



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Hearing:
Science and Technology at the EPA

September 27, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Lucas. I'm so glad to be sitting next to you again today – on behalf of all Members and staff on this side of the aisle, we're wishing you continued success on your recovery. I also want to thank Administrator Regan for joining us so we can discuss the EPA's research and development work.

The EPA has a unique and important mission – to put human and environmental health at the center of everything they do. The Office of Research and Development serves a crucial role in this mission. This office drives the science that the regulatory offices depend on to ensure they're setting health-protective standards. It puts out state-of-the-art assessments that state, local, and tribal governments rely on to protect their residents. EPA laboratories across the country monitor air for pollutants, soil for contaminants like PFAS, and water to track viruses including COVID-19. All Americans depend on EPA to deliver on its clear mandate to prioritize health and safety above all else.

Under Administrator Regan's leadership, this EPA has made incredible efforts to bring this mission to environmental justice communities. These communities have been on the front lines of devastating pollution by industry and by the federal government itself. Some bear an incredibly high risk of cancer due to unfettered dumping by chemical companies.

Others worry that environmental contaminants and anemic government response will have an irreversible impact on their children's development. They have been neglected in programs that have prioritized clean water, energy efficiency, and climate resilience in other, better resourced areas. EPA's new Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights is an important step in addressing these needs and connecting these communities with much-needed information and resources.

I am proud of the work we did last Congress to fund this effort. The Inflation Reduction Act provided \$41 billion to the agency to advance environmental justice. And the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included \$50 billion to improve water infrastructure and quality. I look forward to hearing how Congress can continue to support this important work.

I would be remiss not to note the larger context of this meeting today. We are hurtling towards a government shutdown. Bitter infighting and political gamesmanship are taking priority over the

functioning of our government – and by extension, the health and wellbeing of all Americans. Administrator Regan is a perfect witness to put this in perspective. This year, we've seen at least 23 weather- and climate-related disasters with losses exceeding one billion dollars. In the thick of hurricane season, how will EPA determine that it's safe to drink the water following the next devastating storm? EPA provides rapid response to manmade disasters, as well. What if there is another catastrophic train derailment, like we saw earlier this year in Ohio? EPA can't effectively respond and inform evacuation orders if their hands are tied by this manufactured crisis. I hope Administrator Regan's testimony today can inform the larger body of just one of many serious consequences of the games being played on the House floor.

Thank you again to Chairman Lucas for holding this hearing and to Administrator Regan for appearing. I yield back.