

Questions for the Record

The Honorable Morgan Griffith (R-VA)

1. Many constituent companies in my district, particularly those in the furniture industry, are negatively impacted by the formaldehyde risk assessment. Does the EPA expect to reexamine the unreasonable risk finding for formaldehyde published at 90 Fed. Reg. 316 (Jan. 3, 2025)?

Response: EPA will ensure that the unreasonable risk finding for formaldehyde that is used to inform any potential future regulation is based on gold standard science and consistent with the strong scientific requirements of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

2. Properly managing coal ash and promoting its beneficial uses is something I have long had an interest in. Unfortunately, I believe that the Biden Administration's Legacy Coal Combustion Residuals Rule established a one-size-fits-all regime that required utilities to reclose certain coal ash units. Will you work with Congress and coal plant operators to prioritize replacing it with a commonsense alternative consistent with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act?

Response: EPA is committed to taking swift action on the programs and regulations impacting coal ash or coal combustion residuals (CCR), including state permit program reviews. EPA is working to ensure appropriate regulations are in place that are protective of human health and the environment, while moving forward with EPA's *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative. This includes a review of the 2024 Legacy-Coal Combustion Residuals Management Units Rule.

3. I was pleased to see that you have announced plans to reopen several recently finalized National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants or NESHAPS. Can you commit to completing the reviews of the two NESHAPS for the pulp and paper industry, known as Subpart MM and Subpart S, in the next four years?

Response: It is important that we have a robust pulp and paper industry within the United States. EPA is currently working on multiple actions that could benefit the pulp and paper industry such as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM2.5.

4. I was also pleased to see that you have announced plans to take another look at the Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards which will be a very important step for our country's manufacturers. Can you commit to providing sufficient resources to improve the New Source Review and Prevention of Significant Deterioration permitting processes over the next two years?

Response: Ensuring timely permitting is of key importance to President Trump's Administration. We fully understand and support the need for more timely permitting and to ensure we have the proper resources for air permitting we are establishing an Office of State Air Partnerships. This

new office will be dedicated to working with states, regions, and partners as we look at new ways to improve permitting in the United States.

5. It is my understanding that, in 2022, the Agency rescinded two frequently answered questions as a part of a guidance document related to the implementation of the Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) rule as it applies to property managers renovating pre-1978 properties. As a result, many property managers who hire certified firms on behalf of property owners believe they are now required to become certified firms. They may also be held liable for any violations committed by the certified firms they hire. Property managers have expressed concern about the increased administrative burden and potential liability for the work they do not directly perform. Does the Agency intend to address these concerns, and if so, how?

Response: Not all property management firms are required to be certified under the Renovation, Repair and Paint (RRP) rule. As explained in the 2022 response to comments to the Federal Register notice describing the removal of the two Frequent Questions (FQs) (86 FR 60812)^[1], the removal of the answers was not meant to be a new regulatory determination or an expansion of the definition of “renovation” or other key phrases in the RRP Rule. Consistent with the RRP rule, *any individual or entity is subject to the RRP rule requirements (including firm certification) when they perform, offer, or claim to perform renovations for compensation in target housing and child-occupied facilities built before 1978. See 40 CFR 745.81(a)(2)(ii).*^[2] Both before and after the change in the FQs, property management companies (PMCs) that do not perform or offer to perform such activities do not need to be certified.

[1] <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/04/2021-24010/withdrawal-of-two-answers-to-frequent-questions-about-property-management-companies-and-the-toxic>

[2] [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-R/part-745/subpart-E/section-745.81#p-745.81\(a\)\(2\)\(ii\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-R/part-745/subpart-E/section-745.81#p-745.81(a)(2)(ii))

The Honorable Robert Latta (R-OH)

1. Appliance manufacturers in my district have been long-time supporters of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Energy Star Program. The Energy Star program, by all accounts, is a highly successful program – benefiting consumers and manufacturers, on average saving household roughly \$450 annually on energy bills, according to EPA’s own numbers. It lowers utility bills, cuts emissions, and drives private-sector innovation, all without mandates, new taxes, or bureaucratic expansion.
 - a. If the Office of Atmospheric Protection, which is the office that oversees the Energy Star program, is closed, are there plans to move the Energy Star program to another office at EPA?
 - b. Has EPA consulted with the Department of Energy (DOE) about the possibility of taking over the Energy Star Program, as DOE already operates alongside EPA through a memorandum of understanding for this program? If so, what was the result?

Response: There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the Energy Star program. EPA is currently evaluating a number of options related to the Energy Star program including, but not limited to, establishment of a user-fee, privatization of the program, or moving all or primary responsibilities to the Department of Energy.

2. During the Environment subcommittee hearing, you suggested that the Energy Star Program could exist outside of the federal government, pointing attention to the Labeling Energy Efficiency in Appliances and Devices Standards (LEADS) Program and DOE.
 - a. Could a public-private partnership model or external administrator under EPA oversight be a viable path forward, maintaining program integrity while reducing federal overhead?

Response: There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the Energy Star program. This could involve working with the private sector for more efficient implementation. Transitioning the Energy Star program away from a publicly-funded EPA program would not prevent consumers from accessing relevant information as companies can provide transparency related to the cost of the products and energy usage as part of their sales information.

3. The flexibility that Energy Star provides is one of the starkest comparisons to the LEADS program. The Energy Star program encourages above-standard performance, enabling market innovation and brand differentiation, while the LEADS program sets minimum performance floors without encouraging performance beyond the standard.

It is also important to mention that according to the Congressional Research Service, the LEADS program is more expensive than the Energy Star Program by a difference of up to \$40 million.

Furthermore, according to the Congressional Research Service, from fiscal year 2015 to 2024, EPA funding has gone down for the Energy Star Program. For 2022, the program was appropriated just under \$34 million. While that is a substantial amount of taxpayer money, EPA reports the program saved Americans over \$42 billion in 2022. This yields an estimated return on investment of \$800 up to \$1,400 in consumer savings for every \$1 of federal spending.

I am concerned that EPA may eliminate this program that embodies conservative principles: voluntary participation, private sector innovation, and consumer empowerment.

- a. What is the estimated savings of ending the program, and how do those compare with the consumer and energy savings it generates annually?

Response: While the benefit of the Energy Star program is widely recognized, multiple private sector partners have reached out to EPA about taking on some or all of this work, similar to how LEED certification is run by a nonprofit. There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the program.

4. During the subcommittee hearing, while answering Congresswoman Castor's questions regarding the Energy Star Program, you mentioned that the return on investment historically reported from EPA might not be accurate.

a. Can you please provide supporting data that these figures historically reported from EPA are inaccurate?

Response: It is unclear what the economic activity generated by the Energy Star program is versus what the economic activity would be without this program. As this program does not preclude the purchase or sales of any product, this program is essentially a government-sponsored advertising regime. We expect that companies will and would have promoted their own products regardless of the existence of the Energy Star program. This does not account for tax benefits that state or the federal government has tied to Energy Star program which could be modified to a performance-based approach that minimizes or eliminates potential impacts.

5. According to the 2023 Energy Star Annual Overview Report, 90 percent of American households recognize the Energy Star label, over 3,000 utilities, states, and local governments incorporate Energy Star into their rebate and energy efficiency programs, and more than 800,000 Energy Star-certified homes and apartments have been built, often commanding a premium in the housing market. It is important to acknowledge the market adoption of this program, and I urge the EPA to consider these factors as well before making any decision regarding the Energy Star Program.

The program operates entirely on voluntary participation, and compliance costs are minimal because it aligns with industry product innovation cycles. Manufacturers seek Energy Star certification as a market advantage, not due to regulation.

It is important to note that the Energy Star program is statutorily authorized and required to be maintained by DOE and EPA under the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and therefore, the program cannot be privatized absent Congressional action.

a. How does EPA plan to ensure transparency and consumer trust in energy efficiency claims without the Energy Star label, which has become a trusted benchmark for millions of Americans?

b. As you know, manufacturers and retailers need to set long-term production strategies. How should manufacturers and retailers plan for Energy Star standard as part of their business models and product innovation strategies moving forward?

- c. Has EPA engaged with stakeholders (including states, energy providers, appliance manufacturers, and homebuilders) to assess the downstream effects of ending this program? If so, what was their response?
- d. Has EPA considered allowing public comments before making a final decision on ending the Energy Star Program?
- e. Rather than seeking to privatize the program, will you commit to working with Congress to find ways to ensure the program is a successful public-private partnership?

Response: While the benefit of the Energy Star program is widely recognized, multiple private sector partners have reached out to EPA about taking on some or all of this work, similar to how LEED certification is run by a nonprofit. There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the program.

The Honorable Gary Palmer (R-AL)

1. Small refiners are a significant source of employment in the State of Alabama and provide vital transportation fuels to the State as well as the rest of the southeast region. Over the last four years, the EPA has ignored its statutory requirements by either failing to act on such hardship exemptions or outright denying them. President Trump has rightly identified through his Executive Order that we need to Unleash American Energy and small refiners are key to achieving this goal.

- a. What is EPA doing to rectify the outstanding small refinery exemptions from the previous administration in an expedited manner, and how do you plan to provide clarity for small refiners going forward so they have business certainty?

Response: On August 22, 2025, EPA announced its decisions on 175 individual small refinery exemption petitions from 38 refineries seeking an exemption from their Renewable Fuel Standard obligations for the 2016–2024 compliance years. In consultation with the Department of Energy, EPA reviewed all the information submitted by each individual refinery in support of its petition. After careful consideration of all statutory factors and the information submitted by the refineries, EPA is granting full (100 percent) exemptions to 63 petitions, granting partial (50 percent) exemptions to 77 petitions, denying 28 petitions, and determining 7 petitions to be ineligible. With this action, EPA has taken action to address the backlog of petitions before the Agency and has established a new methodology that will provide certainty to stakeholders going forward. Additionally, on September 16, 2025, EPA announced a supplemental proposed rule that takes into consideration the expected impacts of those small refinery exemption decisions. Based on this information, EPA is co-proposing additional volumes representing complete (100 percent) reallocation and 50 percent reallocation for SREs granted in full or in part for 2023 and 2024, as well as those projected to be granted for 2025, as part of the ongoing RFS rulemaking.

EPA is also providing more information on its projection of SREs to inform the calculation of the 2026 and 2027 percentage standards.

The Honorable Randy Weber (R-TX)

1. Given the concerns about the reliability of IRIS assessments and their impact on industry, what steps is the EPA taking to restore confidence among American manufacturers and other stakeholders in the Agency's risk assessment processes?
 - a. How will you ensure that future regulations are based on transparent, scientifically sound data that reflect real-world conditions and are achievable for industry?

Response: EPA will ensure that the science supporting risk assessments is consistent with gold standard science and consistent with the strong scientific requirements of the Agency's statutory responsibilities and programs, like TSCA. In addition, EPA is seeking to collect better information to inform current exposures scenarios, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to better inform regulations.

2. The HFC Management Rule imposes unnecessary, burdensome, costly requirements related to refrigerant systems that will have to be replaced within a few years under the AIM Act. Those are costs with limited to no benefits, and they will hurt consumers and increase the price of food. Is it your intention that the EPA reconsider the HFC Management Rule?

Response: EPA is implementing the American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act consistent with the direction provided by Congress and legal obligations under the statute. The Agency continues to engage with stakeholders and evaluate any implementation challenges as part of its commitment to ensure smooth and effective transitions under the law. You may be interested to know that on March 12, 2025, in the greatest and most consequential day of deregulation in the history of the United States, Administrator Zeldin announced the agency is reconsidering the Technology Transitions Rule under the AIM Act. The Technology Transitions Rule raises the cost of food at the grocery store, harms semiconductor manufacturing, and restricts Americans from being able to purchase affordable air conditioning systems for their homes. EPA has a proposal at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under interagency review reconsidering the Technology Transitions Rule. When EPA's reconsideration proposal clears interagency review, it will be released for public notice and comment.

The Honorable August Pfluger (R-TX)

1. Thank you for including the reconsideration of the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program under Subpart W in your broader deregulatory agenda. This rule has been a top concern of mine, as its current form—finalized under the Biden administration—poses serious challenges to the nation's oil and gas producers and runs counter to President Trump's policy of American energy dominance.

