

ACTION SHEET

September 20, 2025



“A strong, thoughtful bill that can pass the Senate on a bipartisan basis.”

—Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Interior-Environment Subcommittee Chair on the appropriations bill (S. 2431) approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee

Summary:

With every debate in Congress over whether and how to spend taxpayer dollars on environmental concerns, our strategy is two-fold: (1) peel away Republican support for Trump’s fossil fuel agenda and (2) encourage Democrats to be active champions for climate justice. We are currently tracking environment-related appropriations bills. Our current action is to seek and fulfill opportunities to engage the public in writing postcards and letters to our members of Congress about our core funding concerns for Fiscal Year 2026.

Laser Talk:

There are stark moral differences in our federal government over funding that would further a clean and just energy system. For example, the Trump administration’s budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2026 includes a 55% cut in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency. With a party-line vote of 33 to 28, the House Appropriations Committee put forward a bill that would cut funding by 23%. By contrast, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed a bipartisan bill with a vote of 26 to 2 that would cut EPA funding by the more moderate amount of 5%. A similar dynamic could occur over funding for the Department of Energy’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. The House has passed a bill that would slash this office’s funding nearly in half, while the Senate has yet to act due to conflicts among Republican appropriations leaders over funding levels. Ask your U.S. Representative and Senators to lead or join a Dear Colleague letter to their chamber’s leadership that declares strong support for the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill as it potentially heads to a Conference Committee that will reconcile the differences between the House and the Senate.

Background:

The appropriations bills follow on the heels of a reconciliation bill that adhered to the Trump administration’s misguided goals for energy policy. During the fight against the reconciliation bill, early signs of support for clean energy credits among Republican members of the House and Senate translated into a more delayed phase out of the clean energy tax credits than was first proposed but did not ultimately prevent the bill’s passage. Republican leadership openly threatened to primary any Republican member who voted against the bill. Instead of a vote on values, the reconciliation bill became a vote on loyalty under pressure and duress. Jonathan Martin in *Politico* observed that the reconciliation bill passed for one main reason: “for Republican lawmakers, this was an up-or-down vote on President Donald Trump.”

Five Republicans in Congress (3 in the Senate and 2 in the House) resisted the pull to loyalty, including Sen. Collins, Sen. Tillis, and Rep. Fitzpatrick. Our goal is to increase Republican dissent until the current administration’s calamitous agenda can be effectively blocked in Congress, while fostering a context of greater urgency on climate justice with outspoken leadership among Democrats. This can only happen through persistent grassroots advocacy.

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Contrasting the House and Senate on Funding

House and Senate bills differ in terms of both numbers and approach. In terms of funding numbers for the EPA, the House bill would reduce the EPA's Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds by \$662 million, while the Senate bill would keep funding at the same level. Moreover, the House bill would eliminate funding for environmental justice programs and grants, while the Senate bill would reduce it from \$100 million to \$40 million.

The Senate is also taking a drastically different approach to its relationship with the EPA. An article by *Politico* notes that "the Senate's bipartisan approach is a major challenge to the White House and is upsetting some conservatives." Moreover, Senate appropriators are particularly displeased with EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin. A report released by the Appropriations Committee states, "The Committee is frustrated with how EPA has decided to not have a working relationship with the Committee and to disregard Congressional directives related to staffing and funding." The Appropriations Committee reduced funding for Zeldin's office and is keeping his office's budget in a new account to ensure "transparency in funding." The committee will grant "targeted increases" if Zeldin's office "takes its relationship with the Committee seriously." The Committee was especially "appalled" by the EPA's announcement that it would close the Office of Research and Development. The EPA is to immediately halt these plans.

With regard to the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, the House has passed a bill that would slash the office's funding nearly in half, while a conflict between Republican appropriations leaders has prevented action in the Senate. Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA), who chairs the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, is seeking an overall funding cut to the bill, while Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), who Chairs the Appropriations Committee, is seeking an overall funding increase to the bill.

Take Action, Invite Others to Join in Advocacy

Invite others in your community to write members of Congress in one or more of the following ways: (a) table at your church's coffee hour or a public event, (b) invite a group or committee at your church to write a Congress member, or (c) invite anyone you know to write a Congress member. Deliver the written comments during your next meeting with your congressional office.

In addition to the option of writing letters on paper, two options currently exist for collecting cards with our 2025 Climate Hope Art on the front:

Option #1: As part of the Sun Day national grass roots day of action in support of solar energy, we have an advocacy card that focuses specifically on solar. Visit our Sun Day toolkit for instructions on our ask of Congress members and for additional resources:

<https://www.ucc.org/climate-hope-toolkit-for-sun-day>

If you did not previously order cards, download the following template to print cards on Avery 8387 paper: <https://bit.ly/ClimateHopeCards>

Option #2: In relation to our ongoing focus on EPA funding, we have another advocacy card. Download the following template to print cards on Avery 8387 paper:

<https://bit.ly/EPA2025Cards>

Flyers and Sign-Up Sheets for Tabling: <https://www.ucc.org/chapter-resources>