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5 THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 ENVIRONMENTAL

6 PROTECTION AGENCY BUDGET

7 TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2026

8 House of Representatives,

9 Subcommittee on Environment,

10 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

11 Washington, D.C.

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15 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2123, Rayburn House Office
16 Building, Hon. Gary Palmer [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

17 Present: Representatives Palmer, Latta, Griffith, Carter of Georgia, Joyce, Weber, Pfluger,
18 Miller-Meeks, Langworthy, Evans, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex officio), Tonko, Ruiz, Barragan, Soto,
19 Auchincloss, Carter of Louisiana, Menendez, Landsman, and Pallone (ex officio).

20

21 Also Present: Representative James, Castor, Fletcher, Ocasio-Cortez, and Mullin.

22 Staff Present: Byron Brown, Chief Counsel; Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Sydney Greene,
23 Director of Finance and Logistics; Christen Harsha, Senior Counsel, Environment; Megan Jackson,
24 Staff Director; AT Johnson, Special Advisor; William Layton, Policy Analyst; Sarah Meier, Counsel and
25 Parliamentarian; Ben Mullaney, Press Secretary; Seth Ricketts, Clerk; Chris Sarley, Member

26 Services/Stakeholder Director; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Katie West, Press
27 Secretary; Katharine Willey, Senior Counsel, Environment; Devon Gorbey, Minority Environment
28 Fellow; Waverly Gordon, Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff
29 Director; Anthony Gutierrez, Minority Professional Staff Member; Caitlin Haberman, Minority Staff
30 Director, Environment; Serena Klebba, Minority Intern; Will McCauliffe, Minority Chief Counsel;
31 Elisabeth Mellen, Minority Intern; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff Assistant; Giancarlo Ceja, Minority
32 Staff Assistant; Andrew Souvall, Minority Director of Communications, Outreach and Member
33 Services Director.

34

35 Mr. Griffith. [Presiding.] The subcommittee will come to order.

36 But before we begin, I want to note for the record that I am filling in for subcommittee
37 Chairman Gary Palmer. Gary had a conflict arise in scheduling, and was unable to attend this
38 morning's hearing.

39 I now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

40 Today, we will consider President Trump's fiscal year 2027 budget request for the U.S.
41 Environmental Protection Agency. I am glad to welcome back Environmental Protection Agency
42 Administrator Lee Zeldin, who I, and many of us, remember fondly from serving with him in the
43 House and working with him in his capacity as administrator.

44 Administrator, when you testified before this committee last year to discuss EPA's budget
45 request for fiscal year 2026, I noted that you faced a difficult but important job as the EPA
46 administrator. I believe that you have done an excellent job as administrator. The people across
47 my district have been excited to see the direction that you and President Trump have steered the
48 EPA under your great American comeback initiative.

49 Thank you and President Trump for returning the EPA to its rightful role of protecting human
50 health and cleaning up the environment -- not as an anti-jobs agency. It is refreshing to see the
51 Trump administration take a measured and thoughtful approach to regulation and enforcement,
52 unlike under the previous administration where the Agency operated as a center for pushing
53 uncompromising ideologies.

54 The EPA, under Trump, has closely followed its enabling statutes and not stretched the
55 meaning of the law for the benefit of overzealous activists. I commend you for taking a pragmatic
56 approach to regulatory actions that closely uphold the laws the EPA is charged with enforcing. The
57 EPA has done great work over this past year, from cleaning up sewage spills in California to
58 expediting Superfund site closures and to clarifying Clean Air Act guidance. You were tasked with

59 undoing the regulatory overreach of the Biden-Harris administration and refocusing EPA's work, and I
60 believe you are off to a good start.

61 Also, I would like to take a moment to personally thank you and President Trump for
62 prioritizing the rollback of blatantly anti-coal regulations that were churned out in what seemed to
63 me to be almost a monthly basis by the Biden-Harris EPA. Under your leadership, EPA finalized a
64 repeal of the Obama administration's 2009 so-called greenhouse gas endangerment finding under
65 the Clean Air Act, which led to a series of costly regulations that limited consumer choices. And as I
66 pointed out at the time that originally started coming out, I didn't understand how you could do one
67 side of the science and not the other side of the science. There was no balance -- counter balance.
68 It was just one side of the story.

69 Over the past year, the EPA has also worked to improve permitting guidance under the Clean
70 Air Act. EPA has prioritized actions to safeguard drinking water, including proposing to require
71 monitoring of microplastics, PFAS, and pharmaceuticals under the Safe Drinking Water Act.
72 Administrator, you have also been successful in reigning in the wasteful Green New Deal and DEI
73 initiatives that characterized the Biden administration.

74 For fiscal year 2027, President Trump is requesting \$4.2 billion in new budget authority for
75 the EPA. This budget proposal would provide more than \$2.5 billion for EPA environmental
76 management programs, as well as almost \$750 million in grant assistance for States and Tribes, more
77 than \$500 million for science and technology activities, and \$290 million for Superfund site cleanup.
78 Despite what our friends across the aisle may say, this is a significant amount of taxpayer dollars.

79 It is important to remember that EPA received a very large \$100 billion in appropriations for
80 fiscal years 2022 through 2026 from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation
81 Reduction Act. Such heavy funding levels or high funding levels -- over 10 times the average
82 historical EPA appropriation -- was intended to be a one-time, once-in-a-generation supplement,
83 with much of the increased funding for specific water infrastructure and cleanup programs. These

84 appropriations were never -- never intended to be the new normal for EPA funding.

85 This budget request is fiscally responsible and focuses on infrastructure and distinct cleanup
86 goals. The EPA's budget request will continue to support EPA's core programs and is in line with
87 limited legal authority and a cooperative federalism framework that Congress envisioned for the EPA.
88 It is important for Congress to examine how the laws it enacts are working and whether they need to
89 be amended or even repealed.

90 When I was chairman of the environmental -- in the Environment Subcommittee, we began
91 reviewing all of EPA's statutory authorities. Chairman Palmer has continued with this important
92 work by holding hearings and markups on reauthorizations for the Toxic Substances Control Act, the
93 Brownfield laws, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and by considering amendments to the Clean Air Act
94 and the Federal waste and recycling laws.

95 Thank you, again, for coming before us today, Administrator Zeldin. I look forward to
96 hearing about your priorities for the EPA and how Congress can help ensure that we have clean air,
97 clean water, and good jobs.

98 With that, I yield back, and now recognize my colleague, the Ranking Member, Mr. Tonko
99 from New York, for his 5-minute opening statement.

100 Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

101 Administrator Zeldin, welcome. Welcome back to the subcommittee.

102 Fiscal year 2027 budget request proposes a more than 52 percent cut to EPA. This includes
103 a 91 percent reduction to categorical grants that States rely upon to support implementation of
104 environmental laws. EPA's budget claims it will empower States through cooperative federalism,
105 but we all know what this really is: It is cost shifting, requiring States to find more revenue to carry
106 out Federal requirements at a time when costs from Medicaid, nutrition assistance, and other
107 programs are being passed on to those State budgets.

108 This budget request also claims to return primary responsibility for water infrastructure to

109 State and local governments, and it includes a nearly 90 percent reduction to the State Revolving
110 Funds, over \$2.5 billion, which local governments rely upon to finance water system projects. This
111 budget completely fails to recognize that the Federal Government is currently responsible for a
112 whopping 4 percent of water systems capital and operating expenses. Ninety-six percent of water
113 utility expenses are paid for by non-Federal sources, primarily customers.

114 If the Federal Government further reduces its financial commitment, people inevitably will
115 see their water bills go up, especially as systems work to reduce risk from lead, PFAS, and other
116 public health issues. It is an understatement to say that I am concerned by the direction to have
117 EPA, and I believe the American people are right to be concerned also.

118 Let's just look at the Agency's track record on protecting people from dangerous chemicals.
119 The Trump administration's first MAHA Commission report correctly identified industry capture of
120 the EPA's chemical safety program as a problem. Today there is several political appointees running
121 EPA's chemical safety program who previously worked for the chemical industry, and I suspect they
122 will return to lucrative jobs working for the industry at the end of this administration.

123 And why do I suspect this? Because some of these very same people also worked in the
124 chemical safety office during the first Trump administration and then went on to work on behalf of
125 chemical manufacturers during the Biden administration. With such strong past financial ties and
126 the high likelihood that their future incomes will come from the companies they are charged with
127 regulating today, can there be any doubt why people are suspicious that this EPA may not put the
128 health and safety of regular Americans over those of the interest of powerful chemical and pesticide
129 manufacturers?

130 This is to say nothing of the industry representatives and industry-paid consultants who have
131 been appointed to EPA's science advisory bodies. Inevitably, empowering people with such obvious
132 and deep financial connections to regulated industries erodes public confidence in the Agency's
133 willingness to be an effective regulator. And this is a problem that can be found across program

134 offices.

135 Last year, Administrator Zeldin, you announced a major deregulatory agenda despite analysis
136 that the rules targeted for repeal were estimated to save thousands of American lives and billions of
137 dollars each year. Time and time again, we have seen that to effectuate this agenda, EPA has
138 needed to change its cost benefit rules and ignore agency and independent analyses that have not
139 agreed with the administrator's predetermined outcomes.

140 In January, EPA announced it would stop considering the value of lives saved from putting
141 limits on air pollution. EPA ignored its own analysis that a rollback of limits on mercury pollution
142 threatens public health that imposes costs on Americans. EPA also ignored its analysis of the
143 revocation of the endangerment finding, which found that the cost of the action would indeed
144 outweigh any savings.

145 So President Trump has issued sweeping exemptions to entire industries from complying with
146 hazardous air pollution standards, which were granted with no transparency and seemingly, no
147 analysis of how they might harm public health. And to repeal vehicle standards, the EPA's analysis
148 found that elimination of these standards would increase consumer costs and gas prices, adding
149 another \$3 billion per year in fuel costs by 2035 for American drivers.

150 And you can bet that EPA took a rosy estimate of future gas prices. This certainly did not
151 account for President Trump's illegal war with Iran, which has now raised average gas prices to over
152 \$4.10 per gallon. This deregulatory agenda is giving Americans the privilege of paying more to have
153 worse health outcomes, because apparently, in the Trump administration, the only costs worth
154 considering are how much environmental protections will affect polluting corporation's bottom lines.

155 EPA's budget cuts and deregulatory actions will result in more pollution while reducing our
156 scientific capacity to understand just how pollution will impact Americans' health and well-being. I
157 find that unacceptable, and I believe most Americans would agree.

158 With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you and yield back.

159 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

160 I now recognize the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie, for his 5-minute opening
161 statement.

162 The Chair. Good morning. And thank you, Chairman Griffith, for holding this hearing and
163 for being here today.

164 Welcome back, Administrator Zeldin. Great to have you here. We look forward to hearing
165 about your plans for the Environmental Protection Agency over the next fiscal year. But, first, I
166 want to commend you and your team for restoring EPA to its core mission to protect human health
167 and the environment within the statutory authority in the mandates provided by Congress.

168 As a former Member of Congress, you respect the Constitution, including Article I. The
169 Biden administration, the Obama administration before it, both pushed laws like the Clean Air Act far
170 beyond what Congress had intended and blindly pursued a hostile regulatory agenda to shut down
171 the fossil fuel energy producers and critical manufacturers.

172 You have reigned in the EPA within bounds of the law while ensuring it fulfills its statutory
173 duty. You have also been laser-focused on making sure taxpayer dollars are invested wisely and
174 have worked hard to end wasteful spending on the Green New Deal and DEI programs.

175 EPA's budget request strikes a balance between building on historic investments in core
176 programs and responding to current environmental and economic challenges. We especially
177 appreciate the budget request focusing on improving permitting and the cooperative federalism
178 framework that respects the role of States, Tribes, and local communities, restoring public
179 confidence in EPA's science activities and positioning EPA to both support and benefit from the rise
180 of the AI economy and a strong domestic, manufacturing Base.

181 We need for the United States to be a leader in innovation, freedom, and economic
182 prosperity to compete effectively with China and to maintain a healthy environment for our
183 constituents. We appreciate your hard work and willingness to serve in this very important role.

184 We appreciate you being here on Capitol Hill, your old home, and welcome you to the committee
185 and look forward to working with you. And I yield back.

186 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

187 I now recognize the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Pallone of New Jersey, for his
188 5-minute opening statement.

189 Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

190 President Trump's budget, in my opinion, is an insult to the American people. At every
191 opportunity, this budget undercuts public health, affordability, and sensible environmental
192 protections to line the pockets of Trump's corporate polluter friends. The budget would cut funding
193 for the Environmental Protection Agency by more than 50 percent, the largest cut in the EPA's
194 history. This would hamstring EPA's ability to fulfill its core mission of protecting human health and
195 the environment, and despite claims to the contrary, it fails to deliver on the Trump administration's
196 promise to make America healthy again.

197 The budget eliminates nearly all State categorical grants, all but ending the cooperative
198 federalism that has made the EPA so successful in cleaning up toxic pollution and providing healthier
199 futures for Americans. EPA is deserting the States to deal with serious climate and pollution issues
200 on their own while EPA focuses on giving polluters free passes to poison our communities with
201 reckless abandon.

202 The budget also takes a sledgehammer to the clean water and the drinking water State
203 Revolving Funds, which are the primary funding sources for water infrastructure projects. At a time
204 when communities are experiencing aging infrastructure and rising water costs, and are fearful of
205 threats of contamination, these funds are critical to ensure all communities have access to safe,
206 affordable water.

207 And the Trump administration clearly doesn't recognize this value, especially when you
208 consider EPA's plans to rescind and delay the historic PFAS drinking water standards that were put in

209 place during the Biden administration to protect public health.

210 Now, under Administrator Zeldin, the EPA is going in a dangerously wrong direction. At
211 every turn, Administrator Zeldin has demonstrated that he is at the beck and call of special interests,
212 providing broad exemptions and handouts to his polluter friends. He has eliminated EPA's climate
213 and clean air work, turned his back on environmental justice communities, and looked the other way
214 as bad actors poison communities across the United States.

215 What is potentially most egregious is EPA's shockingly irresponsible rollback of the landmark
216 endangerment finding, which that rollback, in my opinion, has no basis in law, science, or reality,
217 especially in 2026. EPA is abandoning its responsibility to protect human health and the
218 environment from the harm of air pollution, replacing it with nothing, ensuring the climate crisis gets
219 far worse and puts the health of Americans in jeopardy.

220 It will result in even higher food and electricity than we are also seeing due to the Republican
221 affordability crisis. And it will put homeownership even further out of reach as unchecked pollution
222 wreaks havoc on property values, insurance rates, and jobs. It will also cause cascading
223 consequences across all sectors of our economy. And at a time when Trump's reckless war of
224 choice with Iran has already caused gas prices to skyrocket, EPA eliminated all clean vehicle
225 standards and incentives, increasing costs on families and businesses when they can least afford it, a
226 fact that EPA conveniently ignores.

227 Simultaneously, the Zeldin EPA has slashed critical protections by leaving radioactive coal ash
228 in unlined ponds and communities, reversing limits on cancer-causing ethylene oxide pollution in
229 cities, and allowing the chemical industry to burn plastic. From the Agency tasked with protecting
230 our public health and safety, these rollbacks cater to the whims of polluting interests, while American
231 communities pay the price.

232 And, finally, the effectiveness of the Agency hinges on EPA having the career staff necessary
233 to fulfill its mission. They are the backbone of the Agency. Yet, Administrator Zeldin's actions to

234 indiscriminately fire hundreds of employees and retaliate against those who raise concerns about the
235 mismanagement of EPA, show a blatant disregard for the critical work career staff conduct on behalf
236 of the American people every day. He has created such a toxic and hostile environment for career
237 staff that EPA has lost about a quarter of its staff since Trump assumed office. And that doesn't
238 make the government more efficient; it simply decimates EPA's ability to effectively do its job.

239 So in my opinion, EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment, and that
240 should be its north star. Yet, at every turn, Administrator Zeldin has placed polluters' favors over
241 the needs of the people the Agency is tasked with protecting. The Agency should be taking action
242 to protect our air, water, and public health. But unfortunately, it seems the administrator's legacy
243 will be selling the health of Americans to the highest bidder.

244 And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

245 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

246 We now conclude with member opening statements. The chair would like to remind
247 members that, pursuant to committee rules, all members' opening statements will be made a part of
248 the record.

249 We want to thank our witness for taking his time to testify before the subcommittee today.
250 Although it is not the practice of this subcommittee to swear in witnesses, I would remind our
251 witness that knowingly and willfully making material false statements to the legislative branch is
252 against the law under Title 18, section 1001, of the United States Code. You will have an
253 opportunity to give an opening statement followed by questions from members.

254 And our witness today is Lee Zeldin, former Member of the House, and Administrator of the
255 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Per committee custom, our witness will have the
256 opportunity for a 5-minute opening statement followed by a round of questions for members. The
257 light is on the timer in front of you and will turn from green to yellow when you have 1 minute left.

258 I now recognize you, Administrator Zeldin, for your 5-minute opening statement.

259 **STATEMENT OF HON. LEE Zeldin, ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

260

261 Mr. Zeldin. Well, thank you, Chairman Griffith, Ranking Member Tonko, Chairman Guthrie,
262 Ranking Member Pallone, members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear
263 before you today to discuss the President's fiscal year 2027 budget request for the U.S.
264 Environmental Protection Agency.

265 From day one, I have made it clear that we are going to fix the mess that we inherited, and
266 reaffirm our commitment to cooperative federalism, understanding that the best solutions are found
267 outside of Washington. Last year, EPA political and career leadership worked to reorganize the
268 Agency workforce to better support EPA's mission, fulfill statutory obligations, protect human health
269 and the environment, and power the great American comeback.

270 This past January, at the 1-year mark of President Trump's term in office, I announced 500 top
271 environmental wins from during that first year. These actions directly advance our agency's core
272 mission. EPA environmental accomplishments these past 15 months include the signing of the
273 historic agreement with the Mexican Government to end the decades-long Tijuana River sewage
274 crisis; highlights also include responding to the Potomac River interceptor collapse; accelerated
275 enforcement efforts to stop foreigners from profiting off sending poisons and pollution to the United
276 States; and unlocking billions of dollars in funding to reduce lead in drinking water.

277 Our commitment to gold standard science at EPA guided our decision to bolster scientists in
278 our national program offices, and establish the Office of Applied Science and Environmental
279 Solutions. We inherited a backlog of chemicals and pesticides from the Biden administration. The
280 Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention has worked tirelessly to bring down this backlog
281 while keeping pace with new incoming reviews.