The previous administration’s revisions to Subpart W not only expanded reporting burdens but also inflated emission estimates by increasing emission factors and restricting the use of site-specific data and advanced monitoring technologies—despite clear congressional direction to support more accurate, empirical reporting. The reclassification of facilities and the broadening of the rule’s scope have raised concerns that it unfairly targets domestic energy production.

We all benefit from an accurate and transparent greenhouse gas inventory, especially as the industry invests billions into emissions reductions.

- a. Can you provide an update on the EPA’s reconsideration of the Biden-era changes to Subpart W?
- b. Will you commit to prioritizing this rulemaking as part of the agency’s regulatory reform efforts?

Response: As announced on March 12, EPA will be reconsidering Subpart W. EPA is committed to working on this reconsideration and providing common sense solutions to the regulated industry. The Agency is currently meeting with stakeholders on this issue as part of the reconsideration and determination for next steps with the regulations and program.

2. The Management of Certain Hydrofluorocarbons and Substitutes under Subsection (h) of the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act rule-making, as finalized by the Biden administration, will impose onerous requirements on American businesses, particularly the nation’s grocery stores. In their rulemaking, the Biden EPA went far beyond statutory requirements enacted by Congress, choosing instead to micromanage industry and impose onerous and costly requirements that will drive up grocery costs for Americans. What steps will the agency take to reconsider this rule-making and protect American consumers from rising food costs?

Response: EPA is implementing the American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act consistent with the direction provided by Congress and legal obligations under the statute. The Agency continues to engage with stakeholders and evaluate any implementation challenges as part of its commitment to ensure smooth and effective transitions under the law. You may be interested to know that on March 12, 2025, in the greatest and most consequential day of deregulation in the history of the United States, Administrator Zeldin announced the agency is reconsidering the Technology Transitions Rule under the AIM Act. The Technology Transitions Rule raises the cost of food at the grocery store, harms semiconductor manufacturing, and restricts Americans from being able to purchase affordable air conditioning systems for their homes. EPA has a proposal at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under interagency review reconsidering the Technology Transitions Rule. When EPA’s reconsideration proposal clears interagency review, it will be released for public notice and comment.

The Honorable Frank Pallone (D-NJ)

1. Your budget has an over 80 percent cut to the Superfund program and justifies it by stating that the taxes will bring in a projected \$1.6 billion in tax receipts.
 - a. You do include any documentation for the projection of tax receipts. Do you commit to providing that information to our committee?
 - b. When we reinstated the Superfund taxes, we did so to spur additional cleanups, as the program had a backlog. How do you intend to address the backlog and continue cleanups at the current rate given the proposed drastic funding cut to the program?
 - c. The IRS is tasked with enforcing the Superfund tax collection. Given the staffing and funding cuts at the IRS, how do you plan to adjust EPA's resources, should Superfund receipts come in below the projection?
 - d. Will you commit to briefing the committee on how you plan to fulfill the statutory obligations of the Superfund program amid your staff reductions?

Response: EPA continues to work on finding improvements in our effectiveness and efficiencies in using Superfund tax receipts to deliver clean land to all Americans. In FY 2024, the U.S. Department of Treasury collected \$1.46 billion in Superfund tax receipts which are available in FY 2025. This fell short of the \$2.17 billion which was estimated, at the time. In FY 2025, Department of Treasury has collected \$412.4 million through December 31, 2024. The Department of Treasury (Treasury) provides biannual estimates of the tax receipts. Additionally, as required in Public Law 118-42 and Public Law 119-4, EPA has previously provided the available Treasury letters informing EPA of the certified receipt amounts. EPA intends to fully replace the Superfund Remedial from tax receipts. EPA will prioritize the Superfund tax receipts to clean up Superfund sites.

2. Your agency has blocked grantees under Section 138 of the Clean Air Act from receiving their obligated funds.
 - a. Please identify what statutory authority the Administrator has to withhold obligated funds.
 - b. Please provide this committee with a full report of the individual reviews of all terminated or paused grants, and the findings and reasons each were terminated or paused.
 - c. Does EPA have a plan for grantees to be reinstated if their grants were terminated or obligated funds were withheld unlawfully?

- d. If so, please provide the committee with details of this process.
- e. If not, why not? And please explain how EPA intends to stay in compliance with the Impoundment Control Act?

Response: While the Agency followed the law and is fully within Agency rights surrounding grants, the Agency will ensure funding is outlaid as directed by law. EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the EPA funding priorities for achieving program goals, and that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. Furthermore, EPA has notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions.

3. Your budget cuts funding by 20 percent for the bipartisan Brownfields program. The Budget in Brief states that grantees “leverage 10,000 jobs and \$1.46 billion in other funding sources.”
 - a. Why would you cut funding for a program that, in your own words, spurs so much economic development?
 - b. How do you plan to keep the same pace of Brownfields projects when you’ve also zeroed out Brownfields categorical grants?
 - c. Will you commit to briefing the committee on how you plan to maintain the statutory obligations of the Brownfields program amid your staff reductions?

Response: EPA is committed to meeting its statutory obligations under the Brownfields program and working with stakeholders at all levels of government and the private sector to support communities across the nation. We continue to issue a wide range of grants and, just as important, we provide technical assistance for Brownfields projects. This technical assistance is a priority for local governments as it further leverages our Brownfields investments, and we plan to continue this support along with our grants program going forward.

4. How do you plan to satisfy the statutory obligations under Section 112(r)(6) of the Clean Air Act while defunding the Chemical Safety Board?

Response: As you know, the Chemical Safety Board is not part of EPA. EPA will continue to meet statutory obligations under the various provisions of section 112(r) of the Clean Air Act. EPA reviews site risk management plans for covered facilities which are required by EPA rules to have certain process safety program elements in place which work to reduce the risk of an accidental release. If a facility does have an accidental release, EPA typically conducts an investigation. EPA will assess whether violations of applicable environmental laws have occurred and take appropriate enforcement action.

5. What is the agency doing to maintain the safety of surrounding communities, facility workers, and first responders at relevant chemical facilities in the wake of such drastic cuts?
 - a. How will this be impacted by the proposed rollback of the Risk Management Plan rule?

Response: We are committed to meeting our statutory obligations to protect human health and safety under the Risk Management Program. Any revisions to the regulations will be consistent with that obligation.

6. EPA announced that it would “rescind” standards for four PFAS in drinking water and would extend the deadline for compliance with the drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS by an additional two years—giving water systems seven years to comply. Since that announcement, you have insisted that rescinding four standards is not weakening them and that the reason EPA is rescinding the standards is due to a “procedural issue.”
 - a. Without these enforceable standards in place, how is EPA fulfilling its commitment to protect the tens of millions of Americans who are currently exposed to dangerous levels of PFAS?
 - b. Will you commit to following the statute, which includes an “anti-backsliding” provision that explicitly says that any EPA cannot weaken any drinking water standards?
 - c. The Safe Drinking Water Act explicitly provides that drinking water standards must be complied with in no more than five years. What legal authority does EPA have to extend this to seven years? How is that consistent with the antibacksliding provision?
 - d. As part of the announcement, you announced the launch of PFAS OUT. As stated in the press release, “EPA will share resources, tools, funding, and technical assistance to help utilities meet the federal drinking water standards.” The release also mentions that EPA will provide “support for accessing federal funding opportunities.” How would EPA assist water systems in accessing federal funding if the proposed budget cuts to the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund were to go into effect?

Response: EPA is committed to addressing Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water while following the law and the science. On May 14, 2025, EPA announced the agency will keep the current National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), which set nationwide limits for these “forever chemicals” in drinking water. EPA also announced its intent to extend compliance deadlines for PFOA and PFOS, establish a federal exemption framework, and initiate enhanced outreach to water systems, especially in rural and small communities,

through EPA's new PFAS OUTreach Initiative (PFAS OUT). This action will help address the most significant compliance challenges EPA has heard from public water systems, members of Congress, and other stakeholders, while supporting actions to protect the American people from certain PFAS in drinking water.

On May 14, 2025, EPA also announced its intent to rescind the regulations and reconsider the regulatory determinations for PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX), and the Hazard Index mixture of these three plus PFBS to ensure that the determinations and any resulting drinking water regulation follow the legal process laid out in the Safe Drinking Water Act. Addressing PFAS will continue to be a priority for EPA, and our actions will be guided by strengthening the science, fulfilling statutory obligations, enhancing communication, and building partnerships.

7. EPA has acknowledged that there is no safe level of lead. Yet over nine million American households get their water from a lead service line that can cause serious lead contamination. Do you agree that there is no safe level of lead in drinking water?
 - a. Will you commit to defending EPA's rule that requires lead service lines to be removed?
 - b. Do you believe that the federal government should provide additional funding to help localities pay to remove lead pipes and upgrade their water infrastructure?
 - c. Will you continue to operate the Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators Community Initiative to develop best practices and creative approaches for conducting inventories to identify lead pipes; developing lead service line replacement plans; increasing community outreach and education; and preparing applications for funding?
 - d. What guidance documents is EPA working on to help water utilities comply with the LCRI and when are they expected to be published?

Response: EPA is committed to making continued progress in reducing lead exposure across multiple statutory authorities and responsibilities. Under Administrator Zeldin's first pillar to provide access to clean water for all Americans, EPA is prioritizing reducing lead in drinking water. For example, EPA's Get the Lead Out (GLO) technical assistance program supports communities through the process of lead service line replacements. On December 13, 2024, the American Water Works Association filed a Petition for Review of the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. In February, the D.C. Circuit granted a request by the Department of Justice (DOJ), on behalf of EPA, to place the current litigation of the LCRI on hold to provide new EPA leadership an opportunity to review the underlying rule. Following that review, DOJ is moving forward with the process of defending the rule. Right now, EPA is developing new tools and information to support practical implementation flexibilities and regulatory clarity that will be available imminently. To support compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule, EPA has shared abundant guidance and resources

for states and water systems, which are available on EPA's website, *Lead and Copper Rule Implementation Tools*.^[1]

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule-implementation-tools>

8. The President's proposed budget would cut funding to the State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs by approximately 90 percent from Fiscal Year 2025. Meanwhile, EPA's own needs surveys indicate that more than \$1.25 trillion is needed to update our nation's water infrastructure over the next twenty years, just to meet current health and safety standards.
 - a. How does the Administration justify such a dramatic reduction given the extent of the need, our nation's aging infrastructure, and growing public health risks?
 - b. What metrics or outcomes does the agency believe can still be achieved in water safety and infrastructure reliability with such a drastic reduction in resources?

Response: I welcome a conversation with Congress about how best to fund the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRF) in FY 2026 and beyond considering Congress's decision to use these accounts to fund Congressional Directed Spending projects for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure and recognizing the SRFs, as a tool of true cooperative federalism, were designed to revolve rather than simply become yet another federal grant program.

9. The budget request document justifies the near-elimination of federal funding for the SRF programs by stating that, "When it comes to water infrastructure, the States should be responsible for funding their own water infrastructure projects," and that states must "adjust to alternative funding sources for their water infrastructure." Local governments rely on SRF support to fund critical projects, leverage municipal financing, and stretch limited budgets.
 1. Have you consulted with state environmental agencies about the potential consequences of this funding cut?
 2. What contingency plan does the EPA have for states dealing with water and wastewater crises if this funding cut is enacted?
 3. What will happen to small or rural communities that depend on SRF loans to fix failing water and wastewater systems if this funding is withdrawn and their state government cannot afford to make up the difference?
 4. The SRF programs not only improve water infrastructure, but they also support tens of thousands of construction, engineering, and maintenance jobs across the country. Has the EPA analyzed the job losses that could result from this nearly \$2.5 billion funding cut?

Response: After decades of sustained federal investment, potential changes to the SRFs and EPA funding programs will empower states to better analyze and leverage their own funding

mechanisms to support water systems and infrastructure across their state, removing restrictive regulatory barriers that came with federal funding schemes. The State Revolving Loan funds will continue to revolve as loan repayments, state match, and federal capital replenish the fund to allow for additional loans to be made for water infrastructure projects. In addition, EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program is also available to provide low-cost financing to public and private borrowers for a broad scope of wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater projects.

10. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law authorized EPA to establish a low-income water assistance pilot program.

