

ACTION SHEET

May 12, 2026



“This Fiscal Year 2027 budget request, similar to last year, proposes cuts to the Agency. We likely cannot accept the proposed steep cuts to the State and Tribal Assistance Grants that our states, tribes, and water utilities rely on for implementing federal statutes and providing safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater.”

—Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Chair of the House Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, [remarks](#) at budget hearing on EPA funding

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 are focused on identifying one or more community leaders with whom members of your chapter can meet and invite to join in direct advocacy with your congressional representative.

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%](#), 16 times smaller than President Trump’s proposed cut. 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%](#) was more than double the job reduction rate across the entire federal government. At the EPA, the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights was dismantled with hundreds of staff 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 This aligned with executive orders that rescinded environmental justice directives and ended the use of environmental justice considerations in agency work. It’s time to expand our outreach and bring in one or more community leaders to partner with us in meeting with Congress.

The Latest on the Appropriations Process and the EPA

Over the past month, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin testified in three congressional budget-oversight hearings on the EPA’s proposed FY2027 budget. The legal advocacy organization Earthjustice provided [an assessment](#) of Zeldin’s central claims and what members of Congress entered into the record as a rebuttal. Here are four of Zeldin’s claims, followed by excerpts from Earthjustice’s reporting:

Claim #1: Public health will be fine after rolling back protections.

“The Environmental Protection Network, made up of hundreds of former EPA staff and political appointees, [estimates](#) 12 of the 31 rollbacks Zeldin announced in March 2025 could cause nearly 200,000 premature deaths over 25 years, and more than 10,000 asthma attacks every day.”

Claim #2: Environmental justice grants were a scam.

After Zeldin asked the EPA’s Inspector General to investigate grants that he already cancelled, the Inspector General “[found](#) nothing wrong, while federal courts said the EPA likely [violated](#) the Administrative Procedure Act by failing to conduct individualized grant reviews—meaning the agency didn’t just cancel the grants without cause, it may have done so without even following its own legal obligations. These weren’t ideological pet projects. They funded low-income communities and communities of color to monitor air quality, challenge polluters, and enforce Clean Air Act protections.”

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Claim #3: Rolling back environmental protections will grow the economy.

“At the Senate EPW hearing, Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) read staggering numbers into the record: a net consumer loss of \$180 billion from vehicle standard rollbacks, \$580 billion flowing to big oil at the pump, and \$230 million in excess energy costs from Clean Air Act exemptions quietly granted to just six coal plants—no public process, no health analysis, no accountability.”

“Then there is PFAS—the sharpest contradiction in the EPA’s FY 2027 budget. The budget brief document designates reducing PFAS exposure as an [Agency Priority Goal](#). Yet, the same budget cuts the Clean Water State Revolving Fund—the primary mechanism communities use to remove PFAS from drinking water—by 90 percent.”

Claim #4: The EPA will become more efficient and scientifically sound.

“The Office of Research and Development—the institutional engine of independent EPA science for half a century—[has been] [dismantled](#). State environmental agencies, left without federal research support, are now quietly pooling resources among themselves just to maintain basic scientific capacity. The [Restoring Gold Standard Science](#) executive order revoked Biden-era scientific integrity policies and installed political appointees as the final arbiters of what science the agency can use. New Yorker writer Elizabeth Kolbert told [NPR’s Fresh Air](#) last week, ‘Gold standard science in the Trump administration seems to mean science that backs up what we want to do.’ Science that [survives political review](#) simply agrees with decisions already made.”

Take Action: Enlist a Community Leader for Your Next Congressional Office Meeting

A community leader can bolster both your chances of securing a meeting with your U.S. Representative and Senators and your chances of building effective relational power in the meeting itself. A community leader can signal support for our cause from a key constituency: businesses, faith communities, educational institutions, etc. Some community leaders may already have an established relationship of influence with your member of Congress. This month, take action by following these steps:

- (1) As a chapter, brainstorm a list of people with whom your members have a relationship. Does anyone have a relationship with a school superintendent, a college president, chair of a key University department, a mayor, a leader of a faith coalition, a business owner, or someone who represents a leading local employer?
- (2) Pick one or two people from your list whom one or two of your chapter members will contact to ask for a meeting. In thinking about who to pick, consider both how strong your relationship with this community leader is and how much influence this person might have with your representative.
- (3) In meeting with the community leader, share part of your own story about becoming involved in CHA and introduce them to our current issue. Invite them to join you in meeting or in seeking a meeting with your representative.
- (4) In booking the Congressional meeting, mention that one of those present will be the community leader who is joining you. Afterward, report your meeting in the [Action Tracker](#).