a change that Americans are not buying.

I look forward to hearing more details from Administrator Zeldon about the reorganization and reform efforts he is making at EPA

The Environment Subcommittee stands ready to work with you, Administrator Zeldin, to help get EPA back on track.

At this Subcommittee's first hearing of the Congress, we examined the implementation of the 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act, often referred to as the TOS-CA law.

We heard how the process for reviewing new and existing chemicals are in need of reform, particularly the ways in which EPA evaluates potential chemical risks.

We also held a hearing in March on ways to maximize brownfield cleanups to support economic development.

As we work on brownfield reauthorization, I hope to collaborate with EPA on ways to possibly setup some sort of pre-clearance permitting pilot program.

Our national security, our economic competitiveness, the health of our families, and strength of our communities all depend on an EPA that is working hard and efficiently for the American people.

Thank you again for appearing before us today, Administrator Zeldin, I look forward to your testimony.