- a. The budget request does not include a funding request for this program. Instead, it proposes to significantly cut federal support for drinking water and clean water programs. If this budget were to be enacted, what is EPA's plan to ensure all Americans have access to clean and affordable drinking water and wastewater services?
- b. Please provide an update on that program including what resources the agency needs to fully implement the program.

Response: EPA is committed to working on water affordability issues and comprehensive strategies to reduce household water bills across the United States. The 2024 EPA Water Affordability Report to Congress stressed the need for a multi-faceted approach to address water affordability. This includes approaches to reduce water infrastructure capital and operating costs by promoting the use of low-cost federal funding and financing for water infrastructure, innovative financing strategies, improved operational efficiencies and Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) to address affordability issues. Many of the WaterTA services can help offset costs that could be passed on to customers or be a barrier for some water systems, especially small, Tribal and rural systems.

EPA is continuing to work on these comprehensive approaches to reduce household water bills and ensure access to water services. Increasing knowledge and implementation of best practices for customer assistance programs, develop case studies on effective capital budgeting and operational efficiencies and partnership with local utilities have been a key component of this work.

11. The budget – if enacted – would eliminate cut funding to the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water program, eliminate the Lead Testing in Schools program, and eliminate Lead Categorical Grants.

- a. Lead poisoning is not only dangerous – especially for our children – but also preventable. How does EPA reconcile its proposal to reduce funding for lead reduction programs with the Administrator's stated support for EPA's mission of protecting public health?

- b. Considering that there is no safe level of lead and that lead exposure is linked to developmental delays and learning difficulties, how does reducing and eliminating these programs help power the great American comeback?

Response: EPA is committed to reducing lead in drinking water. The President's FY 2026 Budget provides \$124 million in funding, a \$9 million increase, to EPA's Drinking Water Programs to advance the critical drinking water mission at EPA, protecting Americans, and especially children, from unsafe or contaminated water, including contamination from lead. The President's FY 2026 Budget also provides \$20 million for the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water grant program and \$28 million for the Lead Testing in Schools grant program to help states, tribes, and communities remove lead from drinking water. EPA also recently announced its plans to defend the existing Lead and Copper Rule in litigation while developing new tools and information to support practical implementation flexibilities and regulatory clarity. The Agency will announce next steps in the coming months.

12. The President issued an Executive Order entitled "Restoring Gold Standard Science," which seeks to roll back scientific integrity policies at federal agencies to the policies that existed as of January 19, 2021. Considering EPA's Office of Inspector General investigated the agency for scientific malfeasance in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention under the first Trump Administration, when EPA's previous policy had been in place, how is the agency planning to prevent such activities in light of these proposed rollbacks?

Response: EPA takes scientific integrity concerns seriously and will ensure the Agency, including OCSPP, is meeting all requirements of the President's Executive Order on "Restoring Gold Standard Science."

13. You plan to cut research funding by 50 percent and terminate 75 percent of the scientists in the Office of Research and Development. EPA's monitoring of all the large and midsize public drinking water systems in the country is detecting 16 PFAS chemicals which have undetermined safe levels, and EPA's National Aquatic Resource Surveys are detecting 9 PFAS chemicals in fish throughout the country which have undetermined safe levels. How do you plan to determine the safe level of these PFAS chemicals given this loss of research capability?

Response: Understanding the characteristics of PFAS chemicals is essential to the ability to identify appropriate alternatives. As noted in Administrator Zeldin's April 28, 2025, announcement on EPA's efforts to address PFAS, EPA is committed to implementing a PFAS testing strategy that includes analysis of existing information on PFAS, as well as generation of critical data either through collaborative efforts with internal and external stakeholders, or by using test order authority under section 4 of the Toxic Substances Control Act. In May 2025, EPA announced an interim final rule^[1] that extended the dates of the reporting period for submissions of existing and reasonably available PFAS data under the agency's TSCA section 8(a)(7) rule. As Administrator Zeldin's April 2025 announcement states, EPA is committed to implementing TSCA section 8(a)(7) to smartly collect necessary information, as Congress envisioned and consistent with TSCA. EPA is also moving forward

on its PFAS test order strategy to ensure that relevant and accurate information on PFAS is available for decision-making. To help meet this challenge, EPA researchers developed a chemical category-based approach to help prioritize PFAS for further data collection efforts. In 2024, EPA published a new approach to categorizing PFAS based on the chemicals' structural similarities. Structurally similar chemicals tend to have similar health effects at similar exposure levels. EPA is now working to integrate this approach with its planning for PFAS test orders. The assertion that we are planning to cut the Agencies scientist by 75 percent is unfounded and simply untrue. Both research and science will continue at the Agency with a clearer focus, closer to the program offices that create policy.

[1] <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/05/13/2025-08168/perfluoroalkyl-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-data-reporting-and-recordkeeping-under-the-toxic>

14. Can you commit to EPA meeting the dates for completing TSCA risk evaluations that EPA agreed to under a consent agreement? Is EPA planning to re-open any of the previously completed risk evaluations?

Response: EPA is committed to meeting its statutory obligations under TSCA. One of those obligations is to use the best available science in risk evaluations, and we are reviewing some of the work completed under the previous administration to ensure this was done. Where there are questions, we intend to review and, as necessary, revise the evaluations. Where there is unreasonable risk, EPA will move to rulemaking as required by the statute.

15. The budget proposes cuts to funding that supports chemical reviews as well as research. How would this budget request support increased workflows in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention?

Response: EPA agrees that the TSCA new chemical review process is critical for advancing innovative chemistries for all sectors of our manufacturing economy. To improve the efficiency of the new chemical review process, a functioning and stable IT system is necessary. The previous administration publicly acknowledged that systems were either not functioning or, at times, completely shut down which paralyzed the Agency's ability to review these important submissions. EPA is grateful to President Trump and Congress for passing the continuing resolution which includes \$17 million to help improve the IT systems used in the TSCA program, especially in our review of new chemicals. We are ensuring that this funding is supporting improvements for our IT infrastructure.

16. Will EPA be finalizing all of the chemical rules that are well past their TSCA statutory deadlines and moving all chemicals that have completed risk evaluations into the rulemaking phase immediately? If not, please provide an updated timeline.

Response: EPA is on track to complete the risk evaluations as agreed to under the consent agreement and has met all related milestones to date. Most recently, EPA released two draft risk evaluations^[1] for two phthalate chemicals and the final risk evaluation for 1,1-dichloroethane within the timeline required under the consent agreement.

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/chemicals-under-tsca/epa-releases-draft-tsca-risk-evaluations-phthalates-dbp-and-dehp-public>

17. EPA released a memorandum entitled, “Implementing National Enforcement and Compliance Initiatives Consistently with Executive Orders and Agency Priorities,” which states that EPA enforcement “shall not shut down any stage of energy production (from exploration to distribution) or power generation absent an imminent and substantial threat to human health.” How does this policy protect communities from bad actors contributing to long-term health harms associated with toxic pollutants, such as cancer and developmental harms?

Response: EPA continues to enforce laws and regulations aimed at pollutants causing long-term harms in communities near oil and gas facilities and power plants, and nothing in the memorandum contradicts such enforcement. Resolving such violations almost never requires shutting down a stage of energy production, and if that were necessary the memorandum simply provides that there must be approval commensurate with the breadth of such an action.

18. The FY26 Budget in Brief states that EPA plans to commence “re-designating areas to attainment of air quality standards.” Please provide more information on the process by which non-attainment areas will be redesignated. How is EPA planning on accounting for health impacts and community needs in its decision-making process?

Response: EPA will continue implementing cooperative federalism to find ways to work with states on state implementation plans to help them achieve attainment of the NAAQS. Additionally, we will work with states to appropriately consider emissions from sources outside of the states’ control (e.g., international emissions) to ensure they are not punished for actions outside of their control.

19. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently sent you a letter that highlights “areas that warrant timely and focused action.”

- a.** What is EPA’s plan for completing the organization-wide cybersecurity risk assessment recommended by GAO? Have any staff working on this effort departed from the agency? If so, how many and what is the plan to complete this assessment without such personnel?

Response: EPA is committed to maintaining robust cybersecurity measures across the organization. In alignment with the recommendations from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), we have successfully completed the organization-wide cybersecurity risk assessment as of July 2025. This comprehensive assessment involved a thorough evaluation of our cybersecurity posture and the identification of potential risks and vulnerabilities.

The findings and insights gained from this assessment have been documented and submitted to the GAO for review. Our focus remains on implementing the necessary improvements and strategies to enhance our cybersecurity resilience, ensuring the protection of our critical systems and data.

We continue to prioritize cybersecurity as a key component of our operational integrity and are dedicated to adapting our strategies to meet evolving challenges. Our ongoing efforts include leveraging internal expertise and collaborating with external partners to strengthen our cybersecurity framework.

- b.** EPA proposes an increase of \$10 million to address cybersecurity in the water sector. What steps does the agency plan to take to address cybersecurity risks in the water sector if given additional resources?

Response: The President’s FY 2026 Budget Request provides \$10 million for a new competitive Water Sector Cybersecurity Grant Program. This program will provide grants to drinking water and wastewater systems to develop and implement programs, in line with EPA, CISA, and NIST guidelines, to proactively mitigate the risk of cybersecurity attacks. To date, water systems have been targeted in multiple attacks by sophisticated foreign state actors and groups affiliated with these adversarial countries.

- In 2023, threat actors affiliated with the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps carried out malicious cyberattacks against 18 United States drinking water systems. In several instances, these attacks disrupted the distribution of safe drinking water, including one that took a treatment plant offline.
- In 2024, a pro-Russia hacktivist group, Cyber Army of Russian Reborn, associated with Russian military intelligence gained access to nine water and wastewater systems: it succeeded in manipulating the systems' industrial controls, for example, causing a water tank to overflow at a small water system in Texas and a lift station to malfunction at a small wastewater system in Indiana.
- A cyber group known as the Volt Typhoon, sponsored by the People's Republic of China, may have compromised information technology networks at multiple drinking water systems.

- c.** What steps, if any, has EPA taken to address GAO’s recommendations regarding harmful algal blooms (HABs)? What additional steps does EPA plan to take to manage risks associated with HABs?

Response: EPA is committed to addressing GAO’s recommendations regarding HABs and recently (on June 16, 2025) transmitted a routine update to GAO. EPA has worked in collaboration with the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABHRCA) - Interagency Working Group to advance research, development, and application of methods and technologies to better manage risks associated with HAB events. In particular, EPA monitors and forecasts HABs in freshwaters using satellite remote sensing and predictive modeling. A central element of this framework is the multi-agency collaboration on the Cyanobacterial Assessment Network (CyAN). CyAN delivers daily cyanobacteria levels for more than 2,000 lakes. States, Tribes and other resource managers including the National Park Service and the public use the CyanWeb tool^[1] to access near real-time HAB data to inform local management decisions including prioritizing monitoring and posting health advisories. The ability to forecast HABs has been identified as critical for water resource managers working to proactively protect public health and the environment.

EPA produces weekly forecasts^[2] of HAB risk for more than 2,000 lakes with 90% overall accuracy. EPA also supports a volunteer monitoring app (bloomWatch^[3]), for members of the public to submit information and photographs of waters with suspected HABs. EPA reviews those submissions and provides notifications to states and other organizations that opt-in for notifications. In addition, EPA continues to evaluate health effects information on cyanotoxins to improve characterization of the human health risks associated with HAB events.

[1] <https://qed.epa.gov/cyanweb/account>

[2] <https://www.epa.gov/habs/hab-forecasts>

[3] <https://www.epa.gov/habs/bloomwatch>

20. The budget request states that EPA will expand AI capabilities within the agency in accordance with OMB Memorandums entitled “Accelerating Federal Use of AI through Innovation, Governance, and Public Trust and Driving Efficient Acquisition of Artificial Intelligence in Government.”

- a. Please provide a detailed explanation of how AI is currently used at the agency and how AI will be used to align with those memorandums.

Response: EPA is actively integrating government-approved AI into its operations to enhance research, regulatory functions, and overall productivity, guided by the principles outlined in OMB Memorandums M-25-10 and M-25-22. Our approach focuses on fostering innovation, ensuring governance, and delivering value to both our employees and the public.

