



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON **SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Environment Subcommittee Hearing:

“Advancing Environmental Protection Through Science and Technology”

June 4, 2026

Good morning, Chairman Franklin, Ranking Member Amo, and Dr. Gwinn. What a fascinating topic we have before us today: “Advancing Environmental Protection Through Science and Technology.” I would argue this EPA has done precisely the opposite. In fact, Science Committee Democrats have been arguing that for over a year.

In March 2025, the *New York Times* broke the news that EPA’s reorganization plan proposed to eliminate the Office of Research and Development and purge up to 75% of its staff. Less than a year later, in January 2026, this Committee held a hearing on EPA chemical research, where some of my Republican colleagues echoed the EPA’s talking point that ORD was not being dismantled, despite irrefutable evidence to the contrary. Just thirty-six days after that valiant defense of the agency, EPA formally notified the Committee that ORD had been officially shuttered. I think there is a valuable lesson for all of us here about the risks of trusting anything the Trump Administration says. I request unanimous consent to enter that February 13th notification letter into the record.

As Ranking Member Amo said, I have no intention of demonizing Dr. Gwinn for EPA’s decisions. On the contrary, I want to be clear – EPA trotting out a career scientist to appear today, as if scientific expertise holds any importance to this Administration, is a joke. Closing the independent Office of Research and Development and placing EPA’s research office directly under the Administrator himself is the fulfillment of industry’s loftiest wish list. Now EPA scientists are under the obligation to get their work approved by political leadership, to ensure there are “no surprises.” There could be no clearer way to send the message that EPA’s mandate to protect human health and the environment has been replaced by a different mandate: to close its eyes, look away, and provide comfort to big polluters.

ORD was not a regulatory office. However, EPA has a legal responsibility to use the best available science. So, what better way to gut regulations than to force the agency’s eyes closed? We’ve already seen how EPA operates now that its blinders have been carefully crafted and installed. I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a *New York Times* article titled, “Trump’s E.P.A. Has Put a Value on Human Life: Zero Dollars.” This is a policy change that literally devalues human life, so the agency can claim that health-protective regulations on pollution do not actually save enough money to bother with implementation.

Trump's EPA is also repealing the landmark Endangerment Finding, which rips away the foundation of life-saving greenhouse gas regulations. This is the purest form of scientific denial. We are living in a bizarro version of reality, where this Administration can declare that well-established science – the fact that greenhouse gases pose serious risks to human health – has been repealed. Polluters rejoice, and vulnerable populations suffer.

The Clean Air Act still exists, but President Trump and Administrator Zeldin are doing everything they can to pretend it doesn't. The EPA is offering industry a free pass to violate the Clean Air Act, and polluters are signing up in droves. According to a recent *ProPublica* article, which I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record, approvals to pollute have rolled in for petroleum refineries, bitcoin miners, and medical sterilizer companies. And reportedly, EPA scientists were not consulted in the approval of these requests. So, again, I call into question this hearing's title – how, exactly, is EPA advancing environmental protection through science and technology?

I look forward to this opportunity to ask Dr. Gwinn about what has transpired at EPA since March 2025, when we first knew that ORD was doomed. I am under no illusion that her expertise has been duly considered by this anti-science, pro-polluter Administration. But this is an important opportunity to conduct vital oversight of EPA as it cannibalizes the very functions over which this Committee has jurisdiction.

I yield back.