

# ACTION SHEET

## February 20, 2026



“The repeal of EPA’s endangerment finding is a giant step backward in our fight to secure a livable planet for future generations. With this action, Donald Trump and his administration have made climate denial the official policy of the United States by once again placing polluter profits ahead of the well-being of American families. While countless Americans suffer from the negative health effects of unchecked corporate pollution and millions more face the extreme weather, wildfires, and droughts it causes, Trump and Lee Zeldin are showing nothing but contempt for their struggles. This policy will only make big polluters richer—and American families will pay the price.”

—Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY)

“This is going to put climate change right back on the front burner of American politics,”

—Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) on the repeal of the endangerment finding

### **Overview:**

The 2025 focus of Climate Hope Affiliates on funding for the EPA has prepared us well for this year. With the repeal of the endangerment finding, our focus now becomes sharpened. In 2026, we’re not just fighting for an EPA that is funded—we’re fighting for an EPA that fulfills its mission of protecting the environment and public health. We need an EPA that is faithful to its founding purpose, and there is no way to do this without making the climate crisis a central focus. Write letters to the editor that urge readers to call the offices of their Congress members and urge them to speak from the floor of Congress about the urgent necessity of an EPA that carries out its founding purpose by addressing the climate crisis.

### **Laser Talk:**

Recently, many of the key battles over the environment have revolved around how federal tax dollars are allocated. Last year, the Trump administration proposed cutting the EPA’s budget by 55%, while the House proposed a 23% cut and the Senate proposed a 5% cut. In a victory for advocates, an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House and Senate passed an appropriations package that cut EPA funding by 3.5% with one analyst stating that it might be even less in practice. One reporter described the bill as “a congressional rebuke” of Trump. With the EPA’s recent repeal of the endangerment finding that previously had established the agency’s mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the battle over the future of the EPA continues. Write letters to the editor that call upon readers to contact their congressional offices in order to urge their members of Congress to speak from the floor about the urgent necessity of having an EPA that addresses the climate crisis. Call for congressional leadership that champions not only robust funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027, but also an EPA that fulfills its mission. To protect the environment and public health according to its mandate, the EPA has no option but to address current and future climate dangers.

### **The Repeal of the Endangerment Finding:**

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revoked its 2009 “endangerment finding,” a determination that greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane pose a threat to public health and welfare. This finding was established after a 2007 Supreme Court decision confirmed that greenhouse gases qualify as air pollutants under the Clean Air Act. For more than a decade, it has served as the legal and scientific foundation for federal action on climate change.

Since it took effect in 2010, the endangerment finding has enabled the EPA to regulate emissions

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from major sources, including vehicles, power plants, and oil and gas operations. It has also supported efforts to address emissions from aircraft and other sectors.

The repeal of endangerment finding removes the core legal basis for regulating greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, existing standards for cars and trucks are being eliminated, and broader climate protections that address power plants and industrial sources of pollution could also be rolled back.

Legal challenges to the repeal are expected but could take years to work their way through the courts. For grassroots advocates, Congress remains the most viable and immediate means to seek effective climate solutions at the federal level.

### **Why Link Appropriations to the Repeal of the Endangerment Finding:**

Through the allocation or withholding of funds as well as the attaching of conditions for funding, Congress can impact the policies and practices of the EPA. Within the purview of Congress's role is to both direct how funds are used and demand accountability. Recall that in 2025 the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies led by Senator Lisa Murkowski sought to reduce funding for the office of Lee Zeldin, the head of the EPA, and keep his office's budget in a new account to ensure "transparency in funding." The committee moved to grant "targeted increases" if Zeldin's office took "its relationship with the Committee seriously."

### **Write Letters to the Editor that Urge Congress Members to Speak Out from the Floor**

- (1) **Determine Your Point of Entry:** If you are writing a letter to a larger, daily newspaper, find an article or editorial that provides a good angle to discuss protecting the environment and public health. If you are writing to a smaller weekly paper, you don't have to reference an article, just write in a way that makes it clear why local readers would care about this issue.
- (2) **Do Your Research:** Prepare to write your letters to the editor by looking up how your Congress member voted on the recent appropriations package that covered EPA funding for 2026:  
<https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/20267>  
[https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_votes/vote1192/vote\\_119\\_2\\_00011.htm](https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_votes/vote1192/vote_119_2_00011.htm)
- (3) **Write Your Letter:** Share what values or experiences move you to care about action on climate change and environmental justice. Use (a) the newspaper's guidelines, (b) information from the laser talk, and (c) if writing a daily newspaper, start by making reference to a recent article or editorial in the newspaper.
- (4) **When Possible, Give Gratitude:** If your member of Congress voted for the appropriations package for Fiscal Year 2026, acknowledge them by name for their leadership on the environment and assert that you want to see their continued leadership in deliberations over the mission and funding the EPA.
- (5) **Ask Readers to Call:** Urge readers to call the offices of their Congress members at (202) 224-3121 in order to urge their Congress members to speak from the floor on the urgent need for an EPA that addresses the climate crisis as part of fulfilling its mission of protecting the environment and public health.
- (6) **Report back and share:** Share your published letter on social media. Send it to your congress members and call their aides to make sure they saw it. If it's not published, consider editing it as appropriate and sending it to another newspaper. If your letter is published, let us know by using our online tracking page: <https://www.powr.io/form-builder/i/39544676#page>