We prioritize data quality and standards to support AI initiatives, leveraging existing software and hardware platforms to enhance machine learning capabilities. Leadership empowerment and workforce development are key components, with efforts to strengthen AI literacy and create an environment conducive to exploration and innovation.

Risk management is integral to our strategy, ensuring responsible AI use and alignment with federal guidelines. These efforts collectively aim to drive innovation while maintaining public trust.

- b. EPA states it “will collaborate with lawmakers and industry leaders to ensure that it is easy to invest in and develop AI within the United States, and that the energy required to do so is reliable and affordable.” Since no mention of communities is made in this statement, please explain how EPA will properly incorporate community feedback into this process?

Response: In addition to EPA actively integrating AI into its operations to enhance research, regulatory functions, and overall productivity, our approach also embraces working with all AI leaders—private and public sectors—to streamline permitting and regulations that will help accelerate American infrastructure and data center development. For example, one way EPA is working to make the U.S. the AI capital of the world is by accelerating the availability and

deployment of water reuse strategies at data centers—like those used to power AI—to provide a reliable and local supply of cooling water for data processing, particularly in communities that face water supply challenges.

- 21.** The budget requests \$10 million to support “organizational restructuring efforts throughout the Agency.” Please provide a detailed spending plan for how that money would be utilized.

Response: This \$10 million request supports workforce reshaping in FY 2026 including \$8 million in EPM and \$2 million in S&T, implementing workforce actions already underway.

- 22.** Did you or someone else make the decision to eliminate the GHG Reporting program (GHGRP) in the budget and reorganization plan?

Response: The President’s FY 2026 Budget Request supports the President’s commitment to unleash America’s affordable and reliable energy and natural resources. The priorities reflected in the President’s Budget Request reflect the unified position of the Executive Branch.

- 23.** Congress directed EPA to create the GHGRP in 2007 and has funded it annually ever since. Will EPA spend the full amount of the FY25 appropriated funds for this program? If yes, please provide the committee with documentation. If not, why not?

Response: The Agency will spend according to law. On September 12, 2025, EPA proposed to permanently remove program obligations for 46 source categories of the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP). Under the proposal, facilities, suppliers, and underground injection sites under these 46 source categories would no longer report to EPA after reporting year 2024.

The Honorable Paul Tonko (D-NY)

1. According to Regulatory Impact Analyses published by EPA, the 31 rules and agency actions that you have proposed rolling back as part of the deregulatory actions announced on March 12 were determined to prevent significant numbers of premature deaths, asthma attacks, missed work days, missed school days, heart disease, emergency room visits, lung disease, cancer, and other ailments. They also would deliver significant economic benefits to Americans, including avoided health care costs, hospital visits, missed work days, and avoided climate change damages.
 - a. Did you ask EPA career staff to examine the potential health impacts of revising the 31 regulations before your March 12 announcement? If yes, what information did they provide?
 - b. Do you agree that reconsideration of these rules could contribute to higher levels of premature deaths, asthma incidents, hospital visits, missed work days, and missed school days than if the rules were left in place?

- c. Will EPA follow past practices of transparently disclosing and quantifying the full costs and benefits of any proposed changes to rules, including disclosing the number of premature deaths, asthma incidents, hospital visits, missed work days, missed school days, and lost economic benefits, compared to a baseline of leaving the current rules in place?
- d. How do you intend to weigh the value of public health impacts, such as risk of cancer, premature deaths, and asthma incidents, to the value of reduced costs to regulated industries?

Response: EPA will follow all requirements under the Administrative Procedure Act and any relevant statutes as part of the regulatory process of any of the actions addressed on March 12, 2025.

2. What communication did EPA have with the White House about the President’s April 8 decision to exempt approximately one-third of the nation’s coal-fired power plants from standards to reduce emissions of mercury and other toxic heavy metals?

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources webpages.^[1] Information about the Presidential Proclamation – Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy is also on our website.^[2]

^[1] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/clean-air-act-section-112-presidential-exemption-information>

^[2] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/presidential-proclamation-regulatory-relief-certain-stationary>

3. How was the “Annex I” list of power plants that received the Presidential exemption developed? And what role, if any, did EPA have in developing this list?

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources

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4. Did the White House request any information from EPA prior to the April 8 announcement, including any analysis about the availability of technology needed to implement the standards or the need for a Presidential exemption? If so, please provide that information or analysis.

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources webpages.^[1] Information about the Presidential Proclamation – Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy is also on our website.^[2]

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5. Did you or the White House consult with EPA’s expert career staff about whether the requirements for granting a Presidential exemption from this standard were met?

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources webpages.^[1] Information about the Presidential Proclamation – Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy is also on our website.^[2]

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^[2] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/presidential-proclamation-regulatory-relief-certain-stationary>

6. Did EPA provide guidance to the White House on the status of technology needed to implement the rule? If so, please provide documentation.

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources webpages.^[1] Information about the Presidential Proclamation – Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy is also on our website.^[2]

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^[2] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/presidential-proclamation-regulatory-relief-certain-stationary>

7. Did EPA undertake a process for reversing the January 2023 technology review that found “there are available controls and methods of operation that will allow lignite-fired EGUs to meet an Hg emission standard of 1.2E-06 lb/MMBtu”? If so, please provide documentation.

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources webpages.^[1] Information about the Presidential Proclamation – Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy is also on our website.^[2]

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^[2] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/presidential-proclamation-regulatory-relief-certain-stationary>

8. Did EPA evaluate the air pollution or health impacts of exempting these power plants? If so, please provide that evaluation.

Response: Information related to the impacts of the regulation can be found in the draft Regulatory Impact Analysis for the regulation.

9. Has EPA research found there is a safe level of mercury exposure? If so, please provide documentation.

Response: Mercury at certain levels is toxic to human health that may have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems. Research on impacts of mercury is ongoing.

10. On March 27, EPA established a website that invited entities to submit requests for exemptions from hazardous air pollutant standards.

- a. Who made the decision to solicit exemption requests in this manner?
- b. What communications has EPA had with the White House about this process, including the use of a website and email address to solicit exemption requests?
- c. For each entity (including any entity acting on behalf of one or more regulated entities) seeking an exemption through this process, please provide the following:
 - i. the name of each entity requesting an exemption;
 - ii. the specific emissions standard or limitation subject to the request;
 - iii. the location of any facility or affected source subject to the request;
 - iv. the length of time sought to delay compliance for each request;
 - v. an explanation for why—
 1. the technology necessary to implement the standard is not available; and
 2. the exemption would be in the national security interests of the United States; and
 - vi. whether an exemption has been issued, denied, or is still under consideration.

- d. Please provide documentation on how EPA is evaluating these requests.
- e. Has EPA provided any information or recommendations to the White House regarding the granting of Presidential exemptions for any of these requests, including any analysis on the availability of technology needed to implement any standards?
- f. Has the White House requested any information from EPA regarding the information submitted by entities, including any request for analysis on the availability of technology needed to implement any standards?
- g. What does EPA intend to do with the information submitted by entities moving forward?
- h. Has EPA evaluated, or does EPA plan to evaluate, the air pollution or health impacts of any requested exemptions? If so, please provide any such evaluation.

Response: Clean Air Act Section 112(i)(4) provides the President of the United States the ability to exempt any stationary source from compliance with any standard or limitation under this section for a period of not more than 2 years if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.

11. For over thirty years, the United States has been party to a treaty – signed by the President and ratified by the Senate – that requires EPA to annually submit the United States Greenhouse Gas Inventory. This year, EPA has failed to comply with that treaty obligation for the first time, even though EPA completed work on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory and was fully prepared to comply.
 - a. Who made the decision not to submit the Greenhouse Gas Inventory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) this year?
 - b. Why has EPA failed to uphold the United States’ legal obligations to submit greenhouse gas emissions data to the UNFCCC?
 - c. Did EPA consult with the State Department on the decision to discontinue staffing and funding for the Greenhouse Gas Inventory in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request?
 - d. Will EPA produce a finalized Greenhouse Gas Inventory and release it on time in 2026?

Response: On January 20, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14162, “Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements” to “put the interests of the United States and the American people first in the development and negotiation of any international agreements with the potential to damage or stifle the American economy. These agreements must not unduly

or unfairly burden the United States.” Within E.O. 14162, President Trump directed the Federal government to get out of the problematic Paris Climate Agreement and “submit written formal notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or any relevant party, of the United States' withdrawal from any agreement, pact, accord, or similar commitment made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.” EPA continues to record and publish emissions data related to criteria air pollutants and hazardous air pollutants.

12. EPA has reported that over 3,600 employees will be departing from the agency due to the deferred resignation program.

- a. What is EPA’s specific target for staffing levels moving forward?
- b. Has EPA conducted any analysis of how recent personnel reductions will affect the agency’s ability to carry out its responsibilities, including fulfilling any consent agreements that bind the agency to finalize actions by a date certain or risk contempt of court? If so, please share that analysis.
- c. How does EPA plan to maintain robust outreach and provision of technical assistance to communities, in particular communities bearing higher pollution burdens, with its plans to reduce the agency’s workforce and eliminate the Office of Environmental Justice?

Response: Under President Trump’s leadership, EPA has taken a close look at our operations to ensure the Agency is better equipped than ever to deliver on our core mission of protecting human health and the environment while Powering the Great American Comeback. This reduction in staffing levels will ensure we can better fulfill that mission while being responsible stewards of your hard-earned tax dollars. In January 2025, EPA had 16,155 employees. Combined with voluntary retirements, separations, and other announced reductions in force, EPA will have an estimated workforce of 12,500 employees by the end of the calendar year. This includes the over 3,200 applications received for Fork in the Road, Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and Voluntary Early Retirement (VERA).

13. As EPA begins reorganization efforts, new jobs will be advertised internally, and existing employees will be given the opportunity to apply for those positions. Are employees on administrative leave, including those from the Office of Environmental Justice, able to apply for these new positions? If not, why are scientists, policy analysts, and others from the Office of Environmental Justice being prohibited from competing for these positions?

Response: All EJ- or DEI-related employees that were placed on administrative leave were allowed to apply for all positions offered as part of the reorganization process. EJ- or DEI-related employees were also allowed to apply for DRP.

14. Has EPA conducted any analysis of how the proposed reorganization will affect the agency’s ability to meet its legal responsibilities? If so, please share that analysis.

Response: Even under the previous administration, EPA was identified by the Office of Personnel Management as in need of improved planning to be more strategic with personnel (see attached document). The Agency is committed to meeting its statutory requirements in a timely manner, and workforce planning is focused on delivering those statutory responsibilities and promoting the Administration’s priorities.

15. The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission, of which you are a member, recently released its Make Our Children Healthy Again Assessment. This assessment found that “Corporate Capture and the Revolving Door” of federal regulatory agencies, such as EPA, contribute to the health crises facing American youths. The report states, “The chemical-manufacturing industry spent roughly \$77 million on federal lobbying activities in 2024, while 60% of their lobbyists previously held federal posts.” Further, the assessment finds, “As a result of this influence, the regulatory environment surrounding the chemical industry may reflect a consideration of its interests.”

- a. Do you agree with the findings of the MAHA Commission’s assessment?
- b. Are you concerned that a significant reduction in the Office of Research and Development’s personnel and scientific capacity may undermine EPA’s ability to develop independent science and verify corporate-funded research, which is highlighted as a cause for concern by the MAHA Commission assessment?
- c. What steps are you taking to eliminate corporate influence, including potential biases stemming from the use of corporate-funded research, within the Toxic Substances Control Act program?
- d. Please provide the names, titles, and descriptions of responsibilities of current EPA political appointees that have previously been employed or otherwise compensated by a chemical or pesticide manufacturer, a trade association representing any such manufacturer, or a lobbying or law firm contracted to lobby, represent, or litigate on behalf of any such manufacturer or trade association.

Response: The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission is completely aligned with the mission of our work at EPA—protecting human health and the environment. At EPA, we will do our part in fulfilling all of our statutory obligations to safely regulate chemicals needed for every part of modern life to transport, build, feed, and power the Great American Comeback. The MAHA report shows America will continue to be the energy, industrial, and agricultural power of the world – and we can continue this while ensuring we have the healthiest children.

