April XX, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray The Honorable Susan Collins

Chairwoman Vice Chairwoman

Committee on Appropriations Committee on Appropriations

United States Senate United States Senate

Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

Chairwoman Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations Committee on Appropriations

U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chair Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we request a minimum funding level of $2,500,000,000 to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (“EPA”) core air, water, and toxics programs.

A decade of funding cuts and staffing reductions have decimated the EPA’s core programs and hampered its ability to carry out its mission to protect human health and the environment. Without significant additional resources, EPA will continue to miss statutory deadlines, which jeopardizes our environment, health, and the welfare of our most vulnerable communities. Dwindling enforcement capacity also limits polluter accountability while underfunded remediation programs leave communities at risk of exposure to hazardous waste. A sustained effort to increase funding and staff is necessary to address past failures and confront the ongoing environmental challenges of today.

Increased funding to grant programs does not alleviate concerns, as the EPA needs funds and staff within its core programs to accomplish the work that protects human health and the environment. To ensure that the EPA has the resources and staffing needed to effectively protect clean air, safeguard clean water, and protect people from dangerous chemicals, we request:

1. $100,000,000 for the Office of Science and Technology, housed within the Office of Water;
2. $300,000,000 for the Office of Air Quality and Planning Standards, housed within the Office of Air and Radiation;
3. $300,000,000 for the Office of Pesticide Programs and Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, housed within the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention;
4. $1,200,000,000 for the Office of Land and Emergency Management, which includes $60,000,000 for the Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation and $60,000,000 for the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery, and;
5. $600,000,000 for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, including a dedicated $40,000,000 for the Office of Site Remediation and Enforcement.

A minimum of $100,000,000 to the Office of Science and Technology would put EPA back on track to developing and updating water quality safeguards while addressing emerging water pollutants. The Clean Water Act requires the EPA to develop and publish “criteria for water quality reflecting the latest scientific knowledge,” which ensure the water we use for drinking, recreation, and other purposes is safe for humans, animals, and the environment. However, only three new water quality criteria for aquatic life have been developed in the last decade, while criteria for several pollutants, such as lead, have not been updated since the 1980s.[[1]](#footnote-1) Hundreds of other novel chemicals known to cause harm in aquatic ecosystems including endocrine disruptors, PFAS, and plastics still have no final water quality criteria. Nor have any of these novel chemicals been added to the EPA’s Toxic Pollutant List, a vital tool in addressing water pollution that has not received an update since the Ford Administration. A lack of funds and staff have undermined these water quality protection efforts.

A minimum of $300,000,000 for EPA’s Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards would support address its backlog and prioritize clean air act activities that Congress has already required the EPA conduct. More than 1 in 3 Americans live in places with unhealthy levels of air pollution, but budget cuts and reduced staffing at the EPA have delayed review and implementation of key Clean Air Act protections.[[2]](#footnote-2) the EPA is long overdue in its review of carbon dioxide and lead, especially as it directs significant resources to implementing tainted determinations for ozone and particulate matter. And while State Implementation Plans are drafted with the goal of reaching federal standards, there is an enormous backlog awaiting review, with some submissions dating back to 1993.

A minimum of $300,000,000 for core programs within the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention would meet mission objectives to better protect people and the environment from dangerous chemicals. The EPA is tasked with evaluating risks presented by new and existing chemicals under both the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Toxic Substance Control Act. While the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention has tried to keep pace and ensure people and the environment are protected from widespread use of chemicals, it has seen its staff whittled down, and much more is ideally needed to put this office back on track. Status quo funding to this program puts human health and the environment at risk of toxic chemicals.

A minimum of $1,200,000,000 to the entirety of the Office of Land Emergency Management will ensure that the EPA can accomplish its mission regardless of deficiencies in the Superfund balance. The EPA’s management of hazardous waste facilities under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and its remediation and response to abandoned, uncontrolled hazardous waste sites under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act requires additional funding to ensure our most vulnerable communities are protected from some of the most dangerous chemicals and poisoned plots of land. While EPA cites the recently revived excise tax on hazardous chemicals as justification for a budgetary reduction, tax receipts have fallen short, which could significantly delay clean-up projects.[[3]](#footnote-3) Without dedicated funding for both remediation and enforcement at Superfund sites, the EPA may fail to hold polluters accountable, prevent future environmental disasters, or protect the health and welfare of affected communities.

Finally, a minimum of $600,000,000 to the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance will help the EPA strengthen its enforcement capacity, which has declined by almost a third over the last decade.[[4]](#footnote-4) The EPA’s prosecution of polluters has continued to decline, allowing polluters to escape accountability for even the most serious violations, putting vulnerable communities and wildlife at risk of harm. A modest increase in funding will allow the EPA to reverse this trend by enforcing environmental laws and holding polluters accountable.

The EPA’s needs significant resources to protect human health and the environment, and funding and staff targeted to the agency’s core air, water, and toxic programs are essential in accomplishing this task. While more is needed to fully restore the EPA, the proposed funding requested here would return EPA to staffing levels from a decade earlier. Without staffing, EPA simply cannot accomplish the work assigned to the agency by Congress.

Sincerely,

1. U.S. EPA, National Recommended Water Quality Criteria - Aquatic Life Criteria Table https://www.epa.gov/wqc/national-recommended-water-quality-criteria-aquatic-life-criteria-table [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. American Lung Association, *State of the Air 2023* (Apr. 20, 2023), https://www.lung.org/getmedia/338b0c3c-6bf8-480f-9e6e-b93868c6c476/SOTA-2023.pdf?ext=.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://insideepa.com/daily-news/superfund-tax-receipts-fall-short-raising-fears-new-cleanup-backlog [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Environmental Integrity Project, *EPA Enforcement Totals in Fiscal 2022 Were Lowest in Decades in Key Areas* (Dec. 16, 2022), https://environmentalintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/EIP-anaylsis-of-20-years-of-EPA-enforcement-data-12.16.22.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)