

ACTION SHEET

April 23, 2026



“The Trump administration and my Republican colleagues are now rolling all of that back. They have already fired thousands of EPA employees, roughly one in four people in the agency. They shut down the Office of Environmental Justice. They took down the EPA's environmental justice mapping tool that communities and local governments were beginning to rely on. One in three EPA staffers who were there on inauguration day will be gone by the time this is all over. That's not reform, that's demolition.”

—Rep. Christian Menefee (D-TX), [speaking from the floor](#) on April 16th

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 write letters to the editor to call upon Congress members to urge the leadership in their chamber to provide robust funding to the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027, while also underscoring the need for the EPA to address environmental injustices and public health inequities.

Laser Talk

In January, Congress rejected the Trump administration's attempt to severely cut funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2026. Whereas the Trump administration proposed [cutting EPA funding by 55%](#), Congress ultimately passed an appropriations package that [cut it by 3.5%](#). For Fiscal Year 2027, the White House is seeking to cut EPA funding by [52% or \\$4.6 billion](#). By contrast, it wants to increase the defense budget to [\\$1.5 trillion, a boost of 44 percent](#). The distorted and destructive priorities of the Trump administration have already been evident at the EPA. Last year, the EPA workforce was [reduced by more than 4,000 to 12,849](#). This [reduction of 24%](#) more than doubled the job reduction rate of the entire federal government. At the EPA, the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights was dismantled with hundreds of staff being laid off or reassigned. This aligned with executive orders that rescinded environmental justice directives and ended the use of environmental justice considerations in agency work. Write letters to the editor to call upon Congress members to urge the leadership in their chamber to provide robust funding to the EPA for Fiscal Year 2027, while also underscoring the need for the EPA to address environmental injustices and public health inequities.

Excerpts from Letter to Subcommittee Leadership

Leadership on EPA funding and accountability for Fiscal Year 2027 came in the Senate from Senators Ed Markey and Lisa Blunt Rochester who led a letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Here are excerpts from that letter:

“As you develop the Fiscal Year 2027 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$12 billion in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and at minimum, no less than Fiscal Year 2026 enacted levels, for the agency to carry out its critical and congressionally mandated work to address air pollution, protect public health, and combat climate change. It is imperative that Congress provides sufficient funding to enable the agency and its staff to fulfill its statutory mission.”

“The EPA has long been woefully underfunded and understaffed. This crisis has only gotten worse over the past year, as the agency has hit 40-year staffing lows following the

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departure of 24 percent of its workforce. While the agency's budget and capacity have shrunk, the threat of the climate crisis and the resulting costs to our health and economy have grown. Air pollution causes serious health problems and disproportionately affects communities of color, fenceline communities, and lower-income communities that are already overburdened by pollution. The climate crisis exacerbates health inequities, and health related impacts due to climate inaction are estimated to exceed \$820 billion in health costs annually, in addition to costs associated with lost workforce productivity days. The global economic costs of climate change could reach \$38 trillion per year by 2050. Investing in climate action, cleaner air, and environmental protection now—by adequately funding the EPA—will save billions of dollars and thousands of lives per year.”

“Nearly half of Americans—156 million people, an increase of 25 million from the previous year—are living in communities with unhealthy levels of air pollution. EPA programs and funding mechanisms support air quality monitoring and efforts to reduce harmful air pollution, control radiation exposure, mitigate climate change, and ensure compliance and enforcement.”

“...we ask that you include bill language providing clear direction and stronger accountability for the EPA Administrator to follow congressionally directed staffing levels.”

“The harm from, and threat of, air pollution and the climate crisis to our health, safety, and economic prosperity is more acute than ever. Funding the EPA and these accounts at the highest possible levels is essential to ensuring EPA's core mission to protect public health is realized and the American people and future generations can breathe easier.”

Write Letters to the Editor that Readers to Call Their Congress Members

- (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.
- (2) **Write Your Letter:** Share what values or experiences move you to care. 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.
- (3) **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 and assert that you want to see their continued leadership on EPA funding.
- (4) **Ask Readers to Call:** Ask readers to call the offices of their Congress members at (202) 224-3121 in order to urge them to write to the leadership of their chamber in seeking robust funding to EPA for Fiscal Year 2027, while also underscoring the need for the EPA to address environmental injustices and public health inequities.
- (5) **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>