We must better understand the full range of impacts of any harmful chemical exposure to our children and its impact on chronic disease and we recognize this cannot happen through a European like, mandate-driven regulatory system that stifles growth. It will happen through a renewed focus on improved science throughout the federal government and our partners—and through unleashing private sector innovation to produce better solutions for our children. I am proud that this is the first

Administration in history to lay a stake in the ground that America will lead in research and innovation to ensure we have the healthiest children in the world.

16. In response to a question from Mr. Soto regarding the Energy Star Program, you testified, “Congress never created the program.” Please provide any EPA Office of General Counsel legal opinions, including its interpretation of Section 131 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, that led you to believe that Energy Star has not been authorized by Congress.

- a. You also testified that, “Multiple entities reached out to EPA over the course of the last few weeks because they want to take over Energy Star.” Please provide the names of any such entity.
- b. When determining to pursue eliminating or privatizing the program, did EPA consult with the Internal Revenue Service or the Department of Energy about how that decision may affect tax credits and other incentives and programs tied to Energy Star?

Response: There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the Energy Star program. EPA is currently evaluating a number of options related to the Energy Star program including, but not limited to, establishment of a user-fee, privatization of the program, or moving all or primary responsibilities to the Department of Energy. Transitioning the Energy Star program away from a publicly-funded EPA program would not prevent consumers from accessing relevant information as companies can provide transparency related to the cost of the products and energy usage as part of their sales information and it would not prevent consumers from making choices that are best for their budgets. Companies provide information related to the cost of the products and energy usage as part of their sales information.

17. Is EPA committed to maintaining non-Energy Star, non-regulatory programs with a track record of benefitting both American consumers and manufacturers, including the Safer Choice program?

Response: EPA is focused on meeting and accomplishing our statutory obligations while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

18. According to EPA's 7th Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, communities need \$625 billion over the next 20 years to maintain and upgrade drinking water systems, underscoring the importance of continued Federal support for our nation's drinking water systems. Has EPA conducted any analysis on how much water utilities may need to raise rates to address these projected needs to compensate for the proposed reduction in State Revolving Fund funding opportunities?

Response: After decades of sustained federal investment, changes to the State Revolving Loan Funds (SRFs) and EPA funding programs will empower states to leverage their own funding mechanisms to support their water systems, removing restrictive regulatory

barriers that came with federal funding schemes. The SRFs will continue to revolve as loan repayments, state match, and federal capital replenish the fund to allow for additional loans to be made for water infrastructure projects. In addition, EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program is also available to provide low-cost financing to public and private borrowers for all types of wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater projects.

Additionally, with respect to alternative resources addressing water infrastructure and affordability, the 2024 EPA Water Affordability Report to Congress included approaches to reduce water infrastructure capital and operating costs by promoting the use of low-cost federal funding and financing for water infrastructure, innovative financing strategies, improved operational efficiencies and Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) to address affordability issues. Many of the WaterTA services can help offset costs that could be passed on to customers or be a barrier for some water systems, especially small, Tribal and rural systems.

19. The Fiscal Year 2026 budget request proposes major cuts to categorical grants, which is how states fund significant portions of their staffs to fulfill their obligations under delegated authority to run state environmental programs.
- a. Recently, you have approved several states' applications for primacy over Class VI wells. How will EPA ensure that states with primacy for Class VI wells have the resources and staff necessary to conduct proper oversight of these wells, including ensuring the safety of drinking water supplies and permanence of carbon dioxide storage?
 - b. In light of the proposed significant reductions in categorical grant funding, including potential reductions to the Public Water System Supervision program, does EPA intend to review previously granted applications for state primacy over Class VI wells to ensure such states are adequately able to oversee and manage a state-run Class VI well program with less Federal financial assistance?
 - c. When reviewing future applications from states for primacy over Class VI wells, how will EPA consider the potential loss of Public Water System Supervision program funding on applicants' ability to properly oversee and manage a state-run Class VI well program?

Response: EPA appreciates the funding Congress has provided for the Underground Injection Control (UIC) program. Consistent with Pillars 2 and 3 of the *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative, granting a state primacy for Class VI Wells under the Safe Drinking Water Act bolsters American energy dominance and expands cooperative federalism while recognizing that states are best positioned to protect their underground sources of drinking water. One of my first decisions as Administrator was to charge the Office of Water with fast-tracking UIC primacy and permitting. As a result, on May 15, 2025, EPA proposed to approve the State of Arizona's request to oversee Safe Drinking Water Act permitting for all underground injection

wells in the state. EPA is also committed to ensuring that all UIC permits and primacy packages are processed in a timely manner.

20. What research, analysis, or monitoring has EPA carried out to examine the effects of road salt and de-icing chemicals on surface water and groundwater quality?

Response: EPA scientists, as well as numerous state, academic, and other federal agencies, have conducted and collaborated on monitoring, research, and analysis to understand the distribution, extent, and magnitude of the effects of road salt and de-icing on water resources. Numerous publications are available in the peer reviewed literature, including the ones listed below.^[1,2,3] Recognizing the need for applied tools, the Freshwater Explorer tool (described in response to question 21) was developed to support state, tribal and local government efforts to manage the application of road salts and deicing chemical to protect water quality while ensuring public safety.

[1] <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7153567/>

[2] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969724038737>

[3] <https://enviromicro-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1462-2920.16628>

21. What non-regulatory tools might EPA be able to use to support tracking of chloride levels to inform future decision-making and limit the amount of excess road salt used?

Response: EPA produced the Freshwater Explorer tool.^[1] Version 1 of this tool focused on tracking conductivity and specific conductance; indicators related to chloride and road salts. The newly released update includes additional water quality parameters. This tool includes estimates of background levels and summary statistics for 11 commonly sampled water quality parameters for approximately 289,000 stream locations, 10,000 lakes and 50,000 groundwater wells. It enables water quality managers and the public to compare sample results to background levels and set priorities for additional monitoring and prioritization of management actions.^[2]

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/freshwater-explore>

[2] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211675323000830>

22. At the hearing, you committed to sharing EPA's evaluation of how eliminating or significantly reducing the Office of Research and Development would affect the agency's ability to fulfill its obligations while ensuring scientific integrity across the agency. Please share any such analysis that contributed to your decision-making on how to reorganize the agency, including how the potential elimination or significant reduction of the Office of Research and Development would affect the agency's ability to fulfill its obligations while ensuring scientific integrity across the agency.

Response: EPA is doubling down on the Agency's approach to science through expanded and focused scientific work directly linked to the statutory obligations Congress has directed of the

Agency. The FY 2026 President Budget Request invests in science and technology to advance innovation across EPA's mission to implement the environmental laws. This includes \$500.7 million in the Science and Technology account to support applied research in EPA programs, and provides the resources necessary to achieve scientific breakthroughs, drive efficiency and accuracy, and operate a world class lab network across the country. Additionally, EPA's reorganizational plan, as presented to Congress, brings more scientists to our Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, Office of Water, Office of Air and Radiation, and a new proposed Office of Applied Science and Environmental Solutions within the Office of Administrator. EPA ORD staff, along with all other EPA HQ employees were encouraged to apply for science-based roles within the Agency as part of the initial reorganization announcement and were afforded the opportunity to apply for both prior rounds of the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) as well as the ongoing third round. EPA does not have any plans to close any of its laboratories outside of ongoing consolidation planning that has been ongoing through multiple administrations.

23. The Fiscal Year 2026 budget request, if enacted, would result in cutting EPA's science budget by half, eliminating more than 1,000 science positions, and weakening research that EPA, states, tribes, communities, and businesses rely on. The EPA is widely regarded as one of the world's leading environmental and human health research entities. The loss of this expertise could contribute to a U.S. brain drain, ceding scientific leadership to other countries around the world that could hurt the United States for decades to come.

- a. Do you believe that U.S. scientific leadership is foundational for the goals imagined by EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative?
- b. What role do you see EPA, and the U.S. Federal research enterprise more broadly, playing in supporting U.S. scientific leadership?
- c. How do significant cuts to EPA's research budget and scientific workforce contribute to the role you have envisioned in your response to the question above?

Response: U.S. scientific leadership is foundational for the goals imagined by the Agency's *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative, and EPA is doubling down on the Agency's approach to science through expanded and focused scientific work directly linked to the statutory obligations Congress has directed of the Agency. The FY 2026 President Budget Request invests in science and technology to advance innovation across EPA's mission to implement the environmental laws. This includes \$500.8 million in the Science and Technology account to support applied research in EPA programs, and provides the resources necessary to achieve scientific breakthroughs, drive efficiency and accuracy, and operate a world class lab network across the country. Additionally, EPA's reorganizational plan, as presented to Congress, brings more scientists to our Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, Office of Water, Office of Air and Radiation, and a new proposed Office of Applied Science and Environmental Solutions within the Office of Administrator.

24. Have you received a formal briefing or training on EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy? If not, are you willing to participate in such a training?

Response: Yes. It is mandatory training for all new employees.

25. Will you require all other EPA political appointees to go through a formal training on EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy?

Response: Yes. It is mandatory training for all new employees.

26. EPA has announced its intention to reconsider the 2009 Endangerment Finding while simultaneously proposing to eliminate climate research in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request. How might the elimination or significant reduction in funding or personnel working to develop or assess science related to climate change affect the agency's forthcoming scientific assessment of greenhouse gas emissions effects on Americans' health and well-being?

Response: The President is committed to Making America Healthy Again, and this framework includes ensuring that the American people have clean air and water and is making investments that benefit human health. The President's FY 2026 Budget Request puts an end to unrestrained research grants, radical environmental justice work, woke climate research, and skewed, overly-precautionary modeling that influences regulations— none of which are authorized by law. Instead, the President's Budget Request provides \$283 million for statutorily required research in support of core mission areas that help the American people.

27. In April, it was publicly reported that President Trump had dismissed hundreds of scientists working on the congressionally mandated National Climate Assessment 6 (NCA6). Prior to this dismissal, had the U.S. Global Change Research Program shared with EPA any Zero Order Draft, or any other form of an annotated outline, for any chapter of the NCA6? If so, please share any such outline or memorandum shared by the U.S. Global Change Research Program for EPA's review and feedback.

Response: EPA leadership is not aware of draft documents associated with National Climate Assessment 6.

28. What statutory authority is the basis for EPA's work on artificial intelligence?

Response: EPA does not have any authority to issue regulations on the development or use of artificial intelligence outside of the agency. However, EPA regulates other aspects of infrastructure necessary to support artificial intelligence, including regulations, and in particular permits, under the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act.

29. What safeguards has EPA implemented around the use of artificial intelligence within the agency?

Response: EPA has implemented comprehensive measures to ensure the responsible use of artificial intelligence within the organization following robust governance practices and oversight from an AI Subcommittee guided by the principles outlined in OMB Memorandums M-25-10 and M-25-22. Our approach focuses on fostering innovation, ensuring governance, and delivering value to both our employees and the public.

These measures include human oversight of AI-generated outputs, maintaining a public inventory of AI use cases for transparency, and regular checks for accuracy and bias. Additionally, EPA conducts cybersecurity reviews and carefully vets partners to protect data integrity. EPA further emphasizes and trains that AI is a support tool rather than a decision-maker.

30. EPA has taken down EJScreen, a valuable database that provides communities, states, and the public with information about local environmental risks, demographic data, and health impacts, from EPA's website. With EJScreen being removed, how does EPA intend to enable the public to have access to information about environmental and health conditions in their communities?

Response: EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. President Trump advanced conservation and environmental stewardship in his first term and EPA will continue to uphold its mission to protect human health and the environment in his second term.

31. Please provide estimates for the amount of staff time and funding that has been required to review, terminate, and litigate EPA grants frozen or terminated since January 20, 2025.

Response: As with any change in administration, the Agency has been reviewing all actions taken by the previous administration to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how individual grants and funding programs align with current Administration priorities. The total amount of staff time required to review, terminate, and defend this process is unquantifiable, but we appreciate the diligent work of the career staff who helped support this review, subsequent actions, and ongoing implementation. EPA will communicate any new grant funding opportunities on Grants.gov.

32. In May, House Republicans passed H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which included provisions to rescind unobligated funding provided to EPA by the Inflation Reduction Act. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund has \$19 million in unobligated funds remaining.