282 With the addition of new technologies and scientists, our team of dedicated career and
283 political staff has made tremendous strides. At the same time, I announced last March the largest

284 deregulatory action in our Nation's history. This announcement consisted of 31 actions to apply
285 common sense, unleash U.S. energy dominance, strengthen the American economy.

286 February of this year, we proudly announced the elimination of the 2009 endangerment
287 finding. This has been the source of 16 years of consumer choice restrictions, and trillions of dollars
288 in regulatory costs for Americans. The Trump EPA believes growing our economy and bringing
289 down costs and protecting the environment is all achievable, and we are proving it every day.
290 President Trump is committed to rebuilding baseload power, including coal, which is vital to our
291 national security and to the wallets of taxpaying Americans. The Biden EPA tried hard to
292 strangle coal out of existence, and we are urgently reversing that damage.

293 Meanwhile, I fulfilled a commitment that I made during my confirmation to visit all 50 States
294 as EPA administrator, and I completed that effort in just 9-1/2 months. I heard from many of your
295 constituents about the hardships burdensome regulations cause. Faithfully abiding by the
296 Supreme Court's decision in Sackett, we are working to finalize a clear, durable Waters of the United
297 States rule. We are reigning in Federal overreach and gutting the prior administration's so-called
298 good neighbor rule, which was used on an ill-advised expansion of Federal jurisdiction.

299 The good news is that EPA is, once again, working closely with our State partners on their
300 State implementation plans. We are committed to advancing cooperative federalism and recognize
301 the important responsibility EPA shares with our State agency partners to ensure clean air for all
302 Americans. The Trump EPA is serious about ensuring future generations inherit clean air, land, and
303 water, and the foundation for healthy lives. That is why I recently announced, alongside HHS
304 Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., that EPA is adding microplastics and pharmaceuticals to our
305 contaminant candidate list for the first time ever.

306 The President's fiscal year 2027 budget will continue to make EPA efficient and effective
307 stewards of Americans' hard-earned taxpayer dollars and fulfill all our statutory obligations and our
308 core mission. This budget proposal captures significant efficiencies, and in return, focus on what

309 Congress has directed us to do: demonstrating our commitment to a leaner, more efficient, and
310 accountable EPA focused on environmental work that directly benefits the American people.

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

312

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

314

315 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

316
317 Mr. Griffith. Thank you very much, Administrator. We will now begin questioning. I
318 would ask that members not begin a new question to our witness as their 5 minutes is about to
319 expire. So if you look up at the clock and you only have about 15 seconds, you can make a
320 statement, but please don't ask a question. You have got plenty of time to do that as a written
321 question for the record.

322 And that being said, I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes. And first, I would like to offer
323 for introduction the list that Administrator Zeldin mentioned in his opening statement of the more
324 than 500 things done in the first year of the EPA's accomplishments under the Trump administration.
325 And that has been offered to my colleagues.

326 Without objection, we will add that to the committee document list.

327 Hearing none.

328 [The information follows:]

329

330 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

331

332 Mr. Griffith. All right. Now, also, we heard comments about, you know, how the budget
333 slashes EPA funds. I mentioned this in my opening statement where I said that, you know, that the
334 moneys that came from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Act were meant to be a
335 one-time shot in the arm for special projects. No matter how that money was spent, it was never
336 intended to be a new norm at the EPA for spending. Is that your understanding as well,
337 Administrator?

338 Mr. Zeldin. In a budget that was an annual operating budget of about \$10 billion a year, EPA
339 in 2024 obligated and spent over \$60 billion. It was more money than they knew how to spend. It
340 was money that was disseminated to left-wing NGOs. It was given out to former Biden and Obama
341 officials, Democratic donors. They created entities that at times, would go through up to four
342 pass-throughs where each of them were taking their own cut to administer the dollar.

343 By design, when congressional Democrats put forth the Inflation Expansion Act, they were
344 using it to raid the taxpayer till to be able to pay off those people who had supported them through
345 the years. Fortunately, the era of tossing gold bars off the Titanic -- that is the word that the Biden
346 administration was using to describe how they were spending the money -- those days are done.
347 We are being responsible steward of taxpayer dollars without any apology or regret, even though I
348 know that makes a lot of your colleagues on the other side of the aisle quite sad.

349 Mr. Griffith. And you feel that the budget request from the administration is one that is
350 appropriate for the EPA be able to get its core functions done. Is that correct?

351 Mr. Zeldin. Not only will we be able to fulfill all of our statutory obligations, we will be able
352 to do more with less. We inherited backlogs of over 14,000 pesticide reviews, 500 in new
353 chemicals, 175 small refinery exemptions, blown deadlines on setting numbers for renewable volume
354 obligations, hundreds of State implementation plans. The core statutory obligations set by this
355 body were ignored by our predecessors. And guess what? All of those backlogs are either

356 eliminated or greatly reduced since we came in -- doing more with less. Wild concept.

357 Mr. Griffith. Congratulations. All right. Let me move to some stuff important to my
358 district.

359 Under the Biden EPA, the coal ash rule was one-size-fits-all in its approach, and unfortunately,
360 had the effect of discouraging beneficial reuse of coal combustion residuals in concrete and drywall.
361 Why should the encapsulation and recycling of coal ash be encouraged?

362 Mr. Zeldin. It is an important -- for anyone who cares about the important, there are
363 good -- as you referenced, it is called beneficial reuse. It is putting to good use what is being
364 produced by these plants. While plants have enacted, for example, the 2012 Mercury and Air
365 Toxics Standards, which were strict, and we see them continuing to improve their environmental
366 technology, rather than trying to get rid of coal altogether, through a combination of regulations,
367 coal combustion residual, steam electric, ELG, Clean Power Plan 2.0, and more -- they were trying to
368 make, you know, this -- send this message to coal miners that they should just learn the code.

369 Well, this is reliable, durable, baseload power that is important to provide to American
370 families. And we are reversing that damage in earnest, and one of the ways to do it is to
371 understand the benefits of beneficial reuse and to make sure that we are supporting it, not
372 suffocating it.

373 Mr. Griffith. Yeah. And Virginia Tech, in my district, is studying how to recover rare-earth
374 elements from coal ash, which could strengthen domestic supplies. Now, it is not an easy thing to
375 do, but it would strengthen our domestic supplies of rare earth. How would the previous coal ash
376 rule have restricted these uses?

377 Mr. Zeldin. Well, for one, I mean, the goal was, and as we saw coming in, the effective
378 implementation of these 2023 and 2024 rules that were put forth by the Biden administration, was
379 leading to coal plants all across the country to announce that they were closing altogether. That
380 was by design. I mean, there are people who serve in this body who will talk about a source like

381 wind as if it is a substitute for baseload power. They just don't care that you have many States
382 across this country that rely on coal in order to heat homes.

383 When you are going through a winter like we just went through, where so many families for
384 so long were so cold, rather than ramping up baseload power they are trying to get rid of it. And
385 we don't play along with that --

386 Mr. Griffith. Yeah.

387 Mr. Zeldin. -- and we are proud of it.

388 Mr. Griffith. I appreciate that. My time is up. I yield back.

389 I now recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Tonko, for his 5 minutes of
390 questioning.

391 Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

392 Administrator Zeldin, last June, hundreds of current and former EPA employees signed an
393 open letter to you raising their concerns about the way you have mismanaged the EPA, undermined
394 science, and harmed communities across our country. EPA emails from that time show that EPA's
395 Office of General Counsel advised that, and I quote, "The letter is likely protected speech under the
396 First Amendment," and that, again, further quote, "the Agency should not take any personnel actions
397 against employees who signed the letter or take any other action against them that may be viewed
398 as retaliatory or that may have a chilling effect on other employees taking similar action."

399 Likewise, the director of EPA's Ethics Office wrote that the employees are simply exercising
400 their First Amendment rights, and in another email wrote that, and I quote, "There is no ethics
401 concern."

402 Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter in the record emails conveying legal guidance and
403 assessments on July 1 and July 2 of 2025, as well as an E&E News article published on July 3 of 2025.

404 Mr. Griffith. All right. I will have the team take a quick look at it, but it shouldn't be a
405 problem. We will add it to the committee document list.

406 Mr. Tonko. And I thank you.

407 Despite the view of EPA's Office of General Counsel that these employees were exercising
408 their rights and should not be punished, you placed nearly 150 employees on paid administrative
409 leave for roughly 2 months and investigated them before most were finally allowed to return to
410 work.

411 So, Administrator Zeldin, why did you retaliate against EPA employees speaking out against
412 your leadership at EPA despite clear opinions from the General Counsel's Office and Ethics Office that
413 these employees were exercising their constitutional rights?

414 Mr. Zeldin. Well, obviously, I will disagree with a lot of the premise of your question.
415 What I instructed my team to do was to conduct an investigation. They conducted an investigation.
416 There was personnel all across the Agency that recommended different actions for personnel
417 following the investigation. There were then deciding officials that acted on the recommendation
418 of those people from across the Agency, and then different areas of discipline were then followed
419 through with. It was following an investigation. It was done on the advice of counsel, but I
420 imagine that you know that and deciding not to include that, but that is okay.

421 Mr. Tonko. Well, but did you consult with the Ethics Office or the General Counsel's Office
422 before taking the action?

423 Mr. Zeldin. The action that I took was instructing our team to conduct an investigation.

424 Mr. Tonko. Well, how much did EPA spend paying the employees that you put on leave
425 instead of allowing them to continue their work as they should have been allowed to do?

426 Mr. Zeldin. We are going to conduct the investigation, and then you are going to have a
427 recommendation that comes from across the Agency and their decisions on those recommendations.
428 It is a process that I would do again.

429 Mr. Tonko. Well, if you could get back to the committee in terms of the amount paid of the
430 employees that were put on leave. Not only did you violate the law and the rights of these

431 employees, you wasted taxpayer dollars and deprived the public of the work of these employees.

432 Now, with the TSCA program, the new chemicals program, there is a significant backlog of
433 chemicals under review. And I know you said that you inherited this backlog from the Biden
434 administration. The Biden administration would say they inherited it from the first Trump
435 administration. We can go back and forth pointing fingers all day, but I would like to talk about
436 where we go from here.

437 EPA's budget request was developed with the intention to reduce this backlog. You tell us
438 how important TSCA's fee collection authority is to having the personnel and resources necessary for
439 this office to do the work.

440 Mr. Zeldin. It is very important for the Office of Chemical Safety to have the personnel, as
441 well as the IT advancements, in order to be able to do their work. When we went through our
442 reorganization, we added scientists, we added personnel to that office to get through that backlog.
443 We also were implementing a congressional appropriation for March of 2025 of \$17 million to
444 update the IT inside of that office, which was a very important appropriation by Congress, because
445 when the system would go down for days that will end up resulting in a lot of lost time.

446 Congress obviously faces decisions to make between now and the end of September as it
447 relates to an expiring fee. As far as what we are doing inside of the Office of Chemical Safety, it has
448 been to increase bandwidth since the moment that we have come in, both with scientists, personnel,
449 and IT.

450 Mr. Tonko. Reclaiming my time, I have other questions on timeline and transparency that I
451 will get via the subcommittee to your office.

452 And with that, I thank you, Mr. Chair, and yield back.

453 Mr. Griffith. Thank you, sir. The gentleman yields back.

454 I now recognize the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Kentucky.

455 The Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

456 Thanks for being here, Administrator Zeldin. And I think when you first came to Congress
457 we connected because I went to college in New York, and I remember talking about Long Island. I
458 went to not only Long Island but down river at West Point -- for Mr. Tonko just a little bit -- and when
459 I was there, the Hudson River was polluted. It was being cleaned up. First time I ever remember, I
460 guess, knowing of Robert Kennedy, Jr., other than his father. This famous name is cleaning up the
461 Hudson River.

462 And so I ask these questions to know that we should never be in that situation ever again.
463 But I know we have AI coming. We have a surge in need of energy. So can you discuss how
464 reforms -- now, we are not changing the standard of the Clean Air Act, how we implement it. So
465 can you discuss how reforms of the Clean Air Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act will help the
466 United States support advanced manufacturing of domestic energy?

467 Mr. Zeldin. Well, first off, Chairman -- and thank you for being here. And I just wanted to
468 point out that the work on the Hudson River PCB Superfund site has been a very important effort of
469 EPA. I am actually surprised that the ranking member didn't ask about it, but I appreciate the
470 Chairman from Kentucky asking about it.

471 And in early January of 2025, EPA came in, obviously, inheriting many years of hard work.
472 Secretary Kennedy deserves a ton of credit. Their recent review, the 5-year review concluded that
473 the levels of PCBs in water and fish are going down. We have seen news stories in recent weeks
474 where people are catching fish and eating it. The water quality has greatly improved, and that work
475 continues.

476 But as far as priorities of yours under the Clean Air Act, where do you want me to start?

477 The Chair. Well, we want a situation that is nothing like that. What do you think we need
478 to do so we can get the permitting done quicker -- not changing any standards, get the permitting
479 done quicker so we can compete with China?

480 Mr. Zeldin. So I know Congress is considering a number of different actions and looking at

481 modernizing the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, NEPA. I commend the
482 efforts of this committee as it relates to that permitting. I would say that a good permitting bill will
483 result in a permitting process that takes less time, costs less money, and has more certainty. If it
484 sacrifices any one of those three, you can easily turn a good bill bad.

485 We, through the White House Council of Environmental Quality, have a list of
486 recommendations as it relates to each of these laws I cited. EPA has additional ideas on top of that.
487 I believe that we have provided that list. We can provide that again to any members of your caucus
488 who are asking for it and involved in this process. There are many ways that you can modernize
489 these landmark laws that have been on the books for a long time to have a permitting process that
490 takes less time, costs less money, and has more certainty, and we would like to help.

491 The Chair. So one of the things that drives our economy is automotive industry. And last
492 year, we repealed the mandates from -- the electric vehicle mandates. Also, you repealed -- can
493 you explain -- I will just ask you this straight up: Can you explain how the repeal of the
494 endangerment finding helps consumers -- it supports manufacturers and complies with the Clean Air
495 Act?

496 Mr. Zeldin. For one, it is going to result in \$2,400 per new vehicle with savings. But this is
497 a combination -- as you pointed out, there are multiple actions that have been taken. Congress,
498 through the Congressional Review Act, got rid of the electric vehicle mandate in California, and I
499 absolutely commend those of you in this body who were leaders in that effort to make sure that that
500 happened. We have seen it in announcements from Secretary Duffy with the President in the Oval
501 Office as it relates to CAFE standards.

502 As it relates to 2009 endangerment finding, this was not just a decision to rescind the 2009
503 endangerment finding but also all greenhouse gas emission standards on light, medium, and
504 heavy-duty vehicles that followed an all off-cycle credits, including the Obama climate participation
505 trophy to manufacturers to create an incentive to have that annoying start/stop feature in vehicles,

506 which is gone, as well -- which, by the way, seems to be the aspect that Americans have related to
507 the most and they have been most passionate about in supporting action.

508 We believe that Americans should be able to buy whatever vehicle they want. And when
509 manufacturers are able to make the vehicles that customers want as opposed to those vehicles that
510 politicians and bureaucrats demand, you end up with a market where you don't have vehicles that
511 are created to just sit on lots like we are seeing with electric vehicles.

512 So applying common sense, following the law, and being able to pursue these efficiencies and
513 empowering consumer choice is a great win that Americans voted for November 2024, and
514 President Trump and Republicans in Congress have been delivering on.

515 The Chair. Thank you. My time has expired, and I yield back.

516 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

517 I now recognize the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Pallone, for his 5 minutes of
518 questioning.

519 Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

520 EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment. In its 2027 budget request,
521 EPA says the Agency is, I quote, "taking action to ensure cleaner, healthier air improves quality of life
522 for all Americans -- especially children, who are particularly vulnerable to air pollutants -- and
523 advances administration priorities set forth in the Make America Healthy Again initiative," unquote.

524 So, Administrator Zeldin, yes or no, please, do you agree that it is an important part of your
525 job to protect the health and safety of children?

526 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely.

527 Mr. Pallone. Thank you. And I agree, too. But unfortunately, in my opinion, under your
528 leadership, EPA has taken actions that will increase our children's risk of exposure to harmful toxins.

529 And last March, EPA set up an in-box for companies to request exemptions from critical Clean
530 Air Act safeguards to protect Americans from pollution. And while the Trump administration

531 provided no transparency into this process, an organization obtained some of these requests through
532 FOIA. And the documents show that 71 coal plants in 24 States will not be required to comply with
533 the updated mercury in the air toxic standards that were set to go into effect next year. And
534 because of this polluter giveaway, the people living near those power plants will be exposed to
535 higher levels of mercury, arsenic, and other toxic pollution that can cause heart and lung disease,
536 cancer, and brain damage, and children are especially vulnerable.

537 So every single company that requests an exemption from the suite of Clean Air Act section
538 112 standards, and even some facilities that didn't ask, were given a 2-year free pass to poison our
539 air under this initiative. So let me ask you, Administrator, were the potential health impacts on
540 those living in the communities around those facilities evaluated, particularly with regard to
541 children? And if so, who performed those evaluations, and what risk and benefits were considered,
542 if you will?

543 Mr. Zeldin. Under the Clean Air Act, decisions in the section 112 presidential exemptions
544 are made by the President. EPA's role was to accept the submissions and transmit them to the
545 White House consistent with this statute. The White House has publicly posted the proclamations
546 and annexes listing the sources that received exemptions, including actions on April 8, July 17,
547 October 24, and November 21 of 2025.

548 Mr. Pallone. Okay. So the law provides that the President can grant exemptions -- that is
549 true -- but they must be based on merit. So did President Trump or someone in the White House
550 review and evaluate each exemption request?

551 Mr. Zeldin. As I pointed out, the role of EPA was to accept the submission and transmit
552 them to the White House.

553 Mr. Pallone. So you just accepted it, okay.

554 Does allowing more mercury, arsenic, and other toxic pollution make Americans healthy, in
555 your opinion?

556 Mr. Zeldin. Fortunately, since the 2012 mercury and air toxic standards that were put in
557 place, very strict standards that were put in place, there were substantial reductions, fortunately,
558 because these are toxins, and reducing them is an important goal that EPA has been leading the way
559 on.

