

ACTION SHEET

July 16, 2026



“This administration has made clear that communities like Fifth Ward and Kashmere Gardens are not a priority. They eliminated the offices that existed to fight for people in neighborhoods like this. They gutted enforcement. And now a community that has already waited years for answers is left wondering whether anyone at EPA is still in their corner. I am working to make sure the answer is yes.”

—Rep. Christian Menefee (D-TX) in a [July 2nd press release](#) referring to predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods in Houston that have suffered from toxic industrial pollution

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, each chapter will write a single letter to each of its members of Congress to request an in-person meeting during the August recess to further our advocacy on this issue.

Laser Talk

In January, Congress rejected the Trump administration’s attempt to severely cut funding for the EPA for fiscal year (FY) 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 FY 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. A [response to the bill from House Democrats](#) states that it includes 51 policy provisions, often called “riders,” that would undermine a number of environmental protections. 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), the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, and 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 riders out of appropriations bills. This month, we are seeking meetings with our members of Congress during the August recess to advocate for robust EPA funding and to oppose any policy riders that would undermine environmental and public health protections.

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 [24% reduction](#) was more than double the rate of job cuts 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. These actions aligned with executive orders that rescinded environmental justice directives and ended the use of environmental justice considerations in agency work. Under the current administration, cuts at the EPA have disproportionately affected communities of color and low-income households.

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

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reporting requirements for farming operations' greenhouse gas emissions." A [response to the bill from House Democrats](#) states that the bill includes 51 riders 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 when 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 about 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: Meet with Your Congress Members during the August Recess

As a chapter, write a single letter to each of your members of Congress to request an in-person meeting during the August recess to discuss EPA funding and accountability for FY 2027.

- (1) Draft an email template that can be adapted into three individual letters, one for your U.S. Representative and two for your U.S. Senators. What to include:
 - Identify your group as a chapter of Climate Hope Affiliates.
 - State that you represent a faith-rooted organization with members from different faith communities.
 - Indicate, in one sentence, why your chapter is especially concerned about the EPA fulfilling its mission.
 - State that you are urging them to reject President Trump's proposed 52 percent cut to the EPA in FY27, support robust funding for the agency, and oppose any policy riders that would undermine environmental and public health protections.
 - Sign the email with the names of all your chapter members.
- (2) Have liaisons adapt and send emails to the [schedulers for congressional offices](#).
- (3) Have liaisons make follow-up phone calls to schedulers. *If they cannot meet during the August recess, remember that they will likely return to the state to campaign before the election and may have additional availability afterward.*
- (4) Practice role-playing your meetings.
- (5) Report your meetings in the Action Tracker:

<https://www.powr.io/form-builder/i/39544676#page>