

# ACTION SHEET

## March 20, 2026

“This is corruption, plain and simple. Old fashioned, dirty political corruption. The EPA has been so infiltrated by the corrupt fossil fuel industry that it has turned an agency of government into the weapon of the fossil fuel polluters against their clean energy competition, which is not just cleaner, but safer and less expensive than fossil fuel.”

—Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) on the repeal of the Endangerment Finding

In the face of continued assaults on climate progress and environmental justice by the Trump administration, Climate Hope Affiliates is urging members of Congress to work for an EPA that is both fully funded and fully accountable. This month we will send messages to our representatives and ask that they urge the leadership of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies to seek robust funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027 while also ensuring that the EPA fulfills its mission by using vital enforcement mechanisms, such as judicial cases, to hold corporate polluters accountable.

### **Laser Talk**

For Fiscal Year 2026, Congress recently rebuked the Trump administration’s attempts to severely cut funding for the Environmental Protection Agency. Whereas the Trump administration proposed cutting EPA funding by 55%, Congress ultimately passed an appropriations package that cut it by 3.5%—16 times smaller than Trump’s proposed cut. Chapter members published four op-eds and dozens of letters to the editor asking readers to call their members of Congress and urge them to support robust funding for the EPA. As the House drafts its funding proposal for Fiscal Year 2027, an opportunity exists to again call for strong action. Funding and accountability must go hand-in-hand. With the repeal of the Endangerment Finding and the recent revelation that the EPA is falsely boasting of the “strongest enforcement and compliance results in years” despite the opposite occurring, the EPA is drastically failing to fulfill its mission of protecting the environmental and public health. Write to your representative to urge that they contact the leadership of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies to seek robust funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027 while also ensuring that the EPA fulfills its mission by using vital enforcement mechanisms, such as judicial cases, to hold corporate polluters accountable.

### **The Lies and Distortions of Lee Zeldin’s EPA Exposed**

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the EPA issued a press release entitled “Trump EPA Releases Strongest Enforcement and Compliance Results in Years.” The release declares, “Some of the strongest achievements in years have taken place since President Trump was sworn back into office, including hundreds more civil enforcement cases concluded than the previous year and an unprecedented commitment to helping secure the border.”

Laura Thoms of Earthjustice quickly exposed the false and misleading nature of this claim in a post entitled “[Zeldin Wants You to Think His EPA Is Serious about Environmental Enforcement. The Evidence Tells a Different Story.](#)” Thoms notes how the EPA’s “own data reveals the lowest number of conclusions in judicial cases (its strongest enforcement tool against industrial polluters) in at least a decade.” Thoms goes on to detail how the EPA is instead “funneling cases into administrative channels, which are far less powerful enforcement tools.” She writes, “These in-house orders impose fewer requirements and lower penalties. They have a limited duration. There’s no avenue for community input and no federal judge to ensure that the outcome is a good one. These are low-visibility actions generally preferred by companies that want to keep their names out of the headlines.”

Thoms further observes that the EPA is shifting away from the kind of enforcement that has “the strongest deterrent effect and leads to the biggest public health benefits.”

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Thoms additionally details how when one looks closely at the data one finds that “the Trump administration is responsible for virtually none of the judicial cases” that might support its boast. Thoms concludes with this assessment:

The real question is why EPA *wants* you to think that it takes enforcement seriously, and whether it intends to keep up appearances after the midterms. Maybe EPA knows that Americans want the federal government to enforce strict clean air and water regulations. Maybe it’s hoping to distract from Zeldin’s massive deregulatory effort that will (among many other things) allow more toxic air emissions from coal-burning power plants and more forever chemicals in our drinking water.

Whatever EPA’s motivation, it’s clear that we must continue to hold the administration accountable for the collapse in enforcement of environmental laws. These are the laws that protect children from being exposed to toxic chemicals in school yards, that stop factories from belching cancer-causing smoke into the air, and that prevent untreated sewage from reaching our drinking water. These laws are empty promises without enforcement.

### **Why We Should Link Funding and Accountability**

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 Your Representatives**

- (1) [Find the web portal](#) for contacting your representative or send a hand-written letter.
- (2) Identify yourself as a member of your local Climate Hope Affiliates chapter. Share why your faith and values lead you to support a strong EPA.
- (3) **If your representative is a Democrat**, ask them to write Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME), the Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, and urge robust funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027. Your representative should additionally encourage her to use the appropriations process to ensure that the EPA fulfills its mission through strong enforcement, such as judicial cases, against corporate polluters. **If your representative is a Republican**, ask them to write Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), the Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, and urge robust funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027. Your representative should additionally encourage him to use the appropriations process to ensure that the EPA fulfills its mission through strong enforcement, such as judicial cases, against corporate polluters.
- (4) Bolster your communications with Congressional offices by tabling and giving presentations that invite people to write their representatives.

### **Recess Opportunity**

The House will be on recess March 30<sup>th</sup> - April 10<sup>th</sup>. See if you can get a meeting with your U.S. Representative or speak to them at a Town Hall meeting or other public event during that period.