560 Mr. Pallone. Well, look, I think that poisoning our air and water makes Americans sicker,
561 and based on EPA's own data facilities that were given, these waivers saw the biggest jump in
562 pollution last year, so there is no question that there was more pollution as a result of these waivers.
563 But I think the whole process was an enormous giveaway to polluters, with zero consideration for the
564 Americans whose health will suffer. And, frankly, I think it is shameful.

565 Mr. Zeldin. There is more pollution even though it hadn't even gone into effect yet? Is
566 that your position? You just stated that --

567 Mr. Pallone. My position is that I see every effort being made to increase pollution as a
568 result of these exemptions, and I believe it is being done by the President -- or you at least, as you,
569 enabler, because of what the President tells you to do -- to help polluters as giveaways to the
570 corporations that pollute.

571 But look, I have to ask one more question, and this is a local issue, Administrator, so let me
572 just mention it. Earlier this month, I sent EPA a letter about a suspected cancer cluster in Keyport,
573 New Jersey, which is in my district, demanding that the Agency work with other Federal and State
574 partners to secure the site and address the ongoing contamination. And corporate polluters have
575 been let off the hook for too long in this area, and the community is paying the price. And I think
576 this matter deserves the full attention and force of our public health and environmental agencies.

577 So Region 2 Administrator, I do want to say it, has been cooperative. He met with my staff
578 last Friday to discuss this cancer cluster and possible remediation of the landfill that we believe may
579 be causing it. So I just wanted to mention it to you and ask you to prioritize this issue as we
580 proceed with the Region 2 Administrator to address remediation and the health concerns, if I can ask

581 for your commitment.

582 Mr. Zeldin. And you are asking about Aeromarine

583 Landfill?

584 Mr. Pallone. Yes exactly.

585 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely. We are very well aware of it. The Region 2 Administrator has
586 briefed me on it. I know how much of a priority it is. This is an issue that New Jersey DEP has
587 been on the lead on enforcement at the landfill. They have not asked for our assistance, but we --

588 Mr. Pfluger. [Presiding.] The gentleman's time has expired.

589 Mr. Zeldin. -- stand ready to help.

590 Mr. Pallone. They have --

591 Mr. Pfluger. The gentleman's time has expired.

592 Mr. Pallone. Yeah, I just wanted to say, they have been working with us, and I appreciate
593 that. Thank you.

594 Mr. Pfluger. The gentleman's time has expired.

595 The chair now recognizes myself for 5 minutes.

596 Director, thank you for being here. Thank you for your service in righting the ship. My
597 colleagues across the aisle claim that this EPA's deregulatory actions are killing Americans. Couldn't
598 be more false. The truth is actually the opposite. What kills Americans is unaffordable energy in
599 an unreliable electric grid, and that is exactly what the previous administration's EPA was delivering.

600 The Biden EPA imposed trillions of dollars in regulatory costs, and based on widely inflated
601 benefit calculations assigning speculative dollar values to statistical lives while ignoring the real-world
602 consequences of making energy unaffordable. 25 million American households have reported
603 going without food or medicine to pay their energy bills. That is the human cost of regulatory
604 excess. This EPA is doing what the Agency is supposed to: Rigorous, honest cost-benefit analysis,
605 not rubber-stamping regulations that strangle reliable energy production while claiming to save lives

606 on a spreadsheet.

607 Affordable, reliable energy is the foundation of American health and safety. And,
608 Administrator Zeldin, your reforms are protecting Americans, not by speculating about benefits, but
609 by delivering them.

610 And I will get to Loper Bright. It is shameful that some of our colleagues have no idea what
611 Loper Bright actually is and actually does. Thank you for the words that you had yesterday here at a
612 hearing here on Capitol Hill. And Loper Bright happened because of left-wing EPA overreach.
613 That is exactly why we are here. And I would like to ask you, how do you respond to the claim that
614 faithfully reading the Clean Air Act as written somehow harms public health, and what actual
615 authorities did Congress provide that this administration is now properly executing to benefit health?

616 Mr. Zeldin. Thank you for asking. For a long time the Chevron doctrine was in place. This
617 got challenged. For those who aren't familiar with the Chevron doctrine, basically agency heads
618 were looking at Federal statute and would get creative. The statute wouldn't say that an agency
619 head can't do something, so they would say, well, I guess that means that we can. We saw that
620 used inside of the 2009 endangerment finding. If you read the endangerment finding, throughout it
621 you will see that discretion being used, just because it doesn't say we can't; well, I guess that means
622 we can.

623 Well, the Supreme Court weighed in in Loper Bright and said, You can't do that anymore, that
624 you have to follow the best reading of statute. The major questions doctrine, which was also put
625 forth by the Supreme Court in recent years in their cases, also say that an agency can't impose
626 trillions of dollars of regulation on their own. That is something that should have a debate and a
627 vote in Congress.

628 And what does that all mean when a member might be upset that we repealed the 2009
629 endangerment finding? Well, if you want an agency like EPA to impose trillions of dollars of
630 regulations and regulate the heck out of greenhouse gas emissions, it is really simple: Introduce a

631 bill, debate it, get it passed, change the law, and we will follow the law. The commitment that I
632 made when I was nominated, the commitment that I reiterate here today, is I will follow the best
633 reading of the law, period.

634 Mr. Pfluger. Thank you for that.

635 And I will ask, can you provide an update regarding what actions the EPA is considering on the
636 reconsideration of Quad Ob/Oc, (ph) which cost hundreds of billions of dollars in excess and is
637 another example of left-wing overreach?

638 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely. This has been a multiple-phased process. We delayed a
639 compliance deadline to allow us to fix the clause with the Quad Ob/Oc regulation. We just
640 announced that second phase of the reconsideration. We are about to announce a third phase.
641 As soon as this week, we will be putting out updated guidance to make sure that those who look at
642 Quad Ob/Oc and have to comply with Quad Ob/Oc understand exactly what that rule means and
643 how the Agency interprets it.

644 This is a really important topic for a lot of our country, a lot of our economy. We want more
645 reliable baseload power. We want to unleash energy dominance, and Quad Ob/Oc is a vehicle that
646 was used to cause a lot of harm to much of this country, including a lot of Texas.

647 Mr. Pfluger. And it ignores the facts that between 2011 and 2020, methane emission
648 intensity has dropped 70 percent just in the Permian Basin, while production of oil and gas has
649 increased 320 percent, so it ignores those facts.

650 I appreciate the work you have done, Administrator, to revisit and improve certain aspects of
651 the AIM Act implementation. And I have heard constructive feedback from stakeholders in Texas
652 on those efforts. And at the same time, some have raised concerns about the HFC management
653 rule, particularly in compliance challenges that it creates for refrigeration in grocery stores and other
654 places. Can you give us an idea whether the Agency is considering near-term reconsideration or
655 adjustments of the HFC management rule? Sorry. I only have 10 seconds left.

656 Mr. Zeldin. So on April 17, EPA sent over a proposal to OMB. We are continuing to work
657 through fixing the technology transition rule. The impacts will fix -- by us addressing this, the
658 negative impacts of the technology transition rule on grocery stores, on the semiconducting industry,
659 on residents across our country, we are going to fix it to the maximum extent allowed under the law.

660 Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Director. My time has expired.

661 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Ruiz.

662 Mr. Ruiz. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

663 Administrator, in July, you provided a clear example of what the Federal Government can do
664 in helping to clean up the Tijuana River. You traveled to San Diego, saw the crisis firsthand,
665 coordinated across agencies with the International Boundary Water Commission and the State
666 Department, and secured a binding agreement with Mexico that delivered real infrastructure
667 upgrades, including expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant. Do you
668 consider it the responsibility for the EPA to help address these types of binational water pollutions?

669 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely. This has been a very important focus of our agency. I look
670 forward to, by the way, coming to New River. Appreciate the invite.

671 Mr. Ruiz. Well, that is what we are going to talk about. So you have heard of the New
672 River, because the same model is what we need for the New River.

673 Mr. Zeldin. I understand.

674 Mr. Ruiz. The New River begins south of Mexicali, carrying raw sewage, industrial waste,
675 pesticides, and heavy metals north across the border into Calexico. And it doesn't stop there. It
676 continues for 60 miles through Imperial County before finally emptying into the Salton Sea, carrying
677 everything it collected along the way. The New River is considered the most polluted waterway in
678 North America. The New River is governed by the same 1944 Water Treaty and IBWC framework as
679 the Tijuana River with the same diplomatic tools available. The difference is not legal authority or
680 technical capacity, but attention and urgency.

681 Administrator Zeldin, the EPA under the Biden and Trump administrations have invested
682 significantly in addressing the Tijuana River crisis, including a Federal record of decision, expanded
683 treatment capacity, and binational coordination. The New River presents a comparable, if not more
684 severe, transboundary pollution challenge as the Tijuana River.

685 At the Calexico crossing, for example, fecal coliform levels have reached nearly 70,000 times
686 the Federal treaty limit. Yet, communities along the river, overwhelmingly low income, have not
687 received comparable action or coordination.

688 There has been reports by CBP agents who take shifts by the river or who have gone into the
689 river of complaining of flu-like symptoms, blurred vision, severe headaches, rashes, open sores, and
690 those that have fallen into the river complained of UTIs, and even skin itching, just itching all over
691 their bodies. Some students who live near there have been complaining of shortness of breath.
692 Some even calling 9-1-1 from the classroom.

693 So they are asking for the same approach and same urgency that you have already used with
694 the Tijuana River: Federal leadership, interagency coordination, accountability with Mexico and
695 real infrastructure solutions. So in June of this year, soon, there will be the binational summary of
696 the water characterization study, which is going to come out. Do you commit to looking at that and
697 having that same urgency and giving your input to the coordinated organizations?

698 Mr. Zeldin. I am happy to. And I know that on May 11 Region 9 leadership is planning a
699 visit to meet with you and your staff. I believe that there is even discussion of a followup visit for
700 the May 11 trip. So the urgency -- we are not going to wait until June and wait for the report. I
701 believe that we are coming to visit here in the next couple weeks.

702 Mr. Ruiz. That is excellent. And that is very good to hear, because from your input to the
703 study, we are going to need an MOU, and we are going to need it quickly, and from the MOU, then
704 we can negotiate a minute. Will you participate in this coordination to develop this minute as soon
705 as possible?

706 Mr. Zeldin. I have heard you and others loud and clear. There was an assemblyman who I
707 met with in San Diego, who, I believe is an assemblyman in the New River area, who was advocating
708 passionately as well. So this is something that I am grateful that you are raising here, and we know
709 that it is important to your constituents. I believe that the model that has worked to approach
710 MOU and minute in Tijuana is a focus that can work in New River, and we look forward to working
711 with you on it.

712 Mr. Ruiz. Great. One last thing. As I mentioned earlier, there has been a lot of
713 investment that helped get the Tijuana River started. This is the moment when Federal investment
714 is vital to mask the scale of this crisis, but this administration is proposing to cut the Clean Water
715 State Revolving Fund by nearly 90 percent, or \$2.6 billion. That is the lowest level since the Reagan
716 era, the same era when we first vowed to clean it up. So this is exactly why the Clean Water State
717 Revolving Fund exists, and we need to preserve it.

718 Mr. Zeldin. If I may respond, I know that time has run -- is it okay, Chairman?

719 Mr. Griffith. [Presiding.] Yes, please.

720 Mr. Zeldin. There are good examples across the country to use as it relates to the State
721 Revolving Fund. I would just offer, as it relates to these cross boundary issues, that the investment
722 that is desperately needed is on the Mexico side. We are seeing that in Tijuana and factoring in
723 population growth. That was part of what we negotiated to get Mexico to commit money that was
724 previously obligated.

725 And while I look forward to learning more about New River, which I know is important to you
726 as you are bringing up here, if it is anything like what we are experiencing with the situation in the
727 San Diego area, the investment that is needed is going to be massive infrastructure investment on
728 the Mexico side, which is why this is more international issue.

729 Mr. Ruiz. They contributed \$140 million to the Tijuana River. The U.S. contributed over
730 \$600 million. So that is the intent is to have both countries clean up this mess.

731 RPTR MCGHEE

732 EDTR SECKMAN

733 [11:01 a.m.]

734 Mr. Griffith. [Presiding.] I will have to -- I appreciate the colloquy, but I do have to call it
735 in. I will also note for the record that there are two new rivers and that we are not speaking about
736 the beautiful pristine recreation driving New River that runs through North Carolina, Virginia, and
737 West Virginia, and now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Dr. Joyce, for his 5 minutes of
738 questioning.

739 Mr. Joyce. Thank you, Chairman, for holding this important hearing and to Administrator
740 Zeldin for testifying with us today.

741 Under your leadership, Administrator Zeldin, the EPA has returned to science-based
742 decisionmaking rather than advancing ideological conclusions that ultimately put our Nation's energy
743 supply and critical supply chains at risk. Thank you. Thank you for that strong direction you have
744 provided from the top of the agency on down, and I look forward to continuing to work with you and
745 this committee as we look to bring America back to scientifically sound regulatory regime.

746 In order to highlight the incredible steps that the EPA has taken in such a short period of time,
747 I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the accounting of the EPA environmental achievements
748 during the first year of the Trump administration that was released on January 20th, 2026, into the
749 record.

750 Mr. Griffith. It is in the record. Thank you.

751 [The information follows:]

752

753 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

754

755 Mr. Joyce. Focusing now on some recent actions that have been taken by the EPA,
756 Administrator Zeldin, what is the legal basis that the EPA relies on when requiring the reallocation of
757 small refinery exemptions?

758 Mr. Zeldin. So the way that the process works under the law following congressional action
759 that was taken a couple of decades ago, the Department of Energy produces a document that is
760 utilized to ensure, applied equally across the board. We do not have any individual adjudication.
761 It is not based off of people calling me up from the Hill and trying to get, you know, special treatment
762 for one over the other, but I will say that it is something that can be reformed through congressional
763 legislation that I look forward to working with you on.

764 You have some small refineries that do not get approval at all. Some got partial. Some got
765 full. It was through an application of the DOE study, the DOE math, and to be done fairly across the
766 board, but I will say it is based on congressional statute from a couple decades ago, and I have plenty
767 of thoughts for anybody who wants to talk about that entire process with SREs. We inherited a
768 backlog of 175. Fortunately, we got rid of all of it. We have received some new applications since,
769 and the approach, the transparent approach that we will continue to pursue is consistent with the
770 one that we pursued last year.

771 Mr. Joyce. Based on the EPA's understanding of the relevant statute regarding the
772 renewable fuel standard, would congressional action be necessary to prevent such reallocation?

773 Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

774 Mr. Joyce. Administrator Zeldin, for several years, I have raised concerns about the impact
775 of the EPA rules governing ethylene oxide and how that is utilized for the sterilization of medical
776 devices. Thank you for your recent announcement that the EPA will reconsider and revise these
777 rules to reflect the available science and protect the safety of medical device chain in the sterilization
778 process.

779 Moving forward, how can EPA ensure that regulations are based on gold standard science so
780 that we can avoid the disruptions that come with unrealistic regulations?

781 Mr. Zeldin. So there has been uncertainty associated with the IRIS value for a long time,
782 well-recognized, including uncertainties related to the choice of dose response model used to
783 produce the IRIS value and other uncertainties in the underlying data. EPA's requesting comment
784 on newer studies and methods that may influence the agency's understanding of ETOs
785 carcinogenetic potency as consistent with Executive Order 14303 restoring gold standard science.
786 EPA is committed to the highest standards of scientific integrity and reliance on the best available
787 scientific information. So the process is one where we created an Office of Applied Science and
788 Environmental Solutions. We are integrating science and research more directly with program
789 offices. We are empowering the dedicated career staffers of this agency, who are experienced;
790 they take their jobs seriously, and they do a fantastic job, and I have been -- it has been an honor to
791 be able to work alongside them.

792 We also want to make sure that we are providing radical transparency to the American public
793 on the studies that were used. And, lastly, what I found too often in the past was that, if you get a
794 wide range of studies and there is some anomaly of a study where maybe because the sample size
795 was too small or the exposure level was, you know, a hundred times reality, you know, that study
796 would get dismissed as an anomaly. The thing is that you have people who are concerned moms
797 and dads in this country, who know of that study; they might go to the EPA's web page looking for an
798 answer on that study. They are looking for that study, but because it might be pushed to the side as
799 an anomaly, you don't see it discussed at all. I think that the agency could do a much better job,
800 not just talking about the best available gold standard science that is being relied upon but also be
801 acknowledging the studies that you might feel as an agency aren't the most reliable, because that
802 might be the study that that member of the public is looking for. So gold standard science isn't just
803 an internal process. It is also about communication with the public.

804 Mr. Joyce. My time has expired, but, Administrator Zeldin, I want to once again express my
805 support for the work that you have already done.

806 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

807 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

808 I now recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragan.

809 Ms. Barragan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

810 EPA Administrator, in my district, the EPA's risk management program inspected a chlorine
811 transfer facility, JCI Jones Chemical, in 2015 and in 2017, and they found serious safety problems,
812 including corroded equipment handling, hazardous chemicals. When the EPA returned in 2024, it
813 found many of the same issues again, but they were not treated as repeat violations because they
814 occurred more than five years apart, and the penalty was just a few thousand dollars. EPA has also
815 acknowledged that it does not inspect every RMP facility more frequently than once every 5 years.
816 The question, Administrator, is can the EPA increase the frequency of inspections at facilities with a
817 history of violations like JCI so these problems are identified and enforced as repeat violations?

818 Mr. Zeldin. The work of the Office of Enforcement and Compliance is important. We take
819 seriously any matters that are raised to us from Members of Congress. We are happy to look at any
820 of these cases strictly on the merits, and while we won't be able to communicate publicly about any
821 ongoing enforcement matters, if there is a belief that something needs to be inspected, to look at, to
822 being forced against or working with our agency to comply on, we will make sure that we mobilize
823 those in the agency.

824 Ms. Barragan. Sir, I don't mean to cut you off. I am trying to get an answer to my
825 question. My question is really about not waiting 5 years for the EPA to come back when there is a
826 repeat violator. So I am trying to ask if maybe you as Administrator think that if the EPA could
827 increase the frequency of the inspections when you have, like, a facility that is having repeated
828 violations, do you think that is --

829 Mr. Zeldin. I never said anything about waiting 5 years. I am talking about at this
830 hearing --

831 Ms. Barragan. I understand. I am asking --

832 Mr. Zeldin. If you want to have a member of your staff talk to someone on my team and we
833 can look into it.

834 Ms. Barragan. Okay.

835 Mr. Zeldin. We might have an update now.

836 Ms. Barragan. I am asking as a general rule, if you have a repeat violator, whether it's a
837 good idea for the EPA not to wait 5 years to come back. I mean, it is a simple, easy question.

