



Toolkit: The Impact of the “Serial Shutdown” of EPA

Introduction

With another government shutdown underway, the chaos and disruption of the last nine months to EPA employees and the communities they serve has come into stark focus. As disruptive as a shutdown can be, it also may be a sneak preview of what will happen to EPA safeguards and programs if the Trump administration continues to have carte blanche to systematically dismantle and weaken the agency. Because Congress has not stepped up in a bipartisan way to provide the staffing, resources, and guardrails against executive overreach needed for EPA to fulfill its mission, the protections that safeguard our families’ health, air, water, and communities continue to diminish.

We’ve prepared this toolkit to help you take action. Inside, you’ll find clear language you can use to explain the “serial shutdown” and why it matters, as well as social media language and posts you can customize and post to your networks.

EPN’s Role So Far

Over the past week, EPN has been driving the public narrative on what we’re calling the **“serial shutdown” of EPA**. This isn’t just about one budget fight—it’s the cumulative effect of undercutting the agency piece by piece: starving it of staff, resources.

- **Media Impact:** EPN volunteers and experts have been quoted and featured widely in coverage of the shutdown’s impact. Reporters are relying on your

expertise to explain what this means for people in real terms—more polluted water, dirtier air, stalled cleanups, and higher costs for families.

- **Press Briefing:** Our [press briefing](#) earlier this week drew strong media attendance, giving national, local and trade outlets direct access to EPN expertise.
- **Public Statement:** We also issued a [statement against the administration's threatened mass firings](#), which has already been picked up and amplified across social media.

What You Can Do

- Talk with friends, neighbors, and community organizations and members about why EPA matters—this issue affects every American household.
- Use the social media posts and graphics included in the toolkit to spread the word.
 - Start by [following EPN](#) and sharing our posts as a way to easily get into the conversation.
 - Add your own perspective of lived experience to move the online conversation forward.
- Share your perspective with local reporters—your voice as a former EPA staffer carries weight.
 - Write an op-ed (use the messaging below to help guide you)
 - Consider providing background or an on-the-record quote if press call you for information.

Talking Points

Topline Messaging

- While we don't yet know how this shutdown will impact the day-to-day functioning of EPA, what we do know is that the administration has been dismantling protections for Americans with an ongoing "serial shutdown."

Piece by piece, protections are disappearing, leaving families exposed to more dirty air, unsafe water, and unchecked toxic pollution.

- When EPA is weakened or shut down, our children and families are less safe. Until this administration is checked by Congress, Americans can count on more kids with asthma, more families exposed to toxic chemicals, and more neighborhoods living near sites that go uncleaned.
- Americans want an effective EPA. Nationwide polling shows voters overwhelmingly back a strong EPA—88% of all voters, including 81% of Trump voters, want Congress to increase or at least maintain EPA funding.

When EPA shuts down, our protections do too—and families pay the price.

- Without a strong, functioning EPA, families lose the protections that keep kids out of emergency rooms and cancer wards. Protections like drinking water oversight, toxic site cleanups, and air monitoring are delayed, reduced, or put on hold. That means Americans face greater risks to their health, and higher medical bills and utility costs down the road.
- Pollution doesn't pause because of political fights—it keeps spreading while fewer scientists, inspectors, and public servants are on the job. EPA has been putting polluters ahead of people for months now by weakening oversight, and a shutdown opens the door to even more.
- We've seen what happens when EPA shuts down. During the 2018–19 furlough, coal plants actually [increased particulate pollution](#) by dialing back their pollution controls. Without EPA staff on the job, oversight disappeared, and polluters took advantage.

The dangers of a diminished or shut-down EPA reach into communities across the country.

- When EPA is gutted, protections everywhere are gutted. EPA's partnership with states and tribes is the backbone of America's clean air and clean water. EPA sets the national standards, provides the science and funding, and acts as the backstop when local agencies can't. States and tribes simply can't fill the gap when EPA's budget is shut down.

- Tribal programs are especially vulnerable. Many tribal governments rely almost entirely on EPA support for clean water and air protection. Without EPA staff and funding, those programs can grind to a halt.

We all lose when public servants at EPA are used as bargaining chips.

- Behind every EPA program is a scientist, engineer, or career expert who serves the public by protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. A shutdown threatens these civil servants—putting their livelihoods, their research, and our health protections at risk.
- With nearly 90% of EPA staff planned for furlough, this shutdown is yet another step by the Trump administration to remove career expertise and force through rollbacks that will harm millions of Americans while benefiting polluters.
- This is not how civil servants should be treated. EPN stands with EPA staff who deserve respect, not political games.

Social Media

Post #1:

To maximize our collective impact and social media algorithms, please share the social media post by EPN:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Bsky](#)

Please repost or share widely to your networks, using the draft copy below.

Remember, your voice and expertise make the message even stronger:

- Add a quick thought, personal observation, or expansion of one of the key points based on your personal expertise.
- If relevant, relate your post content to your state or community.

Reshare Copy:

Pollution doesn't pause because of political fights—it keeps spreading while fewer scientists, inspectors, and public servants are on the job. With its ongoing "serial shutdown," EPA has been putting polluters ahead of people for months now by weakening oversight.

Congress must step in and give EPA the staffing and resources needed to protect our air, water, and health.

Post #2

Following is another social post for your customization—focused on EPA staff.

Social Post Copy:

As a former EPA staffer, I know we all lose when public servants at EPA are treated as bargaining chips.

Behind every EPA program is a scientist, engineer, or career expert who protects our air, water, and food. With nearly 90% of EPA staff planned for furlough, this shutdown is yet another step by the Trump administration to remove career expertise and force through rollbacks that will harm millions of Americans while benefiting polluters.

EPA staff deserve respect, not political games.

#SaveEPA #PublicHealth #GovernmentShutdown