

ACTION SHEET

June 16, 2026



“Anti-environment poison pills are giveaways to the fossil fuel industry at the expense of the health and financial wellbeing of the American people. They have no place in bipartisan spending deals.”

—Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), on letter sent urging Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) to keep harmful provisions out of FY 2027 appropriations bills

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 calling two friends or family members in key states to ask them to call the offices of their senators and urge robust EPA funding for Fiscal Year 2027 without any policy riders that would weaken protections for the environment and public health.

Laser Talk

In January, Congress rejected the Trump administration’s attempt to severely cut funding for the EPA for Fiscal Year 2026. The Trump administration proposed [cutting EPA funding by 55%](#), but 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](#). On June 3rd, the House Appropriations Committee voted along party lines [for an appropriations package](#) that would cut EPA funding by 20% or \$1.8 billion. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies has yet to vote on EPA funding for next year. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, along with 40 other Democratic senators sent a letter urging Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) to keep harmful policy provisions out of appropriations bills. These provisions, often called “riders,” threaten to weaken [“safeguards for air, water, and federal lands.”](#) This month, we want senators to know that we want robust funding for the EPA in FY 2027 without any policy riders that would weaken protections for the environment and public health.

Larger Context of the Administration’s Assault on 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.

Further Details about House Spending Bill

Regarding the House appropriations bill, [E&E News noted](#), “EPA’s Science and Technology work would receive \$527.94 million, or a 29 percent decrease from enacted funding, while the Environmental Programs and Management account would have \$2.29 billion, roughly a 26 percent cut from fiscal 2026.” E&E News also wrote, “Riders would further restrict EPA, such as barring funds for incorporating the social cost of carbon and implementing reporting requirements for farming operations’ greenhouse

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gas emissions.” A [response to the bill from House Democrats](#) asserts that 51 riders are included that would undermine the Endangered Species Act, prohibit “protection from oil and gas leasing near pristine water and balancing development with protection of natural resources in arctic landscapes,” and hinder “the EPA’s ability to protect the environment” while creating “an unfair playing field that gives polluters the advantage.”

Why Policy Riders Are Dangerous

The nonpartisan initiative [USAFacts notes](#), “A rider is a legislative provision added to a bill or resolution that is often not directly related to the legislation’s main purpose. Riders are frequently attached to larger or must-pass bills to increase the likelihood that the provision will become law. Riders are commonly used to change policy, funding, or regulatory issues that might not pass if considered as standalone legislation.” In essence, riders are a way of evading scrutiny, which poses a particular danger if environmental protections are at stake.

Faith and Values Framing

The Jesuit ethicist William O’Neill [once wrote](#) of applying “the church’s moral squint” to how we think of public policy. Such a moral squint evokes scriptures such as [Isaiah 10:1-2](#) which speaks of “unjust laws” that harm the poor and the oppressed, the widow and the orphan. As people of faith and conscience, we do not want appropriations bills, including their policy riders, to evade scrutiny or escape a moral squint.

Take Action: Urge Friends and Family Members in Key States to Call Their Senators

Call two friends or family members in key states to ask them to call the offices of their senators as they urge robust EPA funding for Fiscal Year 2027 without any policy riders that would weaken protections for the environment and public health.

- (1) Contact friends and family members, especially in Alaska or Oregon, the home state of the Subcommittee Chair Lisa Murkowski and Ranking Member Jeff Merkley of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. If you don't have friends in Alaska or Oregon, contact friends and family in Kentucky or Maryland, where Senators Mitch McConnell and Chris Van Hollen, respectively, are the next two most senior members of that subcommittee.
- (2) Use this sample email to contact friends and family:
<https://www.ucc.org/sample-email-to-friends-and-family-members>
- (3) Follow up your email with a phone call to support and coach your friends and family members in calling the DC offices of their senators to urge full funding for the EPA without any policy riders that would weaken protections for the environment and public health.
- (4) Have one leader from your chapter use the Action Tracker to report the final tally of outreach by your group. For example, one might report: Our chapter contacted 37 people in the states of _____. Of those, 29 were reached and said they would take the action, and 24 reported completing the action. Action Tracker:
<https://www.powr.io/form-builder/i/39544676#page>