

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2026

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We strongly oppose your disastrous decision to eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Research and Development (ORD) and demand that you reverse this action immediately. Closing ORD will make the American people sicker and poorer as big businesses get richer and the environment more polluted.

For decades, ORD research has served as the scientific backbone for lifesaving EPA actions. Its research has armed our nation with the facts needed to confront toxic mercury, dangerous air pollutants, and contaminated water. It was ORD science that helped inform the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), which have saved approximately 11,000 lives per year by improving health outcomes.¹ Stripping the EPA of independent, unbiased research blinds the agency to emerging threats to public health and the environment. It also invites political interference in science and sends a chilling message that corporate polluters' profits matter more than public health. Abandoning lifesaving science is shortsighted and morally indefensible.

Divorcing EPA actions from unbiased science will exacerbate climate change and increase its already sky-high cost to taxpayers. Before ORD's closure, experts estimated that climate change would cost a baby born in the United States in 2024 nearly \$500,000 over their lifetime.² Without sound science guiding EPA policy, those costs will soar. Adding fuel to climate change's fire will increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather, disrupt food systems, hike energy costs, and drive higher rates of climate-related illnesses. American families will ultimately pay the price in hospital visits, in lost wages, and in rebuilding after floods and fires, while polluters reap the profits.

Eliminating ORD is part of your crusade to gut the EPA and allow big business to pollute with impunity as our constituents get sicker. It follows sweeping reductions in force that eliminated 23% of EPA's workforce.³ It follows the repeal of the Endangerment Finding, which is foundational to climate protections.⁴ It follows disregarding the economic cost of fine particles and ozone damage to human health.⁵ It follows every action you have taken as Administrator that has handicapped the very institution you lead, which is charged with protecting the health and well-being of the American people. Your goal as Administrator should be to support the EPA, not sabotage it.

The EPA's mission is clear: protect human health and safeguard our environment. It is not to shield corporate polluters from accountability or trade children's lungs for quarterly earnings. Yet that is exactly the road you are marching down.

In the name of science, in the name of public health, and in the name of every American family who deserves clean air and clean water, we urge you to immediately reopen ORD and return the resources you reallocated. We request that you confirm your plans to reverse this reckless decision and ensure that independent science remains at the heart of EPA's mission immediately. Without independent research from ORD, the EPA will be unable to fulfill its mission to protect human health and the environment.⁶

¹ <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/how-epa-rollbacks-will-cost-us-dollars-and-lives#health>

² https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/press_release/earth-day-2024-report/

³ <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-epa-cutting-workforce-by-23-closing-research-division-2025-07-18/>

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/regulations-emissions-vehicles-and-engines/final-rule-rescission-greenhouse-gas-endangerment>

⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/13/nx-s1-5675307/epa-air-regulations-health-benefits>

⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/our-mission-and-what-we-do>

Thank you for your prompt attention to our request to stand with the American people, defend science, and protect our health, our communities, and our future over corporate polluters.