- a. Please provide a description of how EPA intends to use that remaining \$19 million in allowable administrative funds should H.R. 1 fail to be enacted.
- b. If this Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund funding is rescinded, how will the loss of those funds affect EPA's ability to effectively administer and conduct oversight of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund grant recipients?

Response: GGRF administrative funding was rescinded in H.R. 1. Activity necessary to administer appropriate oversight of remaining grants is being supported by base EPA

funding associated with the oversight of other grants. EPA is committed to financial integrity and spending according to law.

33. EPA has terminated many, if not all, previously awarded Community Change Grants. This includes an award to Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region in Albany, New York.

EPA's "Summary of Selections" document states, "The project will build two community resilience hubs, increase access to accessible workforce training, reduce urban heat island effects by investing in green infrastructure, increase community composting, and work with local building trades professional and general contractors to conduct home energy audits, home inspections, and remediate indoor pollution. This project will increase resiliency to extreme weather events among Albany's most vulnerable neighborhoods for generations due to improved infrastructure, disaster preparedness training, and reduced chronic exposure to indoor pollutants."

- a. Did you personally review the award to the Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region before making the decision to terminate it?
- b. Please describe any outreach conducted with the awardee or its partner organizations before the termination decision was made.
- c. In an exchange with Chairman Griffith, you expressed a willingness to work with members of the Committee to improve our understanding of the circumstances around various terminated grants. You stated some terminated grants had "major issues" and others had "smaller issues". Please provide an explanation of EPA's concerns with this award that led to its termination, including any specific examples of waste, fraud, and abuse by the awardee or its partner organizations.
- d. Is EPA willing to work with the awardee to adjust or re-scope its award to allow them to move forward with the previously awarded grant or better compete for a future funding opportunity?
- e. During litigation involving the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, the attorney for the administration expressed EPA's intention to "act expeditiously to re-obligate the grant funds under new agreements." Does EPA plan to re-obligate funds resulting from terminated Community Change Grants? If so, please provide a timeline for the publication of a new funding opportunity announcement for these funds.

Response: As with any change in administration, the Agency has been reviewing all actions taken by the previous administration to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how individual grants and funding programs align with current Administration priorities. While the Agency followed the law and is fully within Agency rights surrounding grants, the Agency will ensure funding is outlaid as directed by law. A programmatic review of all grants programs was conducted, and separately individualized reviews of each grant were also conducted. EPA notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is

working through that process and will not comment until the dispute process is resolved. EPA will communicate any new grant funding opportunities on Grants.gov.

34. During litigation involving the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, the attorney for the administration expressed EPA's intention to "act expeditiously to re-obligate the grant funds under new agreements." Does EPA plan to re-obligate funds resulting from terminated C-MORE grants? If so, please provide a timeline for the publication of a new funding opportunity announcement for these funds.

Response: EPA intended to re-obligate those funds as previously stated. However, Congress rescinded the funding for the low-embodied carbon materials in construction materials and products (often called the C-MORE Grant Program) in section 60015 of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Pub. L. No. 119-21.

35. Given the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, what do you believe is the appropriate role for EPA in supporting enhancements to community resilience from extreme weather events, particularly at sites and infrastructure directly related to EPA's core mission, such as Superfund sites and water systems?

Response: EPA is committed to meeting its statutory obligations to assist every community and ensuring human health and the environment are protected. This includes ensuring that any potential remedies at Superfund sites are resilient. Due to EPA's nationwide presence and our ability to surge personnel, equipment and contract support across the full organization, EPA will remain fully prepared to accomplish our emergency response mission.

In EPA's role as the sector risk management agency for water, EPA works alongside water utilities, in addition to local and state partners to prepare and respond to both physical and cyber threats. Threats from natural disasters and cyberattacks can jeopardize the water system ability to provide safe drinking water to their community. EPA provides technical assistance to reduce the risks to water and wastewater utilities from such threats, for example through emergency response exercises with water and wastewater utilities as well as state and federal agencies. EPA provides straightforward guidelines to prepare utilities for natural disasters, also offering direct technical assistance in tailoring these guidelines to a utility's specific risks. EPA provides a wealth of additional information to water and wastewater systems on preparing for and responding to natural disasters as can be readily found on our website.^[1]

Further, EPA's Office of Water has a robust technical assistance program, WaterTA, to support utilities in identifying water challenges, developing plans, building capacity, and preparing application materials to access water infrastructure funding to help finance more resilient infrastructure. Through WaterTA, EPA is also providing support that is focused on enhancing resilience by improving access to supplemental funding from State Revolving Funds (SRFs) and SDWA 1442(b) Response to Emergency Situations Affecting Public Water Systems, building capacity of State agencies and technical assistance providers to support drinking water and wastewater utilities serving fewer than 10,000 people in conducting risk and resilience assessments (RRA), and for those serving over 3,300 people SDWA Section 1433, which

specifies the components that the RRAs and Emergency Response Plans (ERP) must address and establishes deadlines by which water systems must certify to EPA completion of the RRA and ERP. SDWA section 1433 also states that EPA should provide guidance and technical assistance to water systems that serve less than 3,301 people on how to conduct RRAs and ERPs, though these systems are not required to certify completion to EPA. The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program also supports financing water and wastewater projects that address extreme weather and disaster resiliency and provides no-cost technical assistance to potential borrowers interested in applying for loans (33 U.S.C. 3907(b)(2)(F) and (H)).

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/waterutilityresponse>

36. How does EPA plan to support communities and other stakeholders affected by extreme weather moving forward?

Response: EPA is committed to meeting its statutory obligations to assist every community and ensuring human health and the environment are protected. Due to EPA's nationwide presence and our ability to surge personnel, equipment and contract support across the full organization, EPA will remain fully prepared to accomplish our emergency response mission.

37. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has a history of opposing efforts to require remediation of PFAS contamination at DOD installations.

- a. What are you doing to ensure that DOD and other Federal agencies remediate PFAS pollution at current and former Federal facilities?
- b. What are you doing to ensure that DOD and other Federal agencies remediate PFAS pollution at current and former Federal facilities?

Response: We continue to work with DOD and other Federal agencies on implementing appropriate remedies to address PFAS contamination. Our actions include partnering with DOD to ensure sampling programs are in place at various facilities and developing appropriate response actions.

38. In its Final Third Five-Year Review for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site, EPA deferred making a protectiveness determination on the basis that additional years of fish data were required. EPA announced that it would issue a protectiveness determination through an addendum to this Five-Year Review by no later than 2027.

- a. What steps has EPA taken since the finalization of the Third Five-Year Review to collect the necessary data to make a protectiveness determination?
- b. Please provide an updated timeline for when a protectiveness determination is expected.

Response: EPA is actively analyzing fish data so the Agency can make a protectiveness determination. The Agency will continue to compare the data to the project objectives outlined in the 2002 Record of Decision to understand how well the fish are recovering. We need at least eight years of fish data after dredging to begin to draw science-based conclusions about the rate of recovery in the fish. The eighth year of fish data was collected in 2024 and is now under review. EPA will evaluate the fish data and assess whether a protectiveness determination could be made later this year. If not, EPA will report out its fish data analysis and continue to actively monitor the river and evaluate data until sufficient data is available to determine protectiveness. The Agency has already begun working on the addendum and intends to release it no later than 2027.

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)

1. During the May 20th hearing, you stated that the EPA is working with states as it relates to lead replacement. I was pleased to hear that, but I am concerned that lead pipe replacement will experience disruptions after learning the EPA's budget proposed a \$2.4 billion cut to the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which funds water infrastructure projects. Without access to those funds, water systems often have to rely on ratepayers to fund projects through increased rates. This would hurt the pockets of hardworking Americans in my district and in areas across the country with lead pipes. Further, having a strong Lead and Copper Rule is crucial to ensure water systems have the resources necessary for speedy pipe replacements.
 - a. What is your timeline for lead pipe replacement in Illinois?
 - b. Will you continue to enforce the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's requirement that 49% of the \$15B for lead service line replacement be issued as grants or forgivable loans to disadvantaged communities and that the funds be used to replace lead service lines on both public and private property?
 - c. Will you continue to operate the Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators Community Initiative to develop best practices and creative approaches for conducting inventories to identify lead pipes; developing lead service line replacement plans; increasing community outreach and education; and preparing applications for funding?
 - d. How is EPA using lead service line inventories submitted last October to recalculate lead service line replacement funding allocations? Will there be significant changes in allocations?
 - e. What guidance documents is EPA working on to help water utilities comply with the LCRI and when are they expected to be published?

Response: EPA is committed to making continued progress in reducing lead exposure across multiple statutory authorities and responsibilities. Under Administrator Zeldin’s first pillar to provide access to clean water for all Americans, EPA is prioritizing reducing lead in drinking water. For example, EPA’s Get the Lead Out (GLO) technical assistance program supports communities through the process of lead service line replacements. On December 13, 2024, the American Water Works Association filed a Petition for Review of the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. In February, the D.C. Circuit granted a request by the Department of Justice (DOJ), on behalf of EPA, to place the current litigation of the LCRI on hold to provide new EPA leadership an opportunity to review the underlying rule. Following that review, DOJ is moving forward with the process of defending the rule. Right now, EPA is developing new tools and information to support practical implementation flexibilities and regulatory clarity that will be available imminently. To support compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule, EPA has shared abundant guidance and resources for states and water systems, which are available on EPA’s website, Lead and Copper Rule Implementation Tools.^[1]

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule-implementation-tools>

The Honorable Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA)

1. In March, EPA “set up an electronic mailbox to allow the regulated community to request a Presidential Exemption under section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act.” Submissions to request a Presidential Exemption were due by March 31, 2025. On April 8th, President Trump issued a proclamation that stated he would exempt certain stationary sources from, the Mercury and Air Toxics update rule.

News reports have revealed that the American Chemistry Council and American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers submitted a request for a blanket two-year compliance exemption for more than 200 chemical manufacturing facilities from EPA’s HON Rule, which limits emissions of toxic pollutants including ethylene oxide and chloroprene and requires fence-line monitoring for six priority chemicals of concern.

EPA has not made any information public about what facilities have requested an exemption, and what facilities have been granted an exemption.

- a. Please provide copies of all requests EPA has received for a Presidential Exemption under section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act.
- b. Please provide a list of all Presidential Exemptions that have been issued, a list of any presidential exemption requests that have been denied, and a list of any presidential exemption requests still under consideration.
- c. Has the March 31, 2025 deadline been extended, or is it officially closed?

- d. Please provide documentation on how EPA is evaluating these requests, including under which statutory authority and regulatory guidance these requests are allowed.
- e. Why have you not publicly disclosed these exemption requests and provided an opportunity for comment from the public and affected communities?
- f. Will you commit to disclose all permit requests to the public? If yes, how and on what timeline?
- g. Will you commit to disclose all Presidential Exemptions directly to the public? If yes, how and on what timeline?
- h. In providing recommendations for the Presidential Proclamation of April 8, 2025:
- i. Did EPA provide guidance to the White House on the status of technology needed to implement the rule? Please provide documentation.
 - i. Did EPA undertake a process for reversing the January 2023 technology review that found “there are available controls and methods of operation that will allow lignite-fired EGUs to meet an Hg emission standard of 1.2E-06 lb/MMBtu”? Please provide documentation.
 - ii. Has EPA research found there is a safe level of mercury exposure? If so, please provide documentation.

Response: Section 112(i)(4) of the Clean Air Act specifically states that the President may exempt any stationary source “if the President determines that the technology to implement such standard is not available and that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so.”

Since this is a presidential authority, any concerns related to the granting of exemptions should be directed to the White House. EPA does not have any updates to provide at this time beyond the information regarding the Presidential exemptions on our stationary sources webpages.^[1] Information about the Presidential Proclamation – Regulatory Relief for Certain Stationary Sources to Promote American Energy is also on our website.^[2]

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/clean-air-act-section-112-presidential-exemption-information>

[2] <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/presidential-proclamation-regulatory-relief-certain-stationary>

- 2. With the closure of Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights and termination of its staff, how will EPA provide focused assistance to communities

overburdened by pollution? Are these tools and services being moved to another office? If so, which one? Will EPA be requesting additional resources for these efforts?

Response: EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. Employees from the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights performing External Civil Rights duties and those performing Conflict Prevention Resolution Program functions have been reassigned to the Office of Civil Rights and Adjudication within the Office of the Administrator.

3. Please provide an explanation for the removal of the EJScreen and EJAM tools from EPA's website? Is EPA developing replacement tools to assist states and communities to identify areas overburdened by pollution?

Response: EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. President Trump advanced conservation and environmental stewardship in his first term and EPA will continue to uphold its mission to protect human health and the environment in his second term.

4. We have already entered into the record the inconsistent testimony of Administrator Zeldin and his Deputy Administrators Daniel Coogan and Travis Voyles who all claim under sworn testimony either to this body or to a court tribunal to have done individualized reviews of 718 grants on February 25, 2025. Mr. Voyles admitted in his testimony that he didn't decide to terminate grants, but rather grant programs - NOT individualized grants for policy reasons. Can you identify what statutory authority an EPA staffer - or even the EPA Administrator- has to terminate entire Congressionally mandated programs based on policy reasons?

Response: As with any change in administration, the Agency has been reviewing all actions taken by the previous administration to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how individual grants and funding programs align with current Administration priorities. While the Agency followed the law and is fully within Agency rights surrounding grants, the Agency will ensure funding is outlaid as directed by law. A programmatic review was conducted, and separately individualized reviews of each grant were also conducted. EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the EPA funding priorities for achieving program goals, and that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. EPA notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment until the dispute process is resolved.

To emphasize, the twelve grants at issue in the *Sustainability Institute* case were reviewed as sworn to in the declaration; and those twelve grants are only a small subset of the 781 grants. And the review of the grants in that case were separate from the programmatic review you are referring to. If you have followed the case since, you would know that the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals granted our stay because they agreed that the Defendant agencies are likely to succeed on the

merits of those jurisdictional objections based on clear Supreme Court precedent. See *Department of Education v. California*, 145 S. Ct. 966 (2025).

5. On May 21, 2025, you testified that you did these individual reviews yourself saying you “did all the research, [asked] questions, and [made sure] you were making responsible decisions.” Yet, EPA and DOJ were unable to produce any documentation detailing the review and decision making process behind these grant terminations when ordered as part of the *Sustainability Institute v Trump* case. Can you provide any documentation to show how you legally reviewed these individual grants? If so, why didn’t you provide it to the court when ordered? If not, why not?

Response: The line of questioning during my testimony asked specifically about Mr. Voyles’ programmatic review that was conducted on a single day and was sworn to in the declaration. The Senator then proceeded to ask follow-up questions about specific grants, implying that my statements did not comport with what was in the declaration. As I tried to explain to the Senator during the hearing, he intentionally misunderstands the facts. A programmatic review was conducted, and separately individualized reviews of each grant were also conducted. To emphasize, the twelve grants at issue in the *Sustainability Institute* case were reviewed as sworn to in the declaration; and those twelve grants are only a small subset of the 781 grants. And the review of the grants in that case were separate from the programmatic review the Senator initially referred to.

Additionally, if the Senator had read the filing, he would know that the sentences right before and immediately after the one he referenced shows that the purpose of not contesting the merits of the Plaintiffs’ Administrative Procedure Act (APA) claims at that time was to “move quickly towards final judgment” so that the federal agencies’ jurisdictional objections could be addressed expeditiously. If the Senator had followed the case since, he would know that the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals granted our stay because they agreed that the Defendant agencies are likely to succeed on the merits of those jurisdictional objections based on clear Supreme Court precedent. See *Department of Education v. California*, 145 S. Ct. 966 (2025).

6. Did EPA use ChatGPT or another AI program to identify grants for termination that contained the words “diversity, equity, and inclusion”?

Response: No.

7. Is it correct that the list of 718 grants terminated includes all Community Change Grants, each of which contain terms and conditions that specifically prohibit EPA from terminating the grant terms based on a shift in agency priorities?

Response: As with any change in Administration, the Agency has been reviewing assistance agreements to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how they align with Administration priorities. A comprehensive review of active grants was conducted, and when grants were determined to fail to represent an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars or to align with Administration priorities, EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA

based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the purposes for which the Federal award was made or that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. EPA notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment on those terminations or the disputes until the dispute process is resolved. To further clarify, EPA has active and terminated grants under the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program (Assistance Listing Code 66.616).

8. According to the Oct 1, 2024 terms and conditions that applies to Community Change Grants, it clearly states that termination is ONLY ALLOWED when: The grantee fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the award, by mutual consent of both parties, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the award itself.

These conditions do NOT include terminating based on a shift in agency priorities. What lawful reason does EPA believe it has to terminate these community change grants based on 'agency priorities', which is what their termination letters stated?

Response: As with any change in Administration, the Agency has been reviewing assistance agreements to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how they align with Administration priorities. A comprehensive review of active grants was conducted, and when grants were determined to fail to represent an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars or to align with Administration priorities, EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the purposes for which the Federal award was made or that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. EPA notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment on those terminations or the disputes until the dispute process is resolved. To further clarify, EPA has active and terminated grants under the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program (Assistance Listing Code 66.616).

9. Is EPA aware that there are over 100 Community Change Grant grantees who have had to lay people off and stop critical life-saving public health projects like removing lead in drinking water because EPA terminated their grant for 'policy reasons'? Please provide any documentation EPA has created to track the impacts of these terminations.

Response: As with any change in Administration, the Agency has been reviewing assistance agreements to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how they align with Administration priorities. A comprehensive review of active grants was conducted, and when grants were determined to fail to represent an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars or to align with Administration priorities, EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the purposes for which the Federal award was made or that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. EPA notified recipients of their

termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment on those terminations or the disputes until the dispute process is resolved. To further clarify, EPA has active and terminated grants under the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program (Assistance Listing Code 66.616).

10. Has EPA analyzed the health impacts to communities from ongoing exposure to lead in drinking water caused by the termination of Community Change Grants designed to remove this contamination? If not, please explain why this hasn't occurred.

Response: As with any change in Administration, the Agency has been reviewing assistance agreements to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how they align with Administration priorities. A comprehensive review of active grants was conducted, and when grants were determined to fail to represent an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars or to align with Administration priorities, EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the purposes for which the Federal award was made or that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. EPA notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment on those terminations or the disputes until the dispute process is resolved. To further clarify, EPA has active and terminated grants under the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program (Assistance Listing Code 66.616).

11. Is lead in drinking water still a public health issue that EPA is concerned with? Is it still one of the EPA's policies to remove lead from drinking water? How does cancellation of grants to remove lead from drinking water infrastructure align with these goals?

Response: EPA is committed to removing lead contamination from drinking water sources across the country. The President's FY 2026 Budget Request provides \$124 million in funding, a \$9 million increase, to EPA's Drinking Water Programs to advance the critical drinking water mission at EPA, protecting Americans, and especially children, from unsafe or contaminated water, including contamination from lead. The President's Budget Request also provides \$20 million for the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water grant program and \$28 million for the Lead Testing in Schools grant program to help states, tribes, and communities remove lead from drinking water.

12. Please provide the results of the individual reviews which led to EJ grants being terminated. Specifically, what findings in each terminated grant lead to their termination?
 - a. Does EPA have a plan for grantees to be reinstated if these were done unlawfully?
 - b. If so, when will the details of that process be released? If not, how does EPA intend to stay in compliance with the Impoundment Control Act?

Response: As with any change in administration, the Agency has been reviewing all actions taken by the previous administration to ensure they are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and to understand how individual grants and funding programs align with current Administration priorities. While the Agency followed the law and is fully within Agency rights surrounding grants, the Agency will ensure funding is outlaid as directed by law. EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the EPA funding priorities for achieving program goals, and that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. Furthermore, EPA has notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment until the dispute process is resolved.

The Honorable Kathy Castor (D-FL)

1. Reporting earlier this month indicates that EPA plans to end Energy Star. In the President's FY26 budget request, he proposed to eliminate Atmospheric Protection Program, the office that created the Energy Star program. Bipartisan laws enacted by Congress in 1990 [42 U.S.C. 7403 (g)(1), (3)(A)], 2005 [42 U.S.C. 6294a (a)- (d)], and 2015 [42 USC 17085 (b)] call for non-regulatory, voluntary strategies for energy conservation and end-use efficiency and have provided the foundation for, specifically established the ENERGY STAR program and called for its expansion. Please clarify how the Agency will continue to meet these statutory requirements in the proposed Agency reorganization plan and in the EPA's FY26 and future budgets. How are EPA's plans to eliminate the Energy Star program consistent with the law?

Response: EPA will follow the law in making decisions on the Energy Star program.

2. EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative seeks to foster an environment conducive to private sector investment, thereby stimulating economic growth and job creation. Previously the EPA has stated that for every \$1 the Agency spends to administer ENERGY STAR, American businesses and households invest approximately \$230 in energy-efficient infrastructure and services. If the ENERGY STAR program has proven itself as a mechanism for stimulating private sector investment, why would EPA not continue the program as a key element of the new "Comeback" initiative?

Response: While the benefit of Energy Star is widely recognized, multiple private sector partners have reached out to EPA about taking on some or all of this work, similar to how LEED certification is run by a nonprofit. There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the program.

3. Has EPA studied how much money the federal government saves from using ENERGY STAR in its procurement process? If so, what are those savings? How much will the federal government's long-term energy costs go up in the absence of Energy Star procurement?

Response: While the benefit of Energy Star is widely recognized, multiple private sector partners have reached out to EPA about taking on some or all of this work, similar to how LEED certification is run by a nonprofit. There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the program.

4. Can EPA assure that while Congressional Committees consider EPA's proposed reorganization of the Office of Air, the agency will continue to operate the ENERGY STAR program in its entirety? Will EPA continue and reactivate its existing contracts that help run the program?

Response: EPA will follow the law in making decisions on the Energy Star program.

5. Has EPA undertaken an evaluation of the legal aspects of partially or fully privatizing the Energy Star program? Please submit any such legal evaluation and plans to this Committee.

Response: There are many different approaches that the Agency is exploring that could save the federal government significant amount of money, while still continuing the areas of success with the program. EPA is currently evaluating a number of options related to the Energy Star program including, but not limited to, establishment of a user-fee, privatization of the program, or moving all or primary responsibilities to the Department of Energy.

6. EPA programs, including the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program and the Solar for All program, funded by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, make our communities more energy resilient and better able to withstand deadly natural disasters like hurricanes that are increasingly common on Florida's Gulf Coast. The EPA works closely with federal, state, and local partners to assist with disaster preparation and recovery, including drinking water and wastewater utilities. All this work is even harder since more than 3,000 EPA staffers have left the agency since the start of the Trump Administration. What is EPA doing to ensure that staffing cuts do not leave communities more vulnerable to natural disasters, including my neighbors in Florida as we both recover from last year's Hurricanes Helene and Milton and prepare for the upcoming hurricane season?

Response: Due to EPA's nationwide presence and our ability to surge personnel, equipment and contract support across the full organization, EPA will remain fully prepared to accomplish our emergency response mission.

7. In May, in my home state of Florida, Governor Desantis signed a bill into law that would ban the decades-long practice of adding fluoride to drinking water. This widespread public health practice has proven oral health benefits, and is particularly beneficial for

children. CDC has called fluoride “one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century.” EPA has indicated that it may change its recommendations for how much fluoride should be added to drinking water. What sort of research has the EPA conducted to justify this change? What is your timeline for making changes?

Response: Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA sets standards that limit the amount of potentially harmful substances in drinking water provided by public water systems and prohibits requiring the addition of a substance for preventative health care unrelated to contamination. It is the U.S. Public Health Service that recommends optimal fluoride levels in drinking water for the prevention of dental cavities and the Center for Disease Control that encourages the effective use of fluoride products and community water fluoridation. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA reviews fluoride as a contaminant. The current standard is 4.0 milligrams of fluoride per liter and was last evaluated by the Agency in July 2024, prior to the latest scientific review by the National Toxicology Program. The National Toxicology Program released a report in August 2024 concluding with “moderate confidence” that fluoride exposure above 1.5 milligrams per liter is associated with lower IQ in children. EPA will expeditiously review new scientific information on potential health risks of fluoride in drinking water. This renewed scientific evaluation is an essential step that will inform agency decisions on the standard for fluoride under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

8. EPA previously committed to conduct a thorough review of peer reviewed studies to inform any potential revisions to EPA’s fluoride drinking water standard. What is the timeline for this review? Will EPA commit to following recommendations that align with a widely accepted scientific consensus?