838 Mr. Zeldin. Sure, yeah, of course, and I have never said anything about waiting 5 years.

839 Ms. Barragan. Yeah. Okay. Well, I hope the EPA will look at doing that when there is
840 repeat violators. So, moving on, last week a hydrogen sulfide leak at an industrial facility in West
841 Virginia killed two workers, and it sent dozens more people to the hospital. The U.S. Chemical
842 Safety Board, an independent agency that investigates chemical disasters, has already announced it
843 is investigating the incident. Do you support the investigation by the Chemical Safety Board into
844 the fatal chemical release in West Virginia?

845 Mr. Zeldin. Well, we have been involved in this process already. Based on catalyst
846 refiners, I self-reported tier 2 emergency and hazardous chemical inventory submissions from 2025
847 and 2026. The chemicals and their quantities, including the self-reported submission, did not
848 trigger applicable thresholds under the risk-management plan rule. OSHA is --

849 Ms. Barragan. Sir, I am going to interrupt you, because I am trying get a very specific answer
850 about the Chemical Safety Board. Not your involvement. The Chemical Safety Board, they
851 announced they are doing an investigation into the incident. I am asking if you support the
852 Chemical Safety Board doing an investigation? It is a yes or no.

853 Mr. Zeldin. Well, you cut me off right when I was saying that OSHA is leading the onsite

854 investigation. EPA is coordinating with OSHA to determine whether or not the facility was
855 complying with regulations.

856 Ms. Barragan. So you don't support the investigation by the Chemical Safety Board then?

857 Mr. Zeldin. I am not saying that at all.

858 Ms. Barragan. I mean, I am trying to get an answer to that question. Will you -- this is not
859 that hard.

860 Mr. Zeldin. I am telling you what process is that we are following.

861 Ms. Barragan. Okay. Well, I am asking you a question, and the question is, do you support
862 the Chemical Safety Board investigation? Either you don't or you do. I understand OSHA is doing
863 something.

864 Mr. Zeldin. I don't understand why you would think I wouldn't support that.

865 Ms. Barragan. Well, I am just -- that is what I am saying. So you do support it.

866 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. I guess the problem is that --

867 Ms. Barragan. That is so easy. This is not a trick question.

868 Mr. Zeldin. I thought you were maybe interested in what was going on beyond the
869 grandstanding, but go ahead.

870 Ms. Barragan. You are the grandstanding. You are the one reading prepared statements
871 instead of answering questions.

872 Mr. Zeldin. I am telling you the process that is going on. I am telling you more about what
873 we know, and you do not want to know about it.

874 Ms. Barragan. You just said you support the Chemical Safety Board's funding -- I mean,
875 rather the Chemical Safety Board's investigation. The President's proposal, the budget proposal, is
876 to eliminate the Chemical Safety Board funding. Do you support that? Do you support
877 eliminating --

878 Mr. Zeldin. Every single aspect of the fiscal year 2027 budget that I am here talking about I

879 am support of.

880 Ms. Barragan. So you do support the Chemical Safety Board's elimination?

881 Mr. Zeldin. Every single aspect, every single aspect of what the President is proposing in --

882 Ms. Barragan. Okay. So I am going to reclaim my time, because it is clear the
883 Administrator is just killing time instead of -- what he just said is contradictory. On the one hand,
884 he supports the Chemical Safety Board investigation. On the other hand --

885 Mr. Zeldin. Actually, you cut me off when I was talking about an OSHA process that is going
886 on right now.

887 Ms. Barragan. It is my time, sir. It is not your time. It's not your time. Even though this
888 chairman doesn't want to enforce it, I will.

889 Mr. Griffith. Everybody settle down.

890 Ms. Barragan. You just contradicted yourself, and it is very rude; it is very rude to even have
891 the chairman --

892 Mr. Zeldin. I am telling you the actual process that is going on right now.

893 Ms. Barragan. -- to even have the chairman to have the witness stop what he is saying. He
894 is clearly contradicting himself.

895 Mr. Zeldin. Why don't you care about the actual process that is going on?

896 Ms. Barragan. And he looks like a fool in doing so, and in that, you won't even stop so that I
897 could be heard. It is not appreciated. And, with that, I am going to yield back my time.

898 Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields back.

899 Ms. Barragan. And, you know, hopefully the EPA Administrator can take the smirk off his
900 face and worry about people's health and safety.

901 Mr. Zeldin. Okay. You didn't say anything about OSHA.

902 Mr. Griffith. Whoa, whoa, whoa.

903 Mr. Zeldin. The actual process that is going on right now.

904 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Latta, is recognized.

905 Mr. Latta. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and we really appreciate you coming back
906 to the House. You were one of our Members for a good number of years. I also want to thank
907 you for coming to my district with the U.S. Trade Representative over the Ford plant. One of the
908 things I would like to start with is on the permitting question. You know, I chair the Energy
909 Subcommittee, and one of the things that we have talked about in this committee, the full
910 committee, that we have to have more energy produced in this country. Everybody admits that we
911 have to get there, but permitting is going to have to be one of the top things we get done. You
912 can't mention energy unless we mention permitting, and I see that one of the goals in the EPA's fiscal
913 year 2027 budget proposal is advanced permitting reform, and I was wondering if you would talk
914 about some of what the EPA has taken steps to streamline, especially on the air permits and how EPA
915 further improve the process under the proposed 2027 budget.

916 Mr. Zeldin. The EPA has the power to really slow things down. The EPA also has the power
917 to speed things up, and we found many ways that the agency was working to gum up the works all
918 across the entire country. We are involved in EIS and NEPA reviews. We work closely with States.
919 We created an Office of State Air Partnership, not just on implementation plans but also to work
920 closely with the State air offices where they are taking the responsibility with the air permits. We
921 are working with local authorities on water permits. We have projects that are on superfund sites
922 and brownfield sites. We work with Members of Congress, as all of you are working through in this
923 committee, permitting reform legislation as it relates to modernizing the Clean Air Act and Clean
924 Water Act and ESA and NEPA and more. So our work is robust internally within the agency working
925 with States and local governments, working with all of you, and we enjoy that aspect of the work and
926 we want to continue to pursue more wins.

927 Mr. Latta. I appreciate that, and also, as we look about from permitting, how we can move
928 things along also with AI, and I was just wondering, especially with EPA and what you are all looking

929 at with AI and working with other Federal departments and agencies as we try to get these projects
930 going a lot of time is a little bit faster because you can use AI to get it done.

931 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely. There are projects breaking ground all across the country right
932 now. You can visit data center groundbreakings that are billions of dollars, projects here in West
933 Memphis, Arkansas, or you can go out to Cheyenne, Wyoming, and see a new data center that is
934 getting built or Idaho Falls, Idaho. These projects are all across the country. A lot of them are
935 generating their own power. A lot of them are structuring deals that are providing net benefits to
936 local rate payers, and it is very important, too, that they lean into water reuse. There are so many
937 different program offices within the agency where we can make sure that these projects are done as
938 well for the environment as possible and making sure that we are providing net benefits to rate
939 payers.

940 There is certainly many ways that these projects can go sideways. You have to also
941 understand that not all States are equal. I mentioned the West Memphis, Arkansas, example,
942 which is a \$4 billion Google project that broke ground last summer. They are working with the
943 State of Arkansas and Entergy. They are able to rely on nuclear power. Well, not all States have
944 access to nuclear power. In that case, they are providing a net benefit to the Entergy rate payer of
945 over \$1 billion. So bringing that experience across the board with the way the deals are structured,
946 where they are sited on the permitting front to get the stuff built quicker, working with these local
947 permitting authorities and more, there are many ways that the agency can assist.

948 Mr. Latta. Also, going on advanced recycling technologies, how does EPA view advanced
949 nonmechanical recycling technologies within its regulatory and budget framework?

950 Mr. Zeldin. This is something that we need to be leaning into more as a country. I visited
951 not too long ago the Baytown facility where advanced recycling is being done it appears to be
952 exceptionally in Texas. There is a lot of advanced recycling projects that are getting ramped up in
953 Europe. They are getting ramped up in Asia. And we are not heading in -- we have not for years

954 been heading in the right direction as far as advanced recycling, but now there is an opportunity to
955 turn it around, and there is a way through advanced recycling where you can take plastic instead of
956 sending it to a landfill, you can now break it down to its raw chemical compound, and I think that is a
957 heck of a lot better than sending this plastic to a landfill to instead put it to good use. So much of
958 recycling's future is in advanced recycling. There is an opportunity to ramp up across the entire
959 country, and I think it would be great to follow the lead of what we are seeing in places like Texas
960 and Baytown as a model of what could be expanded.

961 Mr. Latta. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired. I yield back.

962 Mr. Griffith. Thank the gentleman for yielding back, and I now recognize the gentleman
963 from Florida, Mr. Soto, for his 5 minutes of questioning.

964 Mr. Soto. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here.

965 You know, in fast-growing central Florida, we have faced many environmental challenges.
966 We have water supply challenges, potential Florida offshore drilling, and intensifying hurricanes. I
967 was surprised, when you had made the fiscal argument for the budgets, since Trump's billionaire tax
968 breaks have caused the Federal deficit to go to \$2 trillion a year while we are seeing cuts to
969 healthcare and infrastructure.

970 Let's just say for a moment that Congress does fund the drinking water State revolving fund,
971 the clean water State revolving fund, and the Water Research Development Act, and WIFIA, add
972 elevated levels like we saw before in a new infrastructure law. I do want to stress that the Federal
973 Government has been a key partner with Florida, and that money has been spent in a bipartisan way
974 because we have such a fast growth. So, if we were -- let's say we bumped up the State revolving
975 fund and others, would you have the capacity and the ability to be able to fund that to help out with
976 some of this demand?

977 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. And what we experienced last year was the bump up that Congress put
978 in was primarily congressional directed spending. There are also a lot of set-asides. The State

979 revolving fund hasn't truly been a revolving fund. I am not opining on those decisions made by
980 Members of Congress. When you advocate for what you believe to be important infrastructure
981 projects for your district, it should just be noted that, when you turn a loan into a grant, give it to a
982 recipient and you pull out of the SRF, it is not revolving anymore, but whatever Congress chooses to
983 appropriate, it is our job to follow the law and make sure that money is spent.

984 Mr. Soto. Mr. Administrator, I agree with you on that, that the State revolving fund should
985 actually revolve and not just turn into a grant program. That is why we also have to fund WRDA.
986 You know, from being a Member of the House and standing up for Long Island, that Congress has its
987 own role and place. I appreciate you mentioned that.

988 There is a lot of bipartisan opposition in Florida to expanding offshore oil drilling to the gulf.
989 I know normally this is a Department of Interior issue, but it did go before the vote of the Endangered
990 Species Committee, which you serve on. I do want to stress tourism, agriculture are top industries,
991 and there is a potential of whales and manatees and sea turtles potentially at danger because of this
992 decision. So, given the bipartisan opposition, you know, what rationale did you use for a "yes" vote,
993 and what compromise do you think could be made to try to help save these species?

994 Mr. Zeldin. So as you know, as you referenced, there was a recent meeting of the
995 Endangered Species Act, the Endangered Species Committee they refer to as the "God Squad," pretty
996 wild name, but EPA is committed to boosting American energy production and promoting economic
997 growth by reducing regulatory burdens and prioritizing efficient permitting processes while
998 protecting water quality. EPA is aware of ongoing litigation that is related to the order, and the
999 agency is unable to further comment on pending litigation.

1000 Mr. Soto. Okay. Well, as you know, historically there has been oil drilling in the western
1001 part of the Gulf but not on the eastern part. So I hope you keep that in mind. We have some of
1002 our U.S. Senators also oppose it as well as a lot of the delegation, because, as opposed to some of
1003 these other Gulf States, Florida is more of a tourism agriculture State than an energy-producing

1004 State. So I appreciate you keeping an open mind on it, and obviously, you may have to resolve that
1005 in litigation.

1006 We also get hit by a ton of hurricanes in Florida, unfortunately. Not as much -- much more
1007 than New York back in the day, I know, and so, as we look at things like the greenhouse gas
1008 endangerment finding, you know, do you believe that greenhouse gases cause climate change,
1009 intensify hurricanes, and it is just not the EPA's role to be involved in it, or do you not believe in that
1010 causality?

1011 Mr. Zeldin. As it relates to the 2009 endangerment finding, the decision to repeal the 2009
1012 endangerment finding and all the greenhouse gas emission standards of light, medium, and
1013 heavy-duty vehicles that followed was based on a review of section 202 of the Clean Air Act. It was
1014 a legal decision that was made.

1015 Mr. Soto. I understand, but is it your personal belief that greenhouse gases do still cause
1016 some kind of climate change and can affect weather?

1017 Mr. Zeldin. The climate has always been changing. I have acknowledged that as real.
1018 The hoax, of course, to it is when you have Members of Congress who say that the world is about to
1019 end in 12 years, and, you know, here we are 4 years and 9 months away from that date, and I am
1020 pretty confident the world isn't about to end.

1021 Mr. Soto. Well, Mr. Administrator, I hope you keep in mind, especially EPA's role in
1022 resiliency, to help a lot of these coastal communities and central communities like I have that
1023 certainly would appreciate those dollars should be funded. Thanks, and I yield back.

1024 Mr. Griffith. The Gentleman yields back.

1025 I now recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Carter, for his 5 minutes of questions.

1026 Mr. Carter of Georgia. Administrator Zeldin, thank you for being here and appreciate all
1027 your work in trying to bring about common sense and workability in the way that the EPA
1028 approaches the regulatory agenda. That is something that we worked on on this committee for

1029 many years and will continue to work on. It is so very important.

1030 One of the regulations that has been devastating for our Nation and for the growth of our
1031 Nation in manufacturing has been the unworkable PM 2.5 standard, the particulate matter. As you
1032 know, the Biden administration made some significant changes to this and has caused a lot of
1033 businesses not to be able to locate in areas that they would like to locate in, and it is something that
1034 we are trying to address here in this committee. This made it more difficult to create jobs, to build
1035 cutting-edge factories, and to lead the world in development of new products that we know that we
1036 need to be doing that we need to do. Can you provide us with an update on where the agency
1037 stands to revisit and revise this rule?

1038 Mr. Zeldin. The Trump administration is no longer defending the unlawful 2024 Biden PM
1039 2.4 NAAQS rule. This was a necessary decision that we made because the previous administration's
1040 actions were discretionary and didn't align with the statutory obligations of the Clean Air Act. EPA
1041 is remaining hopeful that the D.C. circuit will soon release a decision on that.

1042 Mr. Carter of Georgia. What about the NAAQS review process? Are you all doing anything
1043 to ensure that any new standards allow manufacturing to thrive while protecting the environment?
1044 I mean, you know, that is one of the most aggravating things to me in Congress is to hear the other
1045 side of the aisle say we don't care about the environment. I was born and raised on the Georgia
1046 coast and lived there all my life. I love the environment. Don't tell me I don't love the
1047 environment and want to protect it.

1048 Mr. Zeldin. It has been important for us, one, to handle this backlog of State
1049 implementation and plan request that we inherited, to make sure that we are getting through that.
1050 That is why we created the Office of State Air Partnership as part of last year's reorganization.
1051 What we saw in the last administration as a very large rejection of State implementation plans in
1052 favor of a one-size-fits-all Federal implementation plan. And, furthermore, what we see is States
1053 being penalized for what have been international sources of air pollution. The State of Arizona, the

1054 State of Utah have already benefited from decisions that we made by pulling down the 179B
1055 guidance a year ago, and we are looking at other nonattainment zones where, in areas being
1056 crushed, penalized, for pollution that is caused by international sources, and that is not right.

1057 We have plenty of ideas on NAAQS reform. I know that this is something that you have
1058 plenty of ideas on as well. A number of the proposals that we know that you are advocating for EPA
1059 has included in our list of priorities in modernizing the Clean Air Act, and we look forward to working
1060 with you further on that.

1061 Mr. Carter of Georgia. And one of those that you are alluding to is the Clear Act that I have,
1062 and of course, that will make some statutory reforms to the NAAQS process and to make it more
1063 workable for manufacturers, and one example of that is to take review from 10 years to 5 years, and
1064 the baseline that was lowered by the Biden administration from 12 down to 9 and the impact that
1065 prescribed burns. Right now, in south Georgia, we have got wildfires that we are dealing with, and,
1066 you know, the particulate matter, obviously, is going to be higher during those times, and we need to
1067 take into consideration those things. Would you agree that reforms like this are common sense and
1068 would help EPA to conduct a more efficient NAAQS process?

1069 Mr. Zeldin. Yes, definitely. When you combine the PM 2.5 level with the exceptional
1070 events rulemaking, with the regional haze rulemaking, you have western Governors who have
1071 reached out to me, by the way on both sides of the aisle, concerned that they are unable to do
1072 prescribed burns because they are worried that they are going to put a community into a
1073 nonattainment issue, that they will not be able to meet Federal standards, and they are going to be
1074 penalized because of it, and we do not believe that the best reading of the Clean Air Act, the best
1075 reading of statute put forth by this committee, is calling on the agency to be putting these western
1076 Governors in a situation where they just have to allow their communities to burn down.

1077 Mr. Carter of Georgia. Well, I don't have enough time to go to TOSCA and ask you about
1078 that, but I do appreciate the fact that, in your briefing, that you elaborated in your budget, you

1079 elaborated on how you are going to be ensuring that section 6 evaluations rely on the gold standard
1080 science and reflect real-world risk. So thank you for the detail that you brought in that in your
1081 budget, and I appreciate it.

1082 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

1083 I now recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Auchincloss, for his 5 minutes of
1084 questioning.

1085 Mr. Auchincloss. Good morning, Administrator. Thanks for being here. When you were
1086 here last year, you and I spoke about PFAS contamination. I represent Massachusetts. You
1087 formerly represented New York. It is a problem in both States. Yes?

1088 Mr. Zeldin. Oh, absolutely.

1089 Mr. Auchincloss. I recall that I was pressing you last year on the budget that would cut
1090 funding by \$2.5 billion for the clean water and drinking water State revolving loan funds, about 90
1091 percent, which is used by municipal water supplies to remediate PFAS, and I was pressing you on that
1092 proposed cut, because I don't know how we are going to remediate PFAS with a 90 percent cut to the
1093 principal program that mitigates it, and you responded that we were going to do it through
1094 technology. And so I reached out to your staff, and I do want to compliment your staff. They
1095 came to my office, two of your top administrators, and I had them huddle up with the top
1096 technologist in the PFAS remediation space, and we talked about it for an hour. It was a good
1097 meeting.