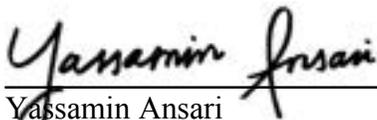
Sincerely,



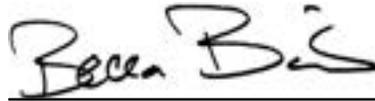
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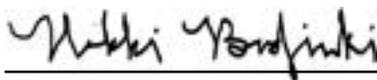
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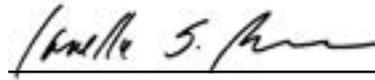
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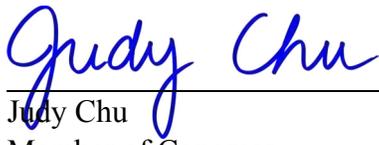
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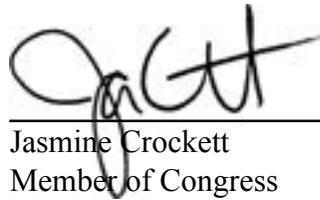
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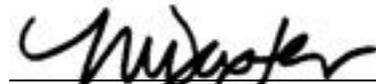
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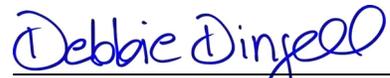
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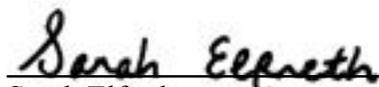
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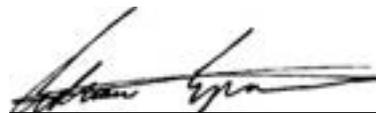
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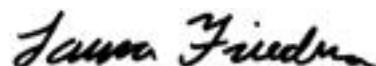
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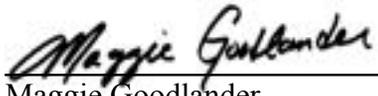
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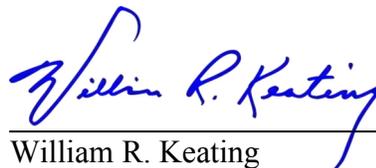
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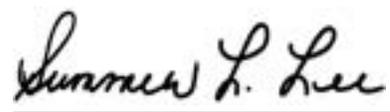
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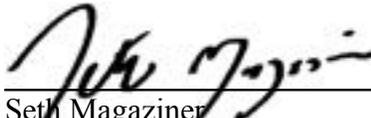
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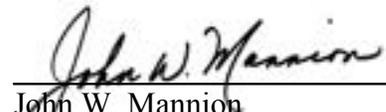
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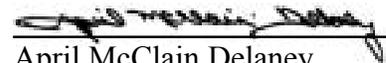
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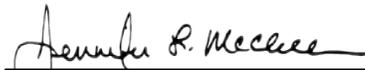
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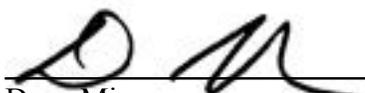
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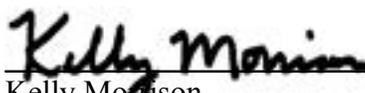
Dave Min
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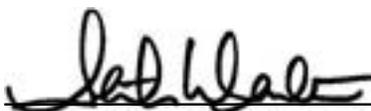
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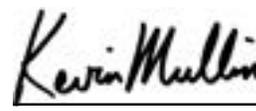
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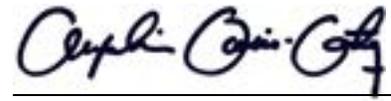
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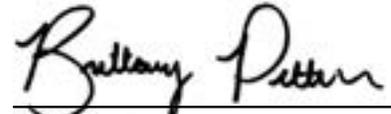
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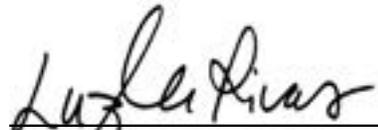
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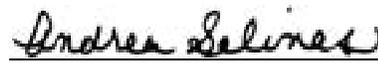
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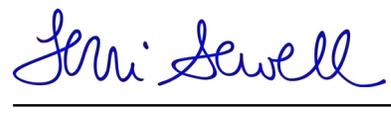
Mary Gay Scanlon
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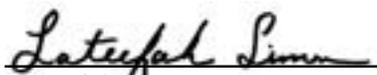
Jan Schakowsky
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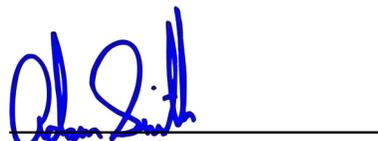
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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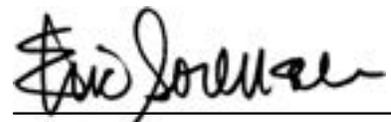
Terri A. Sewell
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Lateefah Simon
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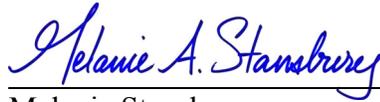
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Eric Sorensen
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Darren Soto
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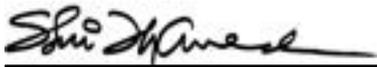
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