Response: EPA will expeditiously review new scientific information on potential health risks of fluoride in drinking water. This renewed scientific evaluation is an essential step that will inform agency decisions on the standard for fluoride under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Fluoride is an element that may be found naturally in sources of drinking water, such as ground water. Fluoride has been added to drinking water by drinking water systems to improve dental health. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA sets standards that limit the amount of potentially harmful substances in drinking water provided by public water systems. The current standard is 4.0 milligrams of fluoride per liter and was last evaluated by the Agency in July 2024, prior to the release of the latest scientific review by the National Toxicology Program that concluded with “moderate confidence” that levels above 1.5 milligrams per liter are associated with negative outcomes for children.

EPA is committing to conduct a thorough review of these findings and additional peer reviewed studies to prepare an updated health effects assessment for fluoride that will inform any potential revisions to EPA’s fluoride drinking water standard. EPA’s review is being done in coordination with the CDC. It is the U.S. Public Health Service that recommends optimal fluoride levels in drinking water for the prevention of dental cavities and the CDC that encourages the effective use of fluoride products and community water fluoridation. The Agency’s actions advance the goals of the Trump Administration’s Make America Healthy Again Commission, with EPA as an integral member.

The Honorable Debbie Dingell (D-MI)

1. Many communities in Southeast Michigan face a serious and growing threat PFAS. That's why I've fought for federal standards. Every Congress, I lead the bipartisan PFAS Action Act, which, among other provisions, strengthens drinking water protections and codifies PFAS as hazardous substances under the Superfund law. I know that during your time in Congress, we worked together on these issues.

In Michigan, under a Republican Governor, we led the way with drinking water standards that were stronger than what the federal government's guidance. For years, I've urged Administrations to catch up and implement stronger protections. So, when EPA finally established a federal drinking water standard in 2024, I was very encouraged. These changes had the potential to make a real difference in communities like mine.

After the announcement by EPA to roll this back on May 14, 2025, I am concerned. Rescinding this standard means more Americans will be poisoned and harmful PFAS contamination will continue to spread. Too many people have already suffered the adverse effects of PFAS exposure, and we must do everything possible to combat this dangerous public health threat.

You said as a response to my question during the May 20, 2025, E&C Environment Subcommittee Hearing that these rollbacks are because of a "procedural error." If that's the case — then while EPA rewrites these rules, which could take years — there will be no drinking water standard. With the implications I've laid out — in the interim and in the future — how do we make sure people have clean and safe drinking water?

Response: EPA is committed to addressing Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water while following the law and the science. On May 14, 2025, EPA announced the agency will keep the current National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), which set nationwide limits for these "forever chemicals" in drinking water. EPA also announced its intent to extend compliance deadlines for PFOA and PFOS, establish a federal exemption framework, and initiate enhanced outreach to water systems, especially in rural and small communities, through EPA's new PFAS OUTreach Initiative (PFAS OUT). This action will help address the most significant compliance challenges EPA has heard from public water systems, members of Congress, and other stakeholders, while supporting actions to protect the American people from certain PFAS in drinking water.

On May 14, 2025, EPA also announced its intent to rescind the regulations and reconsider the regulatory determinations for PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX), and the Hazard Index mixture of these three plus PFBS to ensure that the determinations and any resulting drinking water regulation follow the legal process laid out in the Safe Drinking Water Act.

2. On April 30, 2025, I led a bipartisan letter to your Agency urging you to uphold the rulemaking that designates the two most dangerous PFAS — PFOA and PFOS — as hazardous substances under CERCLA. This rule would give your Agency stronger tools to investigate and clean up some of the most contaminated sites, including many in Southeast Michigan, and I believe they are important tools to EPA.

Your Agency was given until June 2025 to indicate in federal court whether you plan to continue defending it. Can you brief the Committee on your plans and how you will protect the public from PFAS?

Response: In April 2025, EPA outlined upcoming agency action to address Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). In this suite of actions, EPA announced a long list that included in part the designation of an agency lead for PFAS, the creation of effluent limitations guidelines (ELGs) for certain PFAS to stop these forever chemicals from entering drinking water systems, and initiatives to engage with Congress and industry to establish a clear liability framework that ensures the polluter pays and passive receivers are protected.

3. In your five-pillar initiative, “Powering the Great American Comeback,” which you rolled out shortly after being confirmed, you stated that your first pillar was, “Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American.” You stated that, “President Trump has been very outspoken about his desire for Americans to be able to access clean air and clean water. We want air, land, and water to be cleaner, safer, and healthier. That is our goal.” Would eliminating PFAS from our water and environment fall under that pillar? If not, why not?

Response: EPA is committed to addressing Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water while following the law and the science.

4. Michigan communities understand all too well the devastating consequences of water contamination. On May 19, 2025, the Detroit News reported that EPA lifted the emergency order stemming from the Flint water crisis — a crisis that became a national symbol of environmental injustice and government failure. While the end of the emergency declaration marks progress, it also underscores the long, painful path to rebuilding trust in our water systems: a path no community should ever be forced to walk again. It was good news for Flint, MI. Access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water isn’t a luxury, and in that vein, will EPA defend last year’s rule requiring all water systems to remove lead pipes within the next decade?

Response: EPA is committed to making continued progress in reducing lead exposure across multiple statutory authorities and responsibilities. Under Administrator Zeldin’s first pillar to provide access to clean water for all Americans, EPA is prioritizing reducing lead in drinking water. For example, EPA’s Get the Lead Out (GLO) technical assistance program supports communities through the process of lead service line replacements. On December 13, 2024, the American Water Works Association filed a Petition for Review of the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. In February, the D.C. Circuit granted a request by the Department of Justice (DOJ), on behalf of EPA, to place the current litigation of the LCRI on hold to provide new EPA leadership an opportunity to

review the underlying rule. DOJ is moving forward with the process of defending the rule. Right now, EPA is developing new tools and information to support practical implementation flexibilities and regulatory clarity that will be available imminently. To support compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule, EPA has shared abundant guidance and resources for states and water systems, which are available on EPA's website, *Lead and Copper Rule Implementation Tools*.^[1]

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule-implementation-tools>

5. None of us want to see another Flint. In my district, I've worked closely with EPA Region 5, state and local officials, and stakeholders on the Gelman Dioxane Plume, which is a more than four decades-old contamination site that is now spreading toward Ann Arbor's primary drinking water source. In September 2024, I learned that EPA did not include Gelman on the National Priorities List, as EPA needed more time because of the overwhelming amount of public comments received on its NPL proposal. This was deeply disappointing to me. On the Gelman Plume, will you commit to working with me on the Gelman site?

Response: We are committed to working to use our authorities to address the contamination at the Gelman site.

6. Regarding other contaminated sites in my district, will you commit to working with me on cleanup efforts and to using every available tool at your disposal to protect clean drinking water? This includes PFAS, lead, and other pollution that impacts our communities.

Response: EPA remains committed to protecting human health and the environment by preventing and cleaning up contamination and protecting water quality for all Americans.

The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX)

1. Thank you for committing to work with me to keep a presence from EPA's Region 6 lab in Houston during this hearing. As we discussed, moving the lab will hurt my district's public health and lead to EPA losing highly specialized, experienced staff. To help clarify EPA's plans, please provide answers to the following questions.
 - a. How many EPA Region 6 lab employees will remain in Houston following the relocation to Ada, Oklahoma?
 - b. What specific positions will the remaining Houston staff fill?
 - c. How many employees will the Ada and Houston labs lose under EPA's RIF and Reorganization Plan? Current Agency reorganization plans are not focused on the Ada or Houston Labs.

- d. What is EPA's timeline for finding a new facility for the lab staff that will remain in Houston?
- e. When will EPA communicate its plans regarding the Houston Lab to the lab's employees?

Response: EPA has been working toward consolidating its laboratory services in Houston, Texas and Ada, Oklahoma to the Ada location since 2016 and across multiple administrations, following the issuance of a study of EPA laboratory space, completed in 2015. The increase and investment in laboratory space and functions in the EPA-owned Ada facility has been supported by previous EPA financial investments over the past fiscal years. The increase in laboratory functions in Ada and the full consolidation of Region 6's laboratory functions will be completed sometime in FY2027. Though final staffing decisions and further communications will take place at a later date, initial communication with staff took place with staff as early as June 2019. EPA will continue to evaluate any necessary EPA footprint and staffing in Houston outside of improved laboratory functions that will be in Ada.

- 2. During the hearing, you committed to Chairman Griffith that you would review terminated EPA grants funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Houston received several highly impactful EPA grants funded by the IRA that were recently canceled, including the City of Houston Health Department's Community Change Grant, Air Alliance Houston's Community Change Grant, and the Port of Houston's Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grants. Did the recipients of any of these grants violate the terms of their agreement with EPA, misuse funding, or fail to perform the requirements of the respective programs from which they received funding in any way?
 - f. If not, please provide EPA's justification for terminating these grants or withholding funding from these grantees.

Response: While the Agency followed the law and is fully within Agency rights surrounding grants, the Agency will ensure funding is outlaid as directed by law, including funding impacted by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act rescissions. EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the EPA funding priorities for achieving program goals, and that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. Furthermore, EPA has notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment until the dispute process is resolved.

- 3. Please provide a list of all EPA grants that have a recipient or place of performance in the greater Houston area (including Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties) that have been terminated or canceled, or funding has been withheld, blocked, or denied from the grantee, since January 20, 2025. Please provide EPA's rationale for terminating, canceling, or withholding funding from each of these grants/grantees.

Response: EPA terminated grants on an individualized basis. EPA based the terminations on an assessment that the remaining portion of the Federal award would not accomplish the EPA funding priorities for achieving program goals, and that the objectives of the award were no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities. Furthermore, EPA has notified recipients of their termination in line with the grant terms and conditions. For recipients that filed an administrative dispute related to the termination, EPA is working through that process and will not comment until the dispute process is resolved. A total of 12 grants were terminated in the greater Houston area, of which 2 are now closed.

The Honorable Jennifer McClellan (D-VA)

1. The President's budget request would cut categorical grants by \$1 billion. EPA has utilized a cooperative federalism model to successfully reduce pollution in our air, water, and land – something you have recognized. Federal funding is essential to the continued success of this model. How would these proposed cuts support states? If states cannot fulfill their duties in light of these proposed cuts and are forced to return responsibilities to EPA, how do you plan to carry out the programs with the severe staffing and funding cuts at the federal level?

Response: EPA will fulfill all our statutory obligations. EPA's commitment to cooperative federalism centers around collaboration with state, Tribal, and local partners to effectively safeguard human health and the environment. EPA works cooperatively with co-regulators and other federal agencies to exercise efficient use of resources and ensure compliance with the law through issuance of inspector credentials and provision of training, guidance, technology, tools, and IT systems to collect data to ensure projects reflect local priorities and deliver measurable results. The federal government has for too long taken administrative overhead out of taxpayer dollars. The Agency is returning the responsibility and opportunity to the states to continue funding.

2. Would you agree that improving air quality protects public health, reduces costly hospital visits, and prevents premature deaths?

Response: EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. The first pillar of EPA's *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative is ensuring clean air, land and water for all Americans.

3. How do your actions to weaken toxic emission limits for power plants, national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter, and other science-based regulations ensure Americans are protected from toxic air pollution?

Response: EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. The first pillar of EPA's *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative is ensuring clean air, land and water for all Americans.

4. Countless studies have shown that low-income communities bear the brunt of environmental harm. Since you have eliminated all environmental justice programs and offices at EPA, how specifically do you plan to ensure those disproportionately impacted communities receive the assistance they need and deserve?

Response: EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. The first pillar of EPA's *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative is ensuring clean air, land and water for all Americans.

5. How do you plan to prioritize low-income communities through your reorganization plan?

Response: The EPA will continue our work to meet our statutory obligations and provide a safe environment for all Americans. The first pillar of EPA's *Powering the Great American Comeback* initiative is ensuring clean air, land and water for all Americans.