1098 And, Administrator, there is no technology to remediate or mitigate PFAS at 10 percent the
1099 cost at the same -- it doesn't exist. Electrochemical oxidation, incineration, like, it is not there. So,
1100 again, you are proposing to cut, again, this cycle, 90 percent. I have now talked to your top staffers.
1101 I have talked to the top technologists. The technology isn't there. So how do we get rid of PFAS in
1102 municipal water supplies -- you agree it is a problem; I agree; it affects your State; it affects my
1103 State -- with 90 percent fewer dollars?

1104 Mr. Zeldin. So it is your position that there is no PFAS destruction technologies that merit
1105 any conversation here?

1106 Mr. Auchincloss. There is tons. What I am saying is at the point of production, yes, for
1107 dredge at landfills, yes. I am talking about municipal water supplies to get to 4.8 points per trillion.
1108 I mean, it was your staff and the top technologist. They were in my office. They were talking
1109 about this. It isn't there. So, if you are a town in New York right now, one of the towns that you
1110 championed when you were a Congressman for PFAS dollars, what are they going to do with 90
1111 percent fewer dollars to get rid of PFAS?

1112 Mr. Zeldin. Well, first off, as I referenced earlier, what we don't do in our proposed budget
1113 is factor in how much you are going to want to raid the SRF for earmarks. That's a decision for you
1114 to decide to make. Now, I am not weighing in on the merits and I am going to opine on what you
1115 choose to advocate for your district on. But, at the same time, the President's FY2027 budget
1116 proposal is not going to propose your earmarks for you. We are also not --

1117 Mr. Auchincloss. So, wait, your plan, your EPA plan for clean water is to hope that Members
1118 of Congress --

1119 Mr. Zeldin. I am not hoping that Members of Congress are going to raid it.

1120 Mr. Auchincloss. Sounds like you are.

1121 Mr. Zeldin. I know that Members of Congress are going to raid it, and they have been doing
1122 it for a long time. There is a reason why the revolving fund is not revolving is because there are
1123 Members who take money out of the revolving fund, and they give it as earmarks to Members of
1124 their district, and by the way, there are a lot of fantastic examples of how Members -- I am sure of
1125 this committee -- have secured these earmarks for their district. The problem is --

1126 Mr. Auchincloss. I have gotten about \$40 million back from my district for clean water.

1127 Mr. Zeldin. It is not a revolving fund anymore, and that is the issues. If you want it to
1128 revolve, you can make sure it is properly funded by getting rid of the congressionally directed

1129 spending. If Congress chooses not to, you are going to continue to have this --

1130 Mr. Auchincloss. Administrator --

1131 Mr. Zeldin. -- this problem.

1132 Mr. Auchincloss. -- you are in charge of the EPA budget. You are not in charge of
1133 earmarks, and hope is not a strategy. I am asking you the technology does not exist. I agree there
1134 is promising technology out there. What is your plan to use technology with 90 percent fewer
1135 dollars to remediate PFAS in places like New York that are struggling with the effects on
1136 endocrinology and cancer from high contents of PFAS in the water supply?

1137 Mr. Zeldin. Listen to the way you are asking the question. You are saying that there are a
1138 whole bunch of technologies, but you are saying that, right now, on this date, because you believe
1139 that there aren't enough technologies today, that there is nothing you can do about some water
1140 system that is going to try to remediate --

1141 Mr. Auchincloss. Name one.

1142 Mr. Zeldin. -- four years from now.

1143 Mr. Auchincloss. Name one that can operate at a municipal water scale. We can talk
1144 about landfills. We can talk about a point of production.

1145 Mr. Zeldin. Where should we start?

1146 Mr. Auchincloss. Name a single technology that can operate at municipal water supply for
1147 90 percent fewer dollars.

1148 Mr. Zeldin. Do you want me to name companies, or do you want me to name technology?

1149 Mr. Auchincloss. A single technology.

1150 Mr. Zeldin. Okay. You have Mekano Chemical degradation, gasification --

1151 Mr. Auchincloss. Not 90 percent cheaper.

1152 Mr. Zeldin. Super critical water oxidation.

1153 Mr. Auchincloss. Not 90 percent cheaper.

1154 Mr. Zeldin. Thermal treatment, landfilling, underground injection.

1155 Mr. Auchincloss. Administrator, all of these things cost more money. They all cost more
1156 money, because they are early incipient technologies. None of them are 90 percent cheaper.
1157 There is no plan from the EPA to protect the State that you championed when you were a Member of
1158 Congress.

1159 Mr. Zeldin. You want me to keep going on technologies and companies? By the way, they
1160 are leaning into research and development on top of it. You have a compliance date that is years
1161 from now on PFOA and PFOS.

1162 Mr. Auchincloss. How are they doing that when you got rid of the Office of Research and
1163 Development?

1164 Mr. Zeldin. Go ahead. And what happened next? We stood up an Office of Applied
1165 Science and Environmental Solutions. We added scientists inside of all sorts of program offices
1166 across the agency to integrate the research.

1167 Mr. Auchincloss. You haven't given a single solution to cities and towns in New York to deal
1168 with PFAS.

1169 Mr. Zeldin. Veolia North America.

1170 Mr. Auchincloss. I yield back, chairman.

1171 Mr. Zeldin. Visits to clear harbors or --

1172 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

1173 Mr. Zeldin. -- or research inside of research triangle park.

1174 Mr. Auchincloss. Are you going to control this gentleman?

1175 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back. I appreciate it.

1176 I now recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Weber, for his 5 minutes of questioning.

1177 Mr. Weber. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1178 Thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here. Would you like to finish your thought process

1179 that you were on?

1180 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. I mean, for example, thank you, Congressman. I had a visit to
1181 Richardson in Alaska. There was a company that had a project for 6,000 tons of contaminated soil
1182 at Richardson. Alaska has an issue that contaminated soil has to get sent to the lower 48, that they
1183 can't fix it on spot. So they give a small project of 6,000 contaminated tons of soil to a local
1184 company to utilize prototype zero to work on their prototype in cleaning up these 6,000 tons of
1185 contaminated soil to get the prototype improved so that it is now economical to be able to scale up
1186 their technology so that they can then get a contract for maybe 600,000 tons of contaminated soil.
1187 Does that mean that at that moment that I was visiting for Richardson that that company with
1188 prototype zero has it all figured out to be able to clean up 600,000 tons of contaminated soil? Not
1189 yet.

1190 But you know what? As they were doing it, they were talking about what their next
1191 prototype is going to look like in order to be able to get it done so Alaska doesn't have to pay to send
1192 the contaminated soil to the lower 48. That is the way things work with technology. You have
1193 research, and you have development. You have companies that are leaning into new innovations.
1194 You have these entities that know that they can destroy PFAS. They say with great confidence and
1195 excitement, and anyone on this committee, anyone in Congress on either side of the aisle who cares
1196 about the topic should be cheering on the reality that these technologies are advancing rather than
1197 us making believe like it doesn't exist.

1198 Mr. Weber. Well, thank you for that. You know, I remember the quote by Helen Keller
1199 once said that there is none so blind as he who will not see. I guess we might add to that there is
1200 none so deaf as those who will not listen. So we appreciate you being here, Mr. Administrator.
1201 You have got a great staff behind you, by the way. You have done a great job.

1202 As you know, my district produces 27 percent of the Nation's gasoline, 35 percent of the
1203 Nation's natural gas, 60 percent of the Nation's jet fuel, and 80 percent of the Nation's military grade

1204 fuel. Because of this, my district is poised to be a strategic element in achieving President Trump's
1205 vision for American energy independence. I know you are part of that. Unfortunately, certain
1206 regulations within the current regulatory climate have limited that development and innovation of
1207 domestic energy production across my district. What plans are in place to eliminate some of those
1208 burdensome permitting barriers to encourage new energy production? Take your time.

1209 Mr. Zeldin. Which industry do you want me to start with?

1210 Mr. Weber. Well, let's start with natural gas.

1211 Mr. Zeldin. So we were just speaking earlier in response to Congressman Pfluger, was asking
1212 about Quad O BC, and we announced on March 12th of last year that we were going to reconsider
1213 the Quad O BC, which we have done through three parts. We just finished the second stage
1214 of Quad O BC. We are going to be putting out now guidance on that as early as this week to help
1215 the regulated community understand the rule and how EPA views the rule as we pursue that third
1216 phase of Quad O BC. That is just one example.

1217 The permitting front, we have been going through a rulemaking on 401 of the Clean Water
1218 Act. We put out new guidance right away last year as it relates to section 401. That is an
1219 opportunity for legislation with any effort by this committee to modernize the Clean Water Act 401,
1220 the use of 404C, waters of the United States. These are all aspects that relate to permitting for
1221 these gas pipelines.

1222 Mr. Weber. Well, that is good to know. And how about on things like jet fuel, petroleum,
1223 and, of course, oil gasoline, those kinds of things?

1224 Mr. Zeldin. Sir, well, actually, a lot of what I just stated applies to --

1225 Mr. Weber. All of that. I gotcha.

1226 Mr. Zeldin. -- industries as well. Now, we are also working with the State of Texas right
1227 now where the State has control over their own State permits, and there are flexibilities that the
1228 State of Texas is pursuing, and by working with EPA to understand interpretation of Federal law and

1229 Federal regulation, it allows the State to put more flexibility in place, and Texas has been fantastic to
1230 work with.

1231 Mr. Weber. Let me paraphrase that. Do you all view the states as allies, not enemies?

1232 Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

1233 Mr. Weber. Very quickly, I am going to say, you mentioned earlier that the world was going
1234 to end by 4 years and 9 months, I think somebody quoted here, but --

1235 Mr. Zeldin. Not my words.

1236 Mr. Weber. I am going to ask the gentlelady if she would give us some more time. Maybe
1237 the world will not end. I yield back.

1238 Mr. Griffith. The gentleman yields back.

1239 I now recognize Mr. Carter of Louisiana for his 5 minutes of questions.

1240 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Administrator, for
1241 being here.

1242 The EPA under the current administration has abdicated its core mission to protect public
1243 health and the environment, dropping enforcement actions, gutting grants, and sidelining science.
1244 That is why, last week, along with Representative Fletcher, I introduced the Zealously Eliminating
1245 Legal Decisions of Ineptitude and Negligence Act, Zeldin Act, to put guardrails around EPA's authority,
1246 to ensure it does its job and does the job the American people expect it to do. If you needed more
1247 proof that guardrails like these are necessary, look no further than EPA's disastrous proposed FY27
1248 budget. It is a roadmap for gutting enforcement, slashing environmental protections, and leaving
1249 communities to fend for themselves.

1250 Administrator Zeldin, I teach a course on government at my alma matter, Xavier University, in
1251 Louisiana. Recently the class learned about cooperative federalism, the system in which Federal
1252 Governments and the States share responsibility for implementing policy. In the EPA's context, this
1253 means the Federal Government sets environmental standards and provides funding to States to

1254 implement and enforce them. How does the President's proposed elimination of State and local air
1255 quality management grants, which States rely on to fund monitoring, enforcement, and community
1256 transparency of air pollution, align with that cooperative federalism model?

1257 Mr. Zeldin. We are in a situation where we inherited an agency where money was being lit
1258 on fire. I was asked to make a pledge when I was going through my confirmation process that we
1259 would find out what the Biden EPA was referring to when they said that they were tossing gold bars
1260 off the Titanic, trying to get billions of dollars out the door before --

1261 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. I have got just 3 minutes. Can I just ask you, yes or no, do you
1262 agree with the President's proposal to eliminate that grant program in its entirety?

1263 Mr. Zeldin. Every single aspect of the President's FY 2027 budget --

1264 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Respectfully, can you do yes or no? You are going to filibuster my
1265 time.

1266 Mr. Zeldin. The answer is yes with regards to every aspect --

1267 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. You do. So you said you were trying to put the fire out on these
1268 grants while putting the fire on communities that depend on these grants to have the audacity to
1269 drink clean water and drink -- and breathe clean air. You think that is the right approach?

1270 Mr. Zeldin. Congress has a deliberative process where you all can decide how you want to
1271 spend this money. The President has a responsibility to come in with --

1272 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. And gut it.

1273 Mr. Zeldin. More fiscal responsibility than --

1274 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Let me -- I reclaim my time. As we have discussed, States partially
1275 rely on Federal grants to implement Federal environmental standards, conduct inspections, ensure
1276 compliance, and enforce them. How do you expect cash-strapped States like Louisiana to make up
1277 for the enforcement gap you are creating while cutting the enforcement budget of your agency by 50
1278 percent?

1279 Mr. Zeldin. So it is your position --

1280 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. No, it is your position. You made the cuts.

1281 Mr. Zeldin. But, no, if I understand your question correctly, you are saying that EPA is
1282 cutting enforcement.

1283 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. You are cutting the dollars -- let me give you a quick lesson in
1284 federalism. Your responsibility to the States are to provide the resources so they can, in fact,
1285 enforce. If you cut the resources, they then cannot enforce. It is very basic math, sir.

1286 Mr. Zeldin. Okay. So now allow me to respond.

1287 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. I would love you to.

1288 Mr. Zeldin. In fiscal year 2025, during the first year of President Trump's term in office from
1289 January 20th of 2025 to January 19th of 2026, we sentenced more criminal defendants; we obtained
1290 far more in criminal fines and restitution. As a matter of fact, \$57.7 million the last year of the
1291 Biden administration; \$561.9 million during the first year of the Trump administration. We
1292 obtained far more in criminal forfeiture. In the last year of the Biden administration --

1293 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. What was the criminal forfeiture from? Who was the criminal
1294 forfeiture from? Who was the criminal forfeiture from? Don't read off your prepared notes.
1295 Answer my question.

1296 Mr. Zeldin. \$1.1 billion --

1297 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Could you tell me from who? Can you tell me? Because right
1298 now you are reading a script and I am asking you a question.

1299 Mr. Zeldin. I am giving you the numbers.

1300 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. No, you are not giving me the answer. Sir, respectfully, could you
1301 just answer my question and abandon your script. You are the Administrator of EPA. You should
1302 know this. If you cut 50 percent of a budget, how can they possibly enforce the way it is needed?
1303 In my home State of Louisiana, people live in communities that need fence line monitoring --

1304 Mr. Zeldin. Another way of wording it is you are welcome. Clean up of contaminated
1305 soil --

1306 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. I reclaim my time, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am reclaiming
1307 my time.

1308 Administrator, I am not going to allow you to -- sir, I am not going to allow you overspeak me
1309 and ignore my questions with prepared scripts.

1310 Mr. Zeldin. They are called numbers.

1311 Mr. Carter of Louisiana. I have very specific questions that require specific answers. You
1312 have been a Member of Congress before. You know better. Shame on you. I yield.

1313 Mr. Griffith. Gentleman yields.

1314 Mr. Zeldin. Can I respond, Chairman, Briefly?

1315 Mr. Griffith. The next person can give you some time, and that would be Dr. Mariannette
1316 Miller-Meeks from Iowa.

1317 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1318 And, Administrator Zeldin, how did you know I was going to do precisely that? And you
1319 were also trying to make a statement, I think, and factual statement about grants being moved to
1320 other parts of the EPA, which would still be administered. So would you care to respond?

1321 Mr. Zeldin. I appreciate that Congresswoman, thank you. So, as I was saying, and I am
1322 very proud of the work of our enforcement and compliance office. As further examples of the good
1323 work during the first year of the Trump administration, cleanup of contaminated soil and water. In
1324 the first year of the Trump administration, it was 59.3 million cubic yards compared to the last year
1325 of the Biden administration it was 1.99 million cubic yards. A billion dollars more in the value of
1326 injunctive relief, hundreds of more civil enforcement case conclusions, more pounds -- a lot more
1327 pounds of illegal pesticides blocked from entering the United States on top of the other examples
1328 that I was given previously.

1329 So, you know, what you have is, you know, you have Members who want to grand stand, and
1330 they want to make a claim about the work of the enforcement and compliance office, and what
1331 happens is, when they actually meet the hard facts, the reality, and they hear the numbers, they
1332 want to cut you off and make sure that you stop reading off the numbers that disprove their false
1333 claim. But, you know, I understand that reaction when you come to a committee like this, and you
1334 actually don't know what you are talking about.

1335 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Most Members read off scripts that are prepared for them, and most
1336 Administrators do, and I remember questioning the last EPA Administrator 2 years in a row with a
1337 power plant 2.0 rule and a tailpipe emission rule, both which reduced the generation of electricity as
1338 they increased demand of electricity, and asked if they knew how many passenger vehicles were on
1339 the road in the United States at the time. Two years in a row, they did not know. And asked them
1340 if they knew how much power it took to power a 100 mile charge for an electric vehicle. They did
1341 not know 2 years in a row. Why would you make rules and put those into place if you don't know
1342 the answer to those simple basic questions? So glad that you have the facts prepared with you.

1343 But let me just thank you very much as an agriculture State for your leadership in finalizing
1344 the 2026 and 2027 RVOs with record-setting biomass diesel volumes. In Iowa, we are seeing the
1345 impact of that leadership in realtime, and it underscores this administration's policy for domestic
1346 American energy production, which we know is part of the diverse mix of liquid fuels and
1347 carbon-based fuels. I would also say that these projects are not only expanding markets for
1348 farmers; they are driving job creation and economic growth across rural communities. Your
1349 commitment to implementing the important -- the import reduction beginning in 2028 is a
1350 meaningful step towards reinforcing domestic American energy production and ensuring the
1351 program works as intended. Does the EPA plan to finalize the 2028 RVOs by the November 1st
1352 statutory deadline?

1353 Mr. Zeldin. We immediately moved to RFS set 3 as soon as we finished RFS set 2. We will

1354 work as fast as we possibly can to be able to get this back on track, as you know, and I believe you
1355 referenced we inherited a blown deadline, and on top of it, we had to also get rid of the
1356 adjudications of 175 of the smaller refinery exemptions. Now that we are done with RSF set 2, we
1357 were able to remove the 175 backlog in the small refinery exemptions. We moved to RFS set 3,
1358 which we will work to complete as fast as we can.

1359 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. I would like to also submit for the record the EPA's actions on PFAS, if I
1360 may.

1361 Mr. Griffith. We will have to take a look at them, but most likely that would be yes.

1362 [The information follows:]

1363

1364 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1365
1366 Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Thank you. And then I will submit questions for the record, but I just
1367 want to get this question out because of some of the comments I have heard. In our home State of
1368 Iowa, we have shown you can modernize air permitting and still deliver cleaner air. Fine particle
1369 pollution is down more than 25 percent since 2000 even as Iowa has added new manufacturing and
1370 energy projects. And Iowa's easy air online system now in its seventh year has processed more
1371 than 5,500 permit applications and reports replacing paper forms with a streamline 24/7 digital
1372 platform that uses build-in data checks and shared emission data to speed reviews. I just want to
1373 know, is this something that you would be able to talk about? You can submit it in writing about
1374 the EPA utilizing to improve permitting and the environmental review process in the integrated
1375 environmental strategies program.

1376 And, with that, I yield.

1377 Mr. Griffith. The gentlelady yields.

1378 I now recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Menendez, for his 5 minutes of
1379 questioning.

1380 Mr. Menendez. Thank you, Chairman.

1381 Administrator Zeldin, I am from New Jersey. You are from Long Island, and Superstorm
1382 Sandy devastated both of our communities. Just yes or no, would you agree that Sandy endangered
1383 communities in New York and New Jersey?

1384 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely.

1385 Mr. Menendez. I would too. And now we know that climate change worsened Sandy's
1386 impact causing an additional \$8 billion of damage from sea level rise and exposing 71,000 more
1387 people to flooding. Despite that disaster, which impacted Long Island and New Jersey, the EPA
1388 under your leadership has repealed the 2009 endangerment finding and all climate pollution
1389 standards for vehicles undermining the foundation of the EPA's ability to mitigate greenhouse gas

1390 pollution and reduce the risk of more frequent and intense super storms inflicted by climate change.
1391 These massive rollbacks are also happening in the midst of an affordability crisis.

1392 By the EPA's own admission, the rollbacks will actually cost American families \$180 billion in
1393 net costs. Yet you still insist on misrepresenting this repeal as a good deal for the American people.
1394 So I want to highlight some of the flawed assertions. Just yes or no, when the EPA analyzed the
1395 impacts of this decision, it relied in part on the assumption that oil will cost about \$47 per barrel. Is
1396 that correct?

1397 Mr. Zeldin. There were many different models that were used.

1398 Mr. Menendez. But \$47 is what I actually have it here as the amount that was the baseline.
1399 Are you familiar with what current oil prices are per barrel?

1400 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. Today?

1401 Mr. Menendez. Yes.

1402 Mr. Zeldin. They are higher than that.

1403 Mr. Menendez. Yeah. Actually, today U.S. gas prices hit the highest level since the
1404 beginning of Trump's war with Iran, and we know that Americans are paying for Trump's war at the
1405 pump with average gas prices around \$4 a gallon and diesel prices around \$5 a gallon. Now with
1406 the repeal of the endangerment finding and vehicle greenhouse gas standards among other clean
1407 vehicle policies, the EPA's own analysis shows that gas prices will increase another 75 cents a gallon
1408 by 2050 adding more than \$3 billion per year in fuel costs for American drivers, but I want to move
1409 on.

1410 We also know that pollution has real impacts in the health of the people that we represent.
1411 Our research shows that climate change will drive \$45 billion in additional health costs by 2050.
1412 Just yes or no, did the EPA fully and comprehensively account for additional healthcare costs,
1413 respiratory illnesses, hospitalizations, premature deaths, associated with these rollbacks?

1414 Mr. Zeldin. The decision was made based on the fact that a -- the best reading of section

1415 202 of the Clean Air Act, EPA does not have the authority for the 2009 endangerment fund.

1416 Mr. Menendez. Right. So it did not, right? So all these impacts to people you
1417 represent --

1418 Mr. Zeldin. Because it was a legal analysis. That is why.

1419 Mr. Menendez. -- and that you used to represent are going to see worse healthcare
1420 outcomes, and this comes on the back of last year when Republicans in the Trump administration cut
1421 a trillion dollars from Medicaid and shifted billions in SNAP administrative costs onto States and
1422 counties. Administrator Zeldin, I know you ran for Governor of New York. So you are familiar with
1423 how State budgets work. State officials have been clear that these decisions are creating major
1424 budget shortfalls, and States are struggling. So, with nearly \$3.5 billion in proposed cuts to water
1425 infrastructure and categorical grants, does that mean that residents of New York should expect
1426 higher water bills or delayed projects? Which one?

1427 Mr. Zeldin. Well, it is interesting how you are posing the question. Why --

1428 Mr. Menendez. Because it is either or, right? Because you are cutting funding to energy,
1429 right?

1430 Mr. Zeldin. Why does New Jersey's energy prices -- do you know how much energy prices
1431 up in New Jersey in the last 5 years?

1432 Mr. Menendez. What would you do if you were Governor, right? Of New York, which you
1433 ran for. Republicans cut a trillion dollars from healthcare, and now States have to backfill. Now
1434 you want to cut \$3.5 billion from water infrastructure. New York I am sure has a ton of projects
1435 that are now going to either be delayed or to do those projects it is going to be on the back of New
1436 Yorkers. So which one is it? Delayed projects or higher costs for residents of New York, the State
1437 you sought to represent?

1438 Mr. Zeldin. Right. So the first part of that, as I have referenced earlier, is that the
1439 EPA -- the President's FY2027 budget does not factor in how much you are going to choose to raid

1440 the budget.

1441 Mr. Menendez. Okay. And that is a point you made before. So I am going to move on.

1442 I am going to move on, because you have said other crazy stuff. You said other crazy stuff today.

1443 Okay? The Biden administration -- that the Biden administration -- I mean, are you going to do

1444 anything at some point? I mean, how many instances --

1445 Mr. Zeldin. You asked a question.

1446 Mr. Menendez. -- do you have to have, man? Because I moved on, and you have done this

1447 numerous times. So, listen, I just want to ask you a question. You have said that the Biden

1448 administration with the IRA had more funds than the EPA knew how to spend, and there was waste,

1449 fraud, and abuse, right? And this was going out to people that were in the Biden orbit. You had

1450 said that earlier. Yet I am curious if you have any issue with the fact that, during the 2024

1451 campaign, the President asked the oil and gas industry for a billion dollars in exchange for supporting

1452 these rollbacks that the EPA is administering now. Is that at all an issue for you? If the President

1453 said to the oil and gas industry "give me a billion dollars and I will do your work," is that not the work

1454 that the EPA is doing today?

1455 Mr. Zeldin. Are you actually asking questions?

1456 Mr. Menendez. I am asking questions. Are you going to give an answer?

1457 Mr. Zeldin. I am going to start an answer, and then you are going to cut me off. Is that

1458 how]this works?

1459 Mr. Menendez. All right. Well, if that is going to be the case, then I have another thing for

1460 you. What do you think about the \$220 million ad campaign that Secretary Noem had with the DHS

1461 that went directly to Trump? I am talking. That went to Trump operative. Did you speak out

1462 against that as a member of the administration?

1463 Mr. Zeldin. How about the fact that the Biden --

1464 Mr. Menendez. Did you speak out -- did you speak out against that as a member of the

1465 administration?

1466 Mr. Zeldin. The former Obama and Biden officials.

1467 Mr. Menendez. I mean, like, the whole day.

1468 Mr. Zeldin. How about the conflicts of interest during the Biden EPA that you don't want
1469 to --

1470 Mr. Menendez. What about in the Trump administration? If you want to talk about the
1471 Biden administration, talk about the Trump administration. You are a part of the administration.

1472 Mr. Zeldin. You asked a question, and you don't want the answer.

1473 Mr. Menendez. Just say that Secretary Noem was wrong. Say that Secretary Noem was
1474 wrong. You are not going to.

1475 Mr. Zeldin. You want to work with the agency --

1476 Mr. Griffith. Mr. Zeldin. Thank you. Mr. Zeldin is here to talk about the EPA, not other
1477 matters. At the same time --

1478 Mr. Menendez. Talk about the Biden administration so we can ask him about things
1479 happening with the Trump administration.

1480 Mr. Griffith. If it is related to the EPA, you certainly can ask, but he also has a right to
1481 answer the question. So let's try to be a little more civil on all parts.

1482 The gentleman yields back.

1483 I now recognize the gentlelady of North Dakota, Ms. Fedorchak.

1484 Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1485 When I first -- the first -- my first day in office, I wrote a letter to President Trump and
1486 Secretary Burgam imploring them to focus on 20 onerous Biden-era regulations that directly attacked
1487 energy producers. These regulations forced Americans to pay a lot more for their energy and left
1488 them much more vulnerable.

1489 Those 20 regulations, of those 20, 17 have been repealed, withdrawn, or vacated, or are

1490 being worked on. Many of those were the EPA, so thank you for your work on that. That includes
1491 the EPA carbon rule, clean power 2.0, the WOTUS rule, the MATS rule, and the waste methane
1492 emissions charge for petroleum and natural gas systems rule. You worked on all of those and
1493 Americans are paying -- are enjoying more reliable energy as a result of that, so thank you, Mr.
1494 Zeldin.

1495 One that remains is going to have an impact in 9 days after this hearing. There is a
1496 compliance deadline on the Biden-era methane rule and that takes effect 9 days from today. North
1497 Dakota operators tell me that this does two things. First, it creates -- will immediately shut in 20- to
1498 40,000 barrels per day of production, and it will help drilling outside of the core Bakken area in my
1499 State.

1500 President Trump has also signed a Defense Production Act determination on April 20th
1501 directing for expanded domestic production, petroleum as essential to national defense. So, as the
1502 EPA Administrator, how do you plan to reconcile these two Federal directives before May 7th?

1503 Mr. Zeldin. We are preparing a guidance document to put out as recently as this week. It
1504 will definitely go out before May 7th. That will address this concern.

1505 Mrs. Fedorchak. Okay. And is that going to potentially extend that May 7th compliance
1506 deadline?

1507 Mr. Zeldin. It will directly address -- fully address the concerns that have been expressed on
1508 this issue.

1509 Mrs. Fedorchak. Okay. So my producers shouldn't be preparing to shut in that
1510 production?

1511 Mr. Zeldin. We are well aware of the issue, and we are extremely confident that the
1512 document that we will be putting out will be assisting the regulated community in interpreting the
1513 law and regulation.

1514 Mrs. Fedorchak. Excellent. All right, thank you, Mr. Zeldin. I would like to turn a bit to

1515 new source review, the new source review issue. As currently structured, new source review
1516 program penalizes facilities for trying to modernize Representative Griffith's improvements act. It
1517 addresses that directly, and I am proud to sponsor that. Can you speak to how streamlining the
1518 new source review process could unlock a broader wave of investment in modernization across the
1519 energy sector and probably at the same time decrease emissions?

1520 RPTR ZAMORA

1521 EDTR ZAMORA

1522 [12:00 p.m.]

1523 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. We have received feedback over the course of the 15 months that we
1524 are in on many different ways that didn't even require new rulemaking. There is some aspects that
1525 do require new rulemaking. We put out new guidance. We, for example, established guidance
1526 that clarified what begin actual construction means. That guidance clarified that companies can
1527 build various parts of the facility as long as the building does not, with regards to the installation of
1528 emissions units or related activities, cross a particular value or threshold. We had allowed
1529 companies at their own risk to construct their facility while they are going through the permitting
1530 process, allowing the companies to be able to operate.

1531 The begin actual construction, the interpretation of various aspects of New Source Review
1532 didn't even require new rulemaking for us to start to be responsive. We have received requests to
1533 go beyond that, which we are considering and planning to take action.

1534 Mrs. Fedorchak. Excellent. Would additional directive from Congress help you address
1535 that issue further?

1536 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely. You know, the Clean Air Act, which is landmark law that was
1537 passed, though half a century ago, includes many different opportunities for modernization, which I
1538 know is a very important priority of many members of this committee. And I have spoken to both
1539 the chairman of your subcommittee who's here, Chairman Palmer -- good to see you -- as well as the
1540 chairman of your full committee, and I know that this is important to you as well.

1541 So as far as ideas, we have a list put forth put together by the White House Council on
1542 Environmental Quality. EPA has ideas even further, beyond the list that was put forth by the
1543 White House Council on Environmental Quality, and we look forward to working with you to
1544 implement any potential statutory changes to help go further.

1545 Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Zeldin. I appreciate your leadership. This is a
1546 commonsense area for improvement.

1547 And I yield back.

1548 Mr. Palmer. [Presiding.] The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Ohio,
1549 Mr. Landsman, for 5 minutes for his questions.

1550 Mr. Landsman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1551 Thank you, Mr. Zeldin, for being here talking about the EPA budget. Just in sort of pulling
1552 back a little bit, over the course of the last 14 months, you all pushed for a massive spending bill,
1553 \$4.5 trillion. Most of it went to tax cuts that overwhelmingly favored the super-wealthy. You
1554 added trillions of dollars to the debt, cut healthcare by nearly \$1 trillion, and now you are going to
1555 cut the EPA by 50 percent.

1556 You are a Member of Congress. Would you have supported all of this as a Member of
1557 Congress?

1558 Mr. Zeldin. The Working Families Tax Cut, I absolutely would have voted yes. And as I am
1559 hearing from Americans across the country, they are really happy to get a lot more back in their tax
1560 return. And I would say that, on behalf of all those Americans who have shared that, while I can
1561 share that feedback with President Trump, I would also say to the Republicans on this committee
1562 who voted for it, thank you for doing your part, understanding the economic concerns of Americans
1563 across this country and doing your part to make sure they have a greater tax return.

1564 Mr. Landsman. You don't spend a lot of time -- Mr. Zeldin, you don't spend a lot of time
1565 with people, right? That really isn't true. No one is really saying thank you for cutting their
1566 healthcare, for adding trillions of dollars in debt.

1567 Mr. Zeldin. That shows how out of touch you are that you believe that Americans are not
1568 happy to get more back in their tax return.

1569 Mr. Landsman. No, you don't talk to folks. There is no -- like, I am just curious --

1570 Mr. Zeldin. I visited all 50 States in my first 9 months. Name one EPA administrator ever --

1571 Mr. Landsman. And people come up to you and they say, thank you so much for spending
1572 trillions of dollars on the super-wealthy and cutting our healthcare. That is what they tell you?

1573 No.

1574 Mr. Zeldin. They don't repeat your sound bites. They say thank you for the greater tax
1575 return.

1576 Mr. Landsman. And they are desperately asking you to shift all this money --

1577 Mr. Zeldin. We appreciate having more money in our wallets.

1578 Mr. Landsman. -- all this money back to --

1579 Mr. Zeldin. We appreciate being able to afford to heat our home and fill up our gas tank and
1580 have our groceries in our refrigerator.

1581 Mr. Landsman. It is so absurd. It is so absurd. Stop.

1582 Mr. Zeldin. That is what they say. So that is what they say. They don't repeat your
1583 talking points.

1584 Mr. Landsman. They don't. They don't say that. They absolutely don't. We are all
1585 Members of Congress.

1586 Mr. Zeldin. They don't say they are grateful for having more back in their tax return?

1587 Mr. Landsman. No. They --

1588 Mr. Zeldin. That is your position? That shows how out of touch you are.

1589 Mr. Landsman. \$1 trillion, and you are shifting money to the States. So this is Russ
1590 Vought, right, he is the head of OMB. He sets the policy for all of you. He came to you and said, I
1591 have got to cut your budget by 50 percent. The EPA, it is there to protect the environment and
1592 Americans, and you just say okay. Is that how it works? Like -- because this is Russ Vought, who
1593 was the architect -- one of the key architects of Project 2025, which was we are going to decimate
1594 the Federal Government, shift the cost burden back to States, and we will free up all this money for

1595 tax cuts for the super-wealthy. And you were like, okay, that is fine?

1596 Mr. Zeldin. No, that is not what happened.

1597 Mr. Landsman. So Russ Vought doesn't make this call?

1598 Mr. Zeldin. The budget that I am here before Congress is a budget that I support, that I take
1599 responsibility for crafting.

1600 Mr. Landsman. Well, I suspect he is glad to hear you say that, yeah.

1601 Mr. Zeldin. And I am sure he is -- I am sure he is happy with the budget that we put forth.

1602 Mr. Landsman. That he crafted.

1603 Mr. Zeldin. But that is not true.

1604 Mr. Landsman. It is true.

1605 Mr. Zeldin. Okay. Well, you are entitled to your own version of reality, I guess. Go
1606 ahead.

1607 Mr. Landsman. Same with you and how happy people are --

1608 Mr. Zeldin. It is your position that our agency, then, put together our budget.

1609 Mr. Landsman. -- with this tax plan where they are just getting demolished in terms of their
1610 healthcare. I am talking about healthcare cuts coupled with EPA cuts. People are obviously
1611 worried about their health. Don't you agree that is a concern with the healthcare cuts, and now
1612 you are going to pollute more of the water and air?

1613 Mr. Zeldin. Actually, the feedback that I get is that people are happy that we have an agency
1614 that applies --

1615 Mr. Landsman. Where is this feedback coming from? I don't -- like --

1616 Mr. Zeldin. So it is America. When you actually get out and you travel the country -- and I
1617 have been to all 50 States across this country. And when I travel I get an opportunity to hear
1618 feedback from Americans who --

1619 Mr. Landsman. You touch ground, and you talk to people --

1620 Mr. Zeldin. -- who apply commonsense. They want us to heed their economic demand.

1621 Mr. Landsman. -- and they are just -- they are running up to you and they are just saying,
1622 thank you so much for cutting the EPA. Thank you so much for --

1623 Mr. Zeldin. They want us to both protect the environment and grow the economy.

1624 Mr. Landsman. -- for cutting our healthcare. We are so glad that trillions of dollars are
1625 going to the richest people in this country.

1626 Mr. Zeldin. They don't want us to get rid of entire sectors of our economy through
1627 regulation. They are happy when they have consumer choice. They are thrilled when they
1628 know --

1629 Mr. Landsman. It is quite alarming.

1630 Mr. Zeldin. -- is going to get removed. They want manufacturers to build the car that they
1631 want rather than --

1632 Mr. Landsman. So last question. Last question. They do, though.

1633 Mr. Zeldin. -- the ones that you demand.

1634 Mr. Landsman. Yeah. The manufacturing has been decimated.

1635 Mr. Zeldin. That is the feedback that I hear from Americans, yeah.

1636 Mr. Landsman. All right. Last question. The data centers. Talk about the analysis you
1637 have done on the pollution, water, air, noise.

