

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC**

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20004

**RE: Opposition to Proposed Dismantling of EPA's Office of Research and Development**

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We write to express our deep concern and opposition to plans by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to cut offices, programs, and employees. A White House spokesperson recently stated the EPA plans to reduce Agency funding by 65 percent,<sup>1</sup> with entire divisions being subject to possible closure.

We are particularly concerned by the proposal to eliminate up to 75 percent of employees within EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD).<sup>2</sup> Firing nearly 1,200 dedicated ORD public servants<sup>3</sup> across the country would decimate the scientific backbone of EPA which provides independent, objective, and unparalleled research that informs Agency assessments and decision-making.

ORD technical employees are organized into four centers with support from three offices: the Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure; the Center for Environmental Measurement and Modeling; the Center for Environmental Solutions and Emergency Response; the Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment; the Office of Resource Management; the Office of Science and Information Management; and the Office of Science Advisor, Policy, and Engagement.<sup>4</sup> The important technical research is organized into six research programs that cover all aspects of the statutory requirements of ORD: the Air, Climate, and Energy Program; the Chemical Safety for Sustainability Program; the Homeland Security and Emergency Response Program; the Health and Environmental Risk Assessment Program; the Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Program; and the Sustainable and Healthy Communities Program.<sup>4</sup>

Together, these ORD divisions “[provide] the foundation for credible decision-making to safeguard human health and ecosystems from environmental pollutants”,<sup>4</sup> which is essential to EPA's ability to carry out its mission to “protect human health and the environment” and “ensure [that Americans] have clean air, land and water.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, ORD research and scientific decision-making is required in multiple statutes such as the Clean Water Act, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, and the Clean Air Act.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2025-02-27/white-house-walks-back-trump-statement-on-65-epa-staff-cuts>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eenews.net/articles/leaked-epa-layoff-plan-would-slash-science-office/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/17/climate/trump-eliminates-epa-science.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-research-and-development-ord>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/our-mission-and-what-we-do>

Firing the majority of ORD employees would be particularly harmful to EPA's work to address industrial pollution, contaminated air and drinking water, environmental health, and worsening natural disasters – and would especially hamper responses to emergencies such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Flint, Michigan water crisis, and the California wildfires.

Dismantling ORD's ability to fulfill its duties would jeopardize decades of progress in protecting public health and the environment. This includes everything from understanding and addressing the environmental causes of asthma in children and the long-term effects of exposure to lead pipes and paint in the home, to reducing the presence of forever chemicals in drinking water.

As such, we demand the immediate reversal of any plan, and the cessation of any activities, that would result in the mass firing of ORD employees or the dismantling of ORD as a whole. Additionally, we request answers to the following questions and a detailed explanation of how EPA intends to continue fulfilling its statutory obligations:

- 1) What is EPA's justification for proposing the mass firing of employees in ORD?
- 2) What are the anticipated impacts of this action on EPA's current and future scientific, public health, and environmental initiatives?
- 3) How has EPA consulted with internal and external experts – such as scientists, public health professionals, and other stakeholders – while considering this plan?
- 4) How does EPA plan to mitigate the loss of scientific expertise, institutional knowledge, and subject matter capacity resulting from this proposed action?
- 5) How would EPA maintain its ability to respond to environmental emergencies and fulfill its statutory responsibilities without ORD's technical staff?

The American people expect and deserve an EPA that protects public health and the environment – an effort that must be grounded in rigorous and independent science. That science depends on the expertise and dedication of ORD's employees. As such, we look forward to your prompt response and an explanation of how the EPA intends to uphold its important mission for our country.

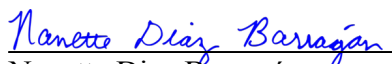
Sincerely,



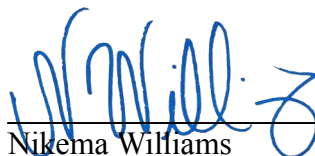
Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



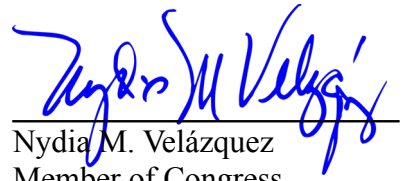
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



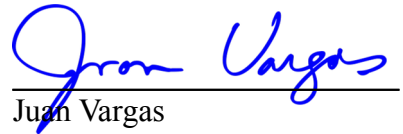
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



