

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 14, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128, United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146A, United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Cochran, and Vice Chairman Leahy:

We are deeply concerned that Senate Interior Appropriations bill includes yet another cut to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). While the 2% total reduction in the Senate bill may seem small, it masks deep cuts into programs ensuring public health and enforcement, showing that this bill is another example of Republicans repeatedly pushing funding cuts that erode the EPA's core budget and capabilities. As a result of these sustained, partisan attacks, the EPA's overall budget is down 22% since 2010. Adjusted for inflation, the Senate's mark would be the smallest EPA operating budget since 1986. This trend cannot continue.

Moreover, this bill includes deep and harmful cuts in programs critical to protecting public health and the environment. For example, the Senate Interior Appropriations bill would make significant cuts to vital programs that protect clean air and water, and that hold polluters accountable, including reducing Enforcement by 10%, Compliance by 15%, human health protection in the water office by 9%, and clean air programs by 10%.

The Trump Administration has made dismantling the EPA a core mission. We urge you to oppose any legislation that advances that goal by further cutting the EPA's already decimated funding levels.

Because of these endless attacks on both the career employees and regional programs, the EPA is badly underfunded, understaffed and struggling to perform its basic and legally required functions. We cannot tolerate efforts to cripple an agency that, with increased use of Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments, is operating with staffing levels not seen since the 1980s.

The EPA provides critical technical assistance, grant funding, and support to state environmental agencies. With health crises across the country in the form of Superfund sites, lead contaminated water, and air pollution hotspots, we cannot afford to further erode the EPA's budget and dedicated workforce.

We must ensure that the EPA has the funding needed to carry out vital public health and environment protections. We urge you to oppose these insidious budget cuts, and oppose any reduction in funding for the EPA in the final Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations package. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



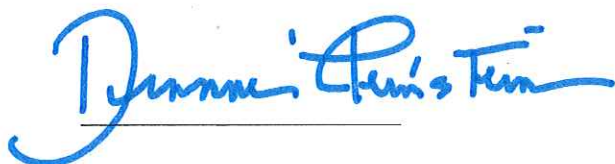
Tom Udall  
United States Senator




Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



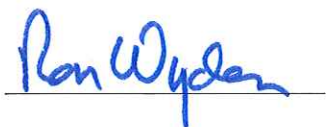
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

Ben Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

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United States Senator

Al Franken

Al Franken  
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Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Bob Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey Jr.  
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Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Patty Murray

Patty Murray  
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Jack Reed

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Bill Nelson

Bill Nelson  
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Angus King

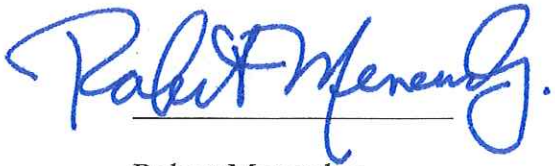
Angus S. King Jr.  
United States Senator

Tom Carper

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

Bert Sanders

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Amy Klobuchar in blue ink.

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Elizabeth Warren in blue ink.

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Jon Tester in blue ink.

Jon Tester  
United States Senator