1638 Mr. Zeldin. So what I have been doing in my travels, visiting --

1639 Mr. Landsman. You have so many binders. I just want to know, like, is one of them the
1640 analysis work that you have done on data centers?

1641 Mr. Zeldin. Yeah.

1642 Mr. Landsman. Can I see the binder? Which binder does --

1643 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. You want me to --

1644 Mr. Landsman. Yeah. Which one of it does -- like, I have never seen any -- that is so many

1645 binders.

1646 Mr. Zeldin. We do a lot of work. We prepare.

1647 Mr. Landsman. Yeah, I am sure. So which one --

1648 Mr. Zeldin. What do you think, they are all blank?

1649 Mr. Landsman. What is the analysis you have done on the data centers?

1650 Mr. Zeldin. How about I just answer off the top of my head? Data centers, I have been
1651 traveling the entire country. The good thing about data centers, they are being built across this
1652 country, and fortunately, we are talking about massive investments --

1653 Mr. Landsman. For big tech. It has been great for big tech. It has been terrible for our
1654 communities, because no one is protecting them, which is what you are supposed to do.

1655 I yield back.

1656 Mr. Zeldin. Go ask the residents of Arkansas about the \$1.1 billion benefit that they are
1657 getting as Entergy ratepayers because of the Google center in west Memphis.

1658 Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields.

1659 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Evans, for 5 minutes for his
1660 questions.

1661 Mr. Evans. Mr. Zeldin -- well, first, thanks to the chairman and to the ranking member for
1662 this hearing.

1663 And, Administrator Zeldin, thanks so much for taking the time, not only to come talk to us
1664 today, but for the times that you have come out to Colorado where we have had roundtables with
1665 real constituents and real stakeholders in my community. So really appreciate you taking that time.

1666 In those roundtables and other times, we have had conversations about commonsense
1667 updates to the Clean Air Act to ensure that American job creators, the American consumer, the
1668 American economy is not unfairly punished for emissions outside their control. Because I think we
1669 can all agree that one of the other things that has a negative outcome on people's health is poverty.

1670 If they can't get jobs and we can't build or produce or make anything here in the United States, then
1671 people don't have money, they don't have insurance, and their health also suffers from poverty.

1672 So being able to make sure that we can update things like the Clean Air Act to not strangle the
1673 American economy is incredibly important to me. Just last week, my bipartisan bill, the FIRE Act,
1674 which clarifies how emissions from wildfires and controlled burns and other exceptional events are
1675 treated in Federal air quality standards, it passed the House. And we know the data. Multiple
1676 studies have shown that controlled burns significantly reduce overall emissions when compared to
1677 damaging wildfires.

1678 And so while I am appreciative of the work that EPA has done to encourage prescribed burns
1679 through rulemaking, there is a bipartisan consensus that a statutory fix is necessary to allow States to
1680 exempt emissions from prescribed burns and take decisive action to prevent catastrophic wildfires.

1681 So, Administrator Zeldin, kind of a two-part question: Do you believe that the FIRE Act will
1682 increase the use of prescribed burns in the United States, and do you agree that this bill is likely to
1683 lower overall emissions in the United States by preventing catastrophic wildfires?

1684 Mr. Zeldin. Yes. And by pursuing more work as it relates to modernizing the Clean Air Act,
1685 there are many opportunities. And this I know is an important issue for you and your constituents
1686 in Colorado. We have heard from your constituents in Colorado who are very concerned about this
1687 issue. And when you add up the Biden PM2.5 level with the exceptional events rulemaking, with
1688 the regional haze rulemaking, you are in a situation in Colorado where there is what felt like a
1689 disincentive that you will be penalized, punished, by protecting the communities in your district, and
1690 that should never be the case.

1691 Mr. Evans. Well, thank you for that, Administrator. And my motivation for this is because,
1692 as you have talked about, as I have talked about, as my governor, who is on the opposite side of the
1693 aisle, has talked about, 70 percent of the emissions in Colorado don't come from sources under
1694 Colorado's control.

1695 And one of the other consequences of being in a nonattainment area, even though over
1696 two-thirds of the emissions come from outside of our control, one of the other problems is
1697 reformulated gas. This is a mandate under the Clean Air Act. Reformulated gas costs about 40
1698 cents more per gallon -- not my data, my governor's data point -- and it reduces ozone emissions by
1699 0.1 parts per billion in terms of emissions.

1700 So, Administrator, I know that the EPA has the authority to grant a reformulated gas waiver,
1701 and this would keep my constituents from having to pay 40 cents more per gallon for a 0.1
1702 part-per-billion reduction in ground-level ozone. Is that something that you and your team will
1703 commit to providing serious consideration around that RFG waiver for Colorado for summertime
1704 ozone?

1705 Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

1706 Mr. Evans. Thank you.

1707 Last question, Mr. Administrator. Last month, I was honored to welcome Chairman Guthrie,
1708 Chairman Palmer, several other members of the Energy and Commerce Committee to my district to
1709 tour Suncor. They run the last two small refineries in the State of Colorado. Those two refineries
1710 provide a third of the gasoline, a third of the jet fuel, half the diesel fuel in the State of Colorado.
1711 And as small refineries, they currently benefit from the small refinery exception program, which is
1712 administered through the EPA, but they are struggling under the crushing weight of State regulations
1713 in the State of Colorado.

1714 And so, do you believe that refineries operating in States with heavy exceptional State
1715 regulations, like Colorado, should small refineries like that be considered for regulatory relief at the
1716 Federal level to protect essential energy infrastructure from shuttering?

1717 Mr. Zeldin. Well, I can't speak to an individual small refinery exemption request. It is very
1718 important for there to be full transparency, following the law strictly. There is plenty of court cases
1719 that are going on, so honoring the decisions that are set by court and making sure that we are

1720 working closely with those applicants, including applicants that come in from Colorado, to make sure
1721 that their requests are adjudicated fairly, and factoring in certain elements that you just included in
1722 your remarks.

1723 Mr. Evans. Thank you, Administrator.

1724 I yield back.

1725 Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields.

1726 I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

1727 I would just like to point out a couple of things, though, Mr. Administrator, that my colleagues
1728 keep attacking the Working Families Tax Cuts, and that is the bill in which the Republicans put in
1729 \$50 billion for transforming rural healthcare. There are whole areas of the country where women
1730 expecting a child might have to drive an hour, hour and a half just to see an OB-GYN, and every one
1731 of my Democratic colleagues voted against it.

1732 There are 51.4 million senior citizens on Social Security didn't have to pay any income tax on
1733 their Social Security, and every one of my Democratic colleagues voted against that.

1734 There are people working in the tip economy, single moms that saw a tax cut sometimes
1735 approaching \$2,000, some more than that, they could use to buy school supplies for the kids, maybe
1736 repair a car or get better housing, and every one of my Democratic colleagues voted against that.

1737 The middle 60 percent of income earners saw the largest after-tax income increase raise
1738 take-home pay significantly for those, and every one of my colleagues voted against that.

1739 I want to get back to the purpose of the hearing. In your proposed budget, the EPA requests
1740 \$1.7 million to implement the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hard Rock Mines Act of
1741 2024. Can you tell us a little bit more about that program?

1742 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. We have been working hard at implementing this. We plan on getting
1743 out the first few this year. Our goal is to get out the first 15 over the course of this administration,
1744 and we look forward to fulfilling our role and making sure that congressional intent is met and this

1745 program is well led and well executed.

1746 Mr. Palmer. Well, the program would provide permits for remediators so that they wouldn't
1747 face liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act, CERCLA.
1748 So I wanted to touch on a related issue.

1749 EPA's budget justification also discusses efforts to clean up PFAS contamination. At a
1750 hearing in December, the committee discussed concerns with regulating PFAS under CERCLA. As
1751 you know, last year, EPA announced that it would maintain the previous administration's designation
1752 of PFOA and PFAS as hazardous substances under CERCLA. At the hearing, members heard that this
1753 designation has been problematic because, among other things, PFAS are ubiquitous in the
1754 environment and there are no Federal PFAS cleanup standards.

1755 From what you and your staff are hearing, have concerns about liability for PFAS
1756 contamination hindered efforts to remediate and reuse properties potentially contaminated with
1757 PFOA or PFAS and other substances? And if so, what is EPA doing to address this?

1758 Mr. Zeldin. Well, first off, it is important to note that the work under PFAS doesn't cleanly fit
1759 inside of RCRA or CERCLA, and this is something that I know. And from conversations with
1760 Members of Congress, this is something that -- there are Members of Congress in both Chambers
1761 they are working to address.

1762 One of the concerns that are brought up to me most often is that the passive receiver status
1763 of these local water systems, where they would have to pass off costs to their ratepayers, if a
1764 ratepayer has to pay to clean up PFAS contamination from their own water supply, that is against the
1765 principle of polluter pays.

1766 So for Congress to be able to work through this in amending Federal statute to ensure that
1767 ratepayers don't have to pay to clean up their own PFAS contamination, that is an example of a way
1768 that these laws can be amended to fit better as it relates to PFAS cleanup.

1769 Mr. Palmer. Could you talk briefly about the significance of the EPA guidance that was

1770 transmitted to an Arizona semiconductor fabrication plant regarding the definition of
1771 preconstruction activities and how it helps to streamline the New Source Review permitting scheme?

1772 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. In order -- to be able to move forward with the construction work
1773 without having to be delayed for years waiting for a permit when something is inactive and then it is
1774 restarting, not to put them back at the beginning of the process when they are looking to restart a
1775 project that had already been permitted in the past, there are ways through the use of current rules
1776 where we were able to announce last September these changes on the preconstruction permitting
1777 through New Source Review. It is in direct response to what we heard from the regulated
1778 community to ensure that these projects can move forward rather than getting stalled for years.

1779 Mr. Palmer. My time has expired.

1780 The chair now recognizes members who have waived on to the committee. I recognize the
1781 gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Castor, for 5 minutes for her questions.

1782 Ms. Castor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1783 Mr. Administrator, the Trump administration's policies are inflicting higher cost on our
1784 neighbors back home. The way I characterize it, based upon what I am hearing from my neighbors,
1785 is that it is soul-crushing when taken all together, whether it is higher grocery bills, the pain inflicted
1786 by illegal tariffs, higher electric bills, ripping away healthcare or leaving them with much higher
1787 premiums.

1788 And, you know, folks look to -- they look for folks up here to provide solutions. And I am so
1789 sorry to report to them when -- from representing a community that so values clean air and clean
1790 water, that the EPA is making it worse and they are making it more expensive.

1791 When you look at this budget, EPA will make it more difficult for local communities to build
1792 and maintain the clean water infrastructure that they rely on, the drinking water infrastructure they
1793 rely on. It is a community that was hit hard by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, and we had a lot of
1794 critical infrastructure impacted severely by floods and by historic rainfall events.

1795 So when I look at your budget that you seek to slash almost in half, clean water state
1796 revolving loan funds, drinking water revolving loan funds, this is the important partnership between
1797 EPA and our States and our local communities to keep that infrastructure online, to help us
1798 modernize it, and to help us save money, because an important piece of the EPA's authorities are to
1799 work with local communities to help them become more resilient and also to repair after a natural
1800 disaster.

1801 And for a community like mine that is -- I don't think we are unique, there are natural
1802 disasters, climate-fueled disasters that are increasingly expensive, increasingly more frequent. And
1803 for you all to kind of rip the rug out from under local communities, you are just asking our neighbors
1804 back home to pay more again when they are already grappling with much higher costs.

1805 In my State already, we are seeing more industrial facilities, waste sites, and neighborhoods
1806 inundated by floods and threatened by wildfires, and that has a significant pollution impact, because
1807 when you -- you know this well -- that unleashes toxic chemicals into the air, soil, and drinking water.
1808 At the same time, you are proposing massive cuts to the very initiatives and professionals that lead
1809 Federal hazardous materials response and long-term cleanup.

1810 Folks used to be so proud of the EPA. They used to rely on the EPA because they were the
1811 folks who were there after a storm to help them rebuild, and now that work is even harder after
1812 4,000 EPA professionals have been DOGE'd or fired. It is so difficult to watch what the Trump
1813 administration is doing. You are unleashing all of this pollution. You are making the heating of the
1814 climate worse and more expensive. And then when we suffer these costly natural disasters, you are
1815 ripping away the help that we need to recover and repair and to save taxpayers money by building
1816 more resilient infrastructure.

1817 It is kind of like what you are doing with healthcare. You rip healthcare coverage away from
1818 people, and at the same time you are making lives less healthy by allowing more toxic chemicals in
1819 the air, in the water, in the food we eat.

1820 I just urge you to make a course correction. Make a course correction for the sake of our
1821 country, for the sake of our pocketbooks, for the sake of our kids. We want to restore the pride
1822 that we had in our environmental laws and not cut them and side with polluters every single time.

1823 And I also need to correct the record, because it is not true what you said before that you are
1824 a stalwart in upholding our environmental laws. I know you had a little conversation with my
1825 colleague from Louisiana. You are not being straight with people. And I will submit this for the
1826 record, "Trump's EPA issues record low legal actions against polluters, watchdog group finds."

1827 You said that a lot of the -- the \$1.16 billion in civil penalties and criminal fines were your
1828 initiative. That is not true. Most of those cases were started under the Biden administration, and
1829 your record is that you have initiated a record low number against polluters compared to past
1830 administrations.

1831 Mr. Palmer. The gentlelady's time is expired.

1832 Ms. Castor. I will offer this. Ask unanimous consent to submit this for the record --

1833 Mr. Palmer. Without objection, so ordered.

1834 Ms. Castor. -- and urge a course correction, Mr. Administrator. People deserve better.

1835

1836 [The information follows:]

1837

1838 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1839
1840 Mr. Palmer. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Langworthy, for
1841 5 minutes for his questions.

1842 Mr. Langworthy. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1843 Administrator Zeldin, welcome. It is great to have a fellow New Yorker testify before the
1844 committee, because you understand something many in Washington don't in that there is a real
1845 disconnect between what activist politicians in States like New York promise on paper and what
1846 families and businesses are dealing with on the ground.

1847 New York continues to brand itself as a national climate leader under policies like the Climate
1848 Leadership and Community Protection Act, which I know you are very familiar with. But the targets
1849 embedded in that law -- 100 percent zero-emission electricity, aggressive electrification mandates,
1850 and rapid phaseouts of traditional fuel -- are increasingly colliding with reality.

1851 Your agency's efforts over the past year to streamline New Source Review permitting,
1852 bringing greater clarity and predictability to the Clean Air Act implementation and revisiting overly
1853 stringent particulate matter standards, are helping to push back on policies that go beyond what is
1854 achievable. And likewise, steps to ensure Federal rules do not unintentionally reinforce State-level
1855 mandates that limit fuel choice or undermine grid reliability are critical for constituents like mine in
1856 western New York and in the southern tier. And I am very grateful that we have a friend and ally at
1857 the EPA that knows and understands my district.

1858 Administrator Zeldin, how is EPA working to restore balance in protecting air quality and
1859 environmental standards while also making sure that we are not driving jobs and investment in
1860 manufacturing out of States like New York through unworkable regulatory burdens?

1861 Mr. Zeldin. Well, thank you, Congressman. Well, first off, it is important for us to follow
1862 the best reading of the law. That is our requirement. And if Congress chooses to amend the law,
1863 then we will follow whatever Congress chooses to amend that law to.

1864 When the American public voted for President Trump and Republicans in November of 2024,
1865 they were putting forth a Trump mandate of wanting an agency like EPA to apply common sense, to
1866 strike a balance of protecting the environment and growing the economy. They saw an agency that
1867 felt like in order to protect the environment we have to target entire sectors of our economy for
1868 extinction. They want more reliable, durable baseload power. They want to unleash U.S. energy
1869 dominance. They want to bring back and empower the American auto industry while also
1870 protecting the environment.

1871 So what you will see on the other side of the aisle is, you know, you will have members who
1872 will want to ignore the fact that on the 1-year anniversary of President Trump's term in office, we
1873 released a list of our top 500 environmental actions. Not once have any of your colleagues on the
1874 other side of the aisle, who claim to be so concerned about protecting the environment, do they
1875 want to even acknowledge all of the good work of our dedicated career staffers at the Agency.

1876 All those scientists who have been there for 20, 30 years, who have secured so many wins,
1877 everything that we have done with tackling the decades-long Tijuana River sewage crisis, or
1878 responding to the L.A. wildfires, or increasing water quality standards across 30-plus miles of the
1879 Delaware River Basin. How can you be that concerned about protecting the environment when you
1880 want to make believe that this list doesn't exist?

1881 And I appreciate the fact, Congressman, that you have been so strong in advocating that we
1882 strike that balance, that we protect the environment and grow the economy, proving that we can do
1883 both.

1884 Mr. Langworthy. Well, thank you very much. You are doing a stellar job at the Agency.

1885 Going to -- you know, my district has Cummin Engine, a very large driver of manufacturing.
1886 What is EPA doing to provide regulatory certainty for heavy duty truck and engine manufacturers so
1887 that they can continue to invest and hire and operate in States like New York without being driven
1888 out by conflicting and unworkable requirements?

1889 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. Well, one is that we believe that manufacturers should be making what
1890 customers want, what customers demand, as opposed to what politicians and bureaucrats demand.
1891 We have seen these mandates coming out of the Biden administration, coming out of States like
1892 California, trying to bend the vehicle market to ideological whims, to try to achieve climate goals, and
1893 as a result, people are paying more for vehicles. They have a situation where manufacturers are
1894 building vehicles that just sit on lots and they aren't wanted.

1895 And I commend Congress for removing the electric vehicle mandates with the three
1896 Congressional Review Act actions that were taken last year. I commend this body that all the
1897 Republicans on this committee who have engaged our agency to make sure that we are promoting
1898 consumer choice, that we are understanding the need to apply common sense, that we protect the
1899 environment and grow the economy, that we achieve both on behalf of your constituents, and I am
1900 grateful for your advocacy.

1901 Mr. Langworthy. Thank you. I wish I had more time.

1902 And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

1903 Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields.

1904 The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Texas, Mrs. Fletcher, for 5 minutes for her
1905 questions.

1906 Mrs. Fletcher. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member
1907 Tonko, for allowing me to waive onto this hearing to follow up with Administrator Zeldin on some
1908 critical issues very important to the people that I represent in Houston.