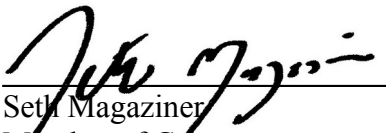
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



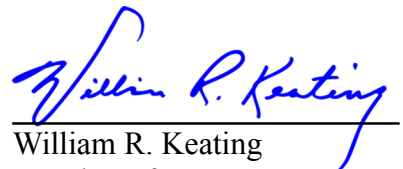
Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress




Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



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George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



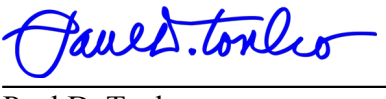
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André Carson  
Member of Congress



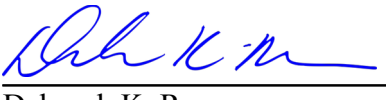
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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress




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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



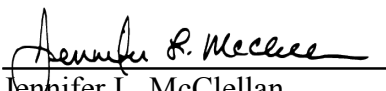
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



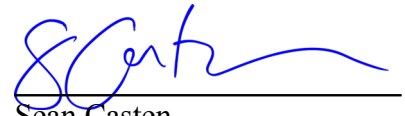
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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



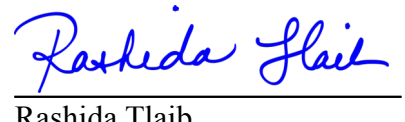
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Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



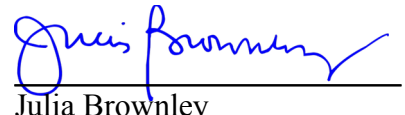
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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



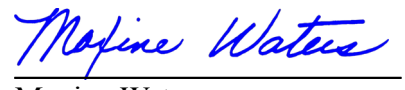
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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



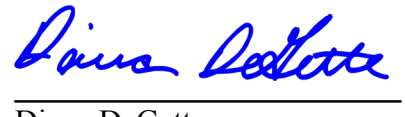
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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



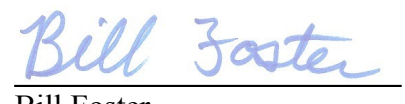
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Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress




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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



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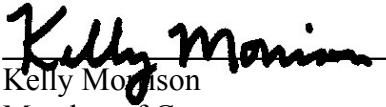
Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress




Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



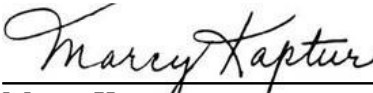
Brittany Petersen  
Member of Congress



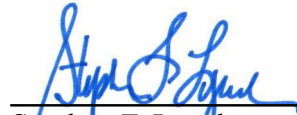
Kelly Morrison  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



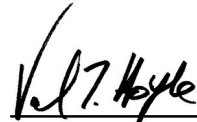
Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



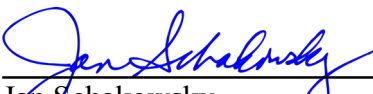
Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



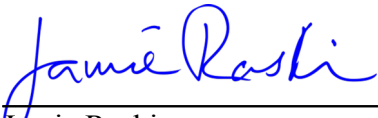
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress




Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



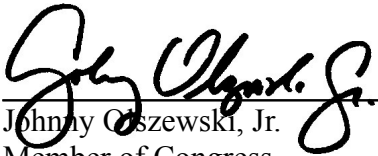
Dave Min  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



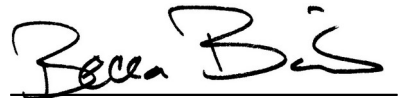
Johnny Oszewski, Jr.  
Member of Congress



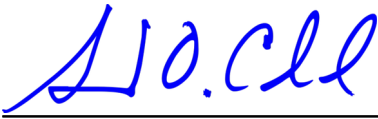
Emilia Strong Sykes  
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress




Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



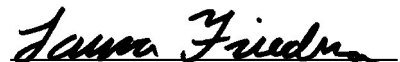
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



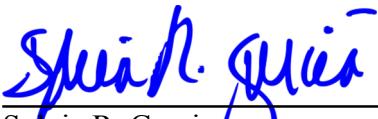
Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman  
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



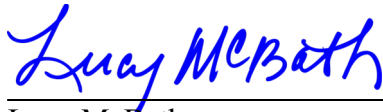
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Al Green  
Member of Congress  
Scion of the Enslaved  
Africans -  
Sacrificed to Make America  
Great



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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress



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Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress