

May 18, 2026

Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of the Environmental Protection Network, a nonprofit composed of more than 750 former EPA scientists, experts and leaders from Democratic and Republican administrations, I write to urge Congress to reject the President's FY27 budget request for EPA and provide at least \$12 billion in annual funding and, at a minimum, no less than FY25 enacted levels. The proposed \$4.203 billion budget would cut EPA by 52% from FY26 enacted levels, repeating the same basic approach Congress rejected last year. Congress should not allow this request to become a backdoor rewrite of EPA's congressionally mandated responsibilities or a justification for further weakening the agency's core science, enforcement, staffing, and state and Tribal implementation capacity.

The consequences of these cuts would be immediate and local. The administration claims to advance cooperative federalism while proposing to cut State and Tribal Assistance Grants from \$4.410 billion to \$748 million, an 83 percent reduction, while nearly eliminating categorical grants that fund state agency staff who conduct inspections, issue permits, and monitor compliance. Many states have already reduced their own environmental capacity and cannot absorb this federal retreat.

The same disconnect appears in infrastructure and cleanup. The request would sharply reduce support for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure through the State Revolving Funds and WIFIA just as communities face growing costs from aging systems, lead, PFAS, and extreme weather events. It would also weaken EPA's direct cleanup role by reducing core Superfund appropriations and shifting reliance to uncertain revenue sources. These choices would shift more costs and risks onto communities already struggling to maintain safe water systems and clean up contaminated sites.

A similar retreat from federal accountability is evident in enforcement. In 2025, an independent analysis of EPA's own ECHO data found that EPA's enforcement record was the weakest or second-weakest in 14 of 24 measured categories over the past 20 years, including 20-year lows in civil judicial cases filed and concluded, a 20-year low in TSCA inspections, and a 20-year high in civil judicial cases filed with zero federal penalties. The FY27 request would extend that retreat—cutting Civil Enforcement from \$234 million to \$139 million and Criminal Enforcement from \$88.5 million to \$33.9 million—further reducing staff capacity and deterrence, and making it easier for serious violations to go unaddressed.

The request would also cut the Science & Technology account by nearly one-third, compounding the damage already done by the closure of the Office of Research and Development and the proposed elimination of the Chemical Safety for Sustainability research

program. EPA cannot make credible, health-protective decisions without the independent scientific capacity Congress has funded it to maintain.

Staffing compounds all of these concerns. EPA has lost nearly 4,000 employees since January 2025—its lowest level since the Nixon and Ford administrations—and is not meeting the FY26 appropriations law's direction to maintain staffing sufficient to fulfill its statutory obligations. The Inspector General has found that grants staff are already managing far more work than agency standards allow, creating risks of mismanagement, noncompliance, fraud, waste, and abuse.

Congress should pair adequate funding with guardrails to ensure EPA uses appropriated funds to carry out its mission. We urge Congress to include appropriations language that:

- Restores and protects EPA's independent science capacity following the closure of the Office of Research and Development; prevents further reductions or politicization of core research, laboratory, risk assessment, peer review, and scientific integrity functions; and preserves Title 42 hiring authority so EPA can recruit, retain, rehire, and convert highly qualified scientific and technical experts.
- Protects EPA's enforcement capacity and directs EPA to publicly report inspections, enforcement actions, penalties, injunctive relief, pollution reductions, and community health-protective outcomes.
- Provides and explicitly protects at least \$30 million in grants and related EPA capacity to assist overburdened communities disproportionately affected by environmental contaminants, and requires EPA to report to Congress on how those funds are obligated, awarded, spent, and used.
- Prevents the transfer of Energy Star to the Department of Energy and keeps the program housed at EPA with sufficient funding and staff.
- Requires regular, public reporting on whether funding, staffing, workforce planning, or reorganization decisions are impairing EPA's ability to meet its responsibilities, and preserves the Office of Inspector General's independence.

EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment by implementing and enforcing the laws Congress has enacted. Dismantling the agency's programs, workforce, and science capacity weakens both EPA's direct work and the support states, Tribes, and communities rely on to secure clean water, breathable air, and cleaned-up land. We urge Congress to reject this proposal, provide funding that allows EPA and its partners to protect communities, and ensure appropriated funds are used as Congress intended—not withheld, redirected, or undermined.

Sincerely,



Michelle Roos
Executive Director
Environmental Protection Network