1909 And, Administrator Zeldin, when you appeared before this committee last year, we spoke
1910 about the vital role that EPA's Region 6 lab in Houston plays in keeping people in our region safe, and
1911 you committed to working with me to maintain a presence from this lab in Houston. So I just want
1912 to revisit that conversation and follow up on it.

1913 It is a question that I have asked every EPA administrator that has come before me in any

1914 committee I have served on in the time I have been in Congress, because in 2019 EPA announced
1915 that it would close the Region 6 Houston lab and relocate its employees to a location more than 400
1916 miles away in Ada, Oklahoma.

1917 And I know, Administrator, at the time we talked about this last year, there was a lot coming
1918 at you, so I am hoping we can follow up and talk a little bit more about the process and where you
1919 are and where the EPA is in that process.

1920 This announcement was made pursuant to the 2016 law, the Federal Assets Sale Transfer Act,
1921 to reduce Federal property holdings. And I also submitted some questions for the record after that,
1922 and, you know, unfortunately, I am sorry to say, I don't think that I was able to get the information I
1923 need, so I am hoping that you can give me and the people I represent a little more clarity today, and,
1924 you know, just really show us that EPA is going to continue to work with us on this in terms of
1925 keeping our community healthy.

1926 As I mentioned, EPA announced it was going to close this lab, and there has been a huge
1927 outcry in Houston that we cannot have this happen. And the lab really provides rapid response air
1928 and water quality monitoring and testing. And I am sure you know, Administrator, in our region we
1929 are prone to hurricanes. We have a lot of concerns about what is happening during hurricane
1930 season when flooding and storm damage can compromise systems that are meant to protect
1931 Houstonians, especially from industrial emissions. And it is worth noting that the lab is an active
1932 partner in disasters of all kinds.

1933 Of course, we are very concerned about emissions along the Port of Houston. It is a 52-mile
1934 waterway that has 200 public and private facilities and is the Nation's largest port for waterborne
1935 tonnage. And unfortunately, in this industrial area, we have had a number of incidents involving
1936 petrochemical facilities where rapid air quality testing, water quality testing is absolutely of the
1937 essence.

1938 And so we are deeply concerned that not only will we lose the ability to have that rapid

1939 testing, flying samples to Oklahoma to do the testing to get information back, but also, EPA is going
1940 to lose that expertise, because, candidly, you are not going to see all of the people who work in that
1941 lab able to move their families to Oklahoma. And so the move has been delayed over the years. I
1942 would encourage you to reconsider it all together.

1943 But I know when we talked last year, we talked about the idea that EPA is committed to
1944 keeping a presence in Region 6, in the lab in Houston, even if it closes the existing lab. Now, the
1945 existing lab is still working, and I would like to keep the lab open indefinitely. But can you confirm
1946 for me today that EPA will fulfill its commitment on keeping a presence from Region 6 lab in Houston
1947 for the reasons I just discussed and more?

1948 Mr. Zeldin. Well, as you pointed out, 2009 notification that EPA sent to congressional
1949 appropriators to relocate Houston to Ada, it was reaffirmed in 2022. Employee relocation
1950 associated with the consolidation is targeted to begin in 2027. I can commit that EPA will maintain
1951 employees in Houston to support emergency response, criminal investigations, and other operational
1952 needs.

1953 The completion of the Ada project is contingent on the Agency receiving fiscal year 2027
1954 building and facilities appropriations at historically comparable or higher levels. EPA will complete
1955 the environmental due diligence process for the Houston laboratory as part of the transition and
1956 lease exit. And as you pointed out, this is something that started several years ago before we got
1957 here. And in moving forward, I can commit, though, that EPA will maintain a presence in Houston
1958 as it relates to the functions that I just stated.

1959 Mrs. Fletcher. Thanks, Administrator Zeldin. I am going to run out of time -- you know
1960 how this works -- but I would like to get your commitment that EPA will retain a robust presence in
1961 Houston, and we will follow up for the record with questions about the number of employees that
1962 will remain and the positions that will remain and the timeline. I appreciate your response today.

1963 And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

1964 Mr. Palmer. The gentlelady yields.

1965 The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. James, for 5 minutes for his
1966 questions.

1967 Mr. James. Thank you, Chairman Palmer and Ranking Member Tonko, for holding this
1968 important hearing today.

1969 Administrator Zeldin, welcome, and thank you for being here. Welcome back. It is an
1970 honor to speak with you at a time when the conversation around energy manufacturing and
1971 environmental stewardship is so important, not just for Michigan, another Great Lake State -- the
1972 Great Lake State, in my opinion -- but for the entire country.

1973 Let me start with something we all agree on: Clean air and clean water are nonnegotiable.
1974 They are fundamental to the health, safety, and prosperity of the American people. There is no
1975 tradeoff there, and there should never be.

1976 We also know something that doesn't get said as often: The United States, and especially
1977 States like Michigan, manufacturers, and producers of energy, we make it cleaner and safer and
1978 more responsible than anyone else in the world. That is a competitive advantage. We should be
1979 leaning into that competitive advantage, not regulating our way out of existence.

1980 Over the past several years, we have seen a growing trend from the previous administration,
1981 from the Whitmer administration in Lansing, toward theoretical one-size-fits-all regulations that look
1982 good on paper but they don't work in the real world. These mandates too often strangle
1983 businesses, delay projects indefinitely, and make it nearly impossible to build, invest, and innovate
1984 right here at home.

1985 At the time when we are competing with China, who is not playing by the same
1986 environmental economic rules, the last thing we should be doing is tying our own hands. If we push
1987 production overseas, we will not reduce global emissions. We just outsource them, along with
1988 American jobs and leadership.

1989 That is why I want to commend your administration, sir, for taking a different approach, one
1990 that recognizes the need for realistic regulations, regulations that protect our air, protect our
1991 drinking water; yes, also, respect the ability of American workers, manufacturers, and builders to
1992 actually get things done and keep prices low.

1993 We need a framework that prioritizes outcomes over ideology, one that reduces frivolous
1994 litigation, cuts through unworkable mandates, and restores a sense of balance so that we can build
1995 again in this country. At the end of the day, we can protect our environment and grow our
1996 economy; in fact, we have to do both. And it is best when we trust Americans, when we trust
1997 American innovation, when we trust American workers and we use common sense.

1998 Administrator Zeldin, thank you again for being here and for your leadership. We look
1999 forward to working together to ensure that America remains both the cleanest and the strongest
2000 economy in the world.

2001 So my first question. Section 111 in reducing barriers to reliable and affordable energy. In
2002 my home State of Michigan, high energy costs threaten families and industries alike. You pledged
2003 to reconsider regulations that limit the production of reliable and affordable energy.

2004 For example, I have heard from producers in Michigan that it can be more cost effective to
2005 flare excess gas than to build a new pipeline. Do you believe that overly burdensome regulations
2006 are driving up the price of electricity, sir?

2007 Mr. Zeldin. Absolutely.

2008 Mr. James. If so, how is your agency continuing to prioritize action on those regulations?

2009 Mr. Zeldin. We just completed phase two of a three-phase process of reconsideration of
2010 Quad Ob/c. We are also in the process this week of finalizing guidance to release publicly to help
2011 the regulated community to interpret both Federal law and Federal regulation as it relates to Quad
2012 Ob/c. There is an upcoming May 7 deadline, that if we don't put that guidance out, some worry
2013 that they might not be interpreting the regulation correctly. But that is not the end of the work.

2014 The reconsideration of Quad Ob/c was partially completed with the second phase. That work of
2015 reconsideration of Quad Ob/c will be completed during the third phase.

2016 Mr. James. Thank you.

2017 Last question. One of your goals for fiscal year 2027 is to bring back and protect American
2018 auto jobs. Can you describe a little bit how that \$103.9 million requested for this purpose will
2019 revitalize the American automotive industry?

2020 Mr. Zeldin. Well, it is really a combination of a lot of actions that we are taking inside of
2021 EPA, as well as other agencies in the Federal Government. Working with Congress, Congress passed
2022 three Congressional Review Acts to revoke Biden EPA waivers in the State of California. And you
2023 were one of the key leaders here in this chamber to make sure that this was done to protect the
2024 American auto industry, to revoke the California electric vehicle mandate, passed, signed into law.

2025 You saw an announcement with the Secretary of Transportation to reconsider CAFE
2026 standards. Just a couple of months ago, EPA announced a rescission of the 2009 endangerment
2027 finding -- all the greenhouse gas emission standards on light, medium, and heavy duty vehicles, as
2028 well as all off-cycle credits, including that almost universally despised start/stop feature. We are
2029 going through our NOx 2027 rule, whether it was the right to repair guidance or its rolling back DEF
2030 requirements.

2031 There is so much that we have been doing under President Trump's leadership to make sure
2032 that we are delivering on that Trump mandate that the American public voted for, and in so many
2033 respects, especially as it relates to the Congressional Review Act, we wouldn't be able to do it
2034 without your leadership.

2035 Mr. Palmer. The gentleman's time has expired.

2036 The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from New York, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, for 5 minutes for
2037 her questions.

2038 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2039 And good afternoon, Secretary Zeldin. This week is a big week in the Supreme Court and
2040 Congress regarding considerations of glyphosate. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in the
2041 herbicide Roundup, which is produced by Bayer, the multibillion-dollar foreign chemical company
2042 that also owns Monsanto. It is used on hundreds of millions of acres of farmland in the U.S.,
2043 including corn, wheat, soybeans, and even almonds. And glyphosate is even used to dry out crops
2044 before they are harvested, correct, Administrator Zeldin?

2045 Mr. Zeldin. Correct.

2046 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you.

2047 Glyphosate is also internationally recognized as likely carcinogenic to humans, with particular
2048 links to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In fact, tens of thousands of lawsuits in the United States, many
2049 issued by farmers with high exposure, have been filed against Bayer for failing to warn them about
2050 the cancer risk of exposure.

2051 Now, interestingly, Administrator Zeldin, on February 18 of this year, President Trump
2052 released an executive order to increase the production of glyphosate in the United States, correct?

2053 Mr. Zeldin. Yes.

2054 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. And not only did that executive order call to increase the production of
2055 glyphosate, it also called for legal immunity for Bayer from the tens of thousands of Americans who
2056 are seeking justice in court for their toxic exposure.

2057 Now, Secretary Kennedy was here a couple of weeks ago, and when he was asked about
2058 glyphosate and the rollbacks against protections against toxic chemicals, he said that, we would,
2059 quote, "have to ask Lee Zeldin about that."

2060 So you are here before us today. Administrator Zeldin, have you ever participated in a
2061 meeting with Bayer where you discuss the legal or litigation issues that the company was facing?

2062 Mr. Zeldin. No, I never did.

2063 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Okay. I have some --

2064 Mr. Zeldin. My meeting with them was very brief, and that topic did not come up.

2065 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. All right. Are you aware of any outreach that they would have in your
2066 agency about this?

2067 Mr. Zeldin. I could say that I directly had a brief meeting.

2068 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Okay.

2069 Mr. Zeldin. But it was a brief meet-and-greet, and that topic did not come up.

2070 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you.

2071 Mr. Chair, I would like to submit EPA visitor logs from July 7, 2025, to the committee.

2072 Mr. Palmer. Without objection, so ordered.

2073 [The information follows:]

2074

2075 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

2076

2077 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. And you are certain they didn't bring up anything regarding your work?

2078 Mr. Zeldin. I am telling you 100 percent, absolutely. Maybe there was some brainstorming
2079 that was done beforehand of potential topics --

2080 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Are you aware of any --

2081 Mr. Zeldin. -- but that topic was not brought up.

2082 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Are you aware of anything brought up to any members of your staff or
2083 your team, your senior team?

2084 Mr. Zeldin. I am not aware of that, no.

2085 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Okay. I would like to submit to the record some internal emails from
2086 the EPA that I have acquired via a Freedom of Information Act submission.

2087 Mr. Palmer. Without objection, so ordered.

2088 [The information follows:]

2089

2090 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

2091

2092 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. We have documentation here, emails from your senior advisor for
2093 Agricultural and Rural Affairs, saying that you were meeting with the Bayer CEO last year. He said in
2094 these emails that they will be bringing up some legal/judicial issues.

2095 More specifically, in this internal email in your EPA, it says that Bayer was specifically seeking
2096 and discussing Supreme Court action; they will want an update on EPA's regulatory review; and that,
2097 interestingly, Bayer will provide a small thanks for updating the glyphosate web page from the EPA
2098 and work on MAHA.

2099 Do you have any idea what they might have been referring to in this email?

2100 Mr. Zeldin. Well, first off, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, it is possible that the team was
2101 doing brainstorming of potential topics.

2102 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Okay.

2103 Mr. Zeldin. As somebody who actually attended the meeting --

2104 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you. I am sorry, I just have 40 seconds. I am not trying to be
2105 rude.

2106 This glyphosate update that they are referring to seems to be correlated to the EPA agency
2107 withdrawing its support for California's cancer warning on glyphosate. Now, this is important,
2108 because 5 days after the EPO this year, Bayer filed their opening brief to the Supreme Court, citing
2109 Trump's executive order and hinging their case on the EPA's warnings or lack thereof of glyphosate.

2110 So we have internal emails from your agency saying that Bayer wanted to thank you and your
2111 agency for removing support for California's warning, because their case before the Supreme Court
2112 right now hinges on you not warning the American people and withdrawing your support on
2113 glyphosate. Do you understand the conflict of interest that is before the American people right
2114 now, Mr. Secretary?

2115 Mr. Zeldin. I understand.

2116 Mr. Palmer. The gentlelady's time has expired.

2117 Mr. Zeldin. Do you mind if I respond to her?

2118 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you.

2119 Mr. Palmer. The gentleman may respond.

2120 Mr. Zeldin. Okay. So right now, EPA is completing an assessment due in 2026, and I
2121 understand this is a very important topic for many people in this country. This review that the EPA
2122 is being conducted, my guidance to dedicated career staffers -- and we have people that have been
2123 there for 20, 30 years -- is that I don't want to --

2124 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. But it is taking a while, Secretary Zeldin, because --

2125 Mr. Zeldin. Just let me answer.

2126 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. -- the Supreme Court is going to be making decisions this week, and
2127 Congress is voting this week on legal immunity.

2128 Mr. Zeldin. Okay. But you made your point. Now, I am asking -- do you mind if I -- this is
2129 an important part of this, and I am sure you also care --

2130 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. And I think the timing is also very important, Secretary Zeldin.

2131 Mr. Palmer. The gentlelady's time has expired.

2132 Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you.

2133 Mr. Zeldin. Should I complete my answer or no?

2134 Mr. Palmer. Mr. Administrator, you can respond in writing.

2135 Mr. Zeldin. Sure. Okay.

2136 Mr. Palmer. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Mullin, for
2137 5 minutes for his questions.

2138 Mr. Mullin. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing to waive on.

2139 Thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for being here today.

2140 So today our water infrastructure is in crisis. According to your agency's estimates, drinking

2141 water systems across the country will need \$625 billion and clean water systems will need
2142 \$630 billion to meet our water needs. But instead of increasing investment, your budget proposes
2143 a 90 percent cut to the Drinking and Clean Water State Revolving Funds. I fear this is a \$1 trillion
2144 liability being shifted directly onto American households.

2145 So, Mr. Administrator, what impacts can everyday Americans expect to see on their monthly
2146 water bill if these proposed cuts become a reality?

2147 Mr. Zeldin. As I stated earlier, the President's fiscal year 2027 budget does not include the
2148 amount that Congress is going to raid the revolving fund account. Now, I am not opining on the
2149 merits of any earmarks of any congressionally directed spending, and I will say that there are many of
2150 these the EPA administers that are fantastic. The problem is, when you take money out of a
2151 revolving fund and you give it out as a grant or you take other money out as part of a set-aside, it is
2152 no longer a revolving fund and the account continues to get depleted.

2153 So a great conversation that could be had right now is, how do we ensure that the revolving
2154 fund is revolving, that you can fulfill the original congressional intent, but the EPA in the President's
2155 fiscal year 2027 budget is not asking for your earmarks?

2156 Mr. Mullin. Appreciate that. Let me just say, we need investments in this area and not
2157 cuts to these programs. We can continue that conversation.

2158 But I would like to also highlight a issue in my district. I know your territory is sprawling, but
2159 this is an important issue in California 15. At the Mussel Rock Landfill in Daly City, this is a landfill on
2160 the Pacific Ocean that closed decades ago but is now facing severe erosion issues due to stronger
2161 storms. We know there are many other sites across the country where legacy contamination is also
2162 a risk, yet the proposed budget slashes climate resilience and adaptation grants, infrastructure
2163 grants, and other programs that could help address this problem, not just in my district but across
2164 the country.

2165 So, Mr. Administrator, how does the EPA plan to address these legacy contamination sites

2166 and the massive risks they pose to the surrounding communities?

2167 Mr. Zeldin. Well, part of our list of the 500 environmental actions that we took over the
2168 course of the first year of President Trump's term includes a lot of work on Superfund sites and
2169 brownfield sites. We added new sites to the list. We were able to successfully delete other sites
2170 from the list, because the Superfund work was completed. And the operation, the staffers doing
2171 this work with brownfield sites, Superfund sites and more, are continuing to be able to do more with
2172 less, and -- but we do ask for robust funding as it relates to Superfund and brownfield.

2173 Mr. Mullin. And, sir, could I just get your commitment to continue to have this conversation
2174 and work on these issues?

2175 Mr. Zeldin. 100 percent.

2176 Mr. Mullin. Yeah. And your fiscal year 2027 budget proposes to eliminate the San
2177 Francisco Bay Program, which supports projects to restore ecosystems and improve resilience in my
2178 district, while other regional geographic programs would continue to receive Federal support. So
2179 let me just say, I am very concerned about San Francisco Bay Program, the bay habitat restoration
2180 program, in my estimation, being singled out, and I certainly hope politics isn't at play there, that that
2181 is somehow, in your mind at least, a substantive decision. But very concerned about that. I want
2182 to get that on the record.

2183 And with that, I yield back.

2184 Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields.

2185 I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record the documents included on the staff hearing
2186 document list.

2187 Without objection, so ordered.

2188 I would like to thank Administrator Zeldin again for being here today. Members may have
2189 additional written questions for you. I will remind members that they have 10 business days to
2190 submit questions for the record and I ask the administrator to respond to the questions promptly.

2191 Members should submit their questions by the close of business on Tuesday, May 12.

2192 Without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

2193

2194 [The information follows:]

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2196 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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