



April 4, 2025

Sent Via U.S. Mail  
The Honorable Lee Zeldin  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
Office of the Administrator, 1101A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

We write on behalf of Waterkeeper Alliance, a global non-profit organization uniting more than 300 community-based Waterkeeper groups around the world, focusing citizen action on issues that affect our waterways, from pollution to climate change. We write today to renew our previous meeting request of December 2024, and express our opposition to recent actions taken at EPA regarding funding for communities impacted by pollution and climate change, regulation of toxic chemicals like PFAS, reductions in EPA's workforce, and proposed budget cuts. These actions put us all at risk and cast doubt on the agency's commitment to fulfill its congressionally authorized mission and to our communities.

The Waterkeeper movement patrols and protects more than 15.4 million square km of rivers, lakes, and coastlines globally for more than two billion people. In the U.S., Waterkeeper Alliance represents the interests of more than 150 U.S. Waterkeeper groups and their more than one million members and supporters that live, work, and recreate in or near waterways across the country, many severely impaired by pollution. In the past three years alone, Waterkeeper Alliance, Waterkeepers, and our respective supporters in the U.S. have submitted more than 50,000 public comments on EPA actions, and Waterkeeper Alliance and Waterkeeper organizations regularly attend public meetings and hearings with EPA, demonstrating our collective knowledge of our local communities and waterways and our strong interest in engaging on issues that impact our water, health, and the environment. Many Waterkeepers have a particular interest in PFAS, as more than 100 Waterkeeper groups participated in our unprecedented [initiative to test U.S. surface waters for PFAS contamination](#).

Specifically, Waterkeeper Alliance strongly opposes:

- The withdrawal of the proposed rule setting effluent limitations guidelines and standards for some PFAS manufacturers, which is misaligned with your stated belief that everyone in America “should be able to access clean drinking water.” According to a 2023 U.S.

Geological Survey study, at least 45% of the nation's tap water contains one or more PFAS compounds. Manufacturing facilities are a known source of PFAS contamination.

- The “reconsideration” of wastewater regulations for steam electric power plants, Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), and coal ash management regulations.
- Limiting federal oversight of certain wetlands and smaller waterbodies. This reinterpretation of the definition of “waters of the United States” could exclude many streams, wetlands, and vital waterways from federal protection, leaving them vulnerable to pollution. Smaller rivers and wetlands, crucial for water filtration, flood control, and wildlife habitats, could lack oversight, threatening clean drinking water and agricultural needs for local communities.
- The termination of hundreds of EPA staff members. This reduction in the workforce will significantly undermine the EPA's enforcement capabilities, diminishing the agency's ability to monitor and penalize polluters, leading to more environmental violations and worsening health outcomes, especially in communities already facing high levels of pollution.
- Closure of the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (formerly Office of Environmental Equity), created by President George H.W. Bush. In 2022, President Joe Biden consolidated the office into the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, which played a crucial role in upholding civil rights in America and addressing the environmental harms committed against people of color, Indigenous peoples, and rural and low-income communities which are disproportionately impacted by pollution and other environmental hazards.
- The freeze on federal funding for climate and clean energy programs—funding previously approved by Congress. EPA must meet its already committed obligations for federally funded projects across states, territories and Commonwealths. Now more than ever America needs EPA to advance policies that support innovation and a cleaner renewable energy future.
- The recently proposed 65% reduction in EPA spending, which would severely undermine the ability of EPA, states, localities, and Tribal Nations to enforce environmental laws, monitor pollution, and protect public health. For example, last year the EPA announced that your home state of New York would receive more than \$450 million for drinking water and wastewater improvements. Each year New York receives millions in funding from EPA to help protect New York's water, clean up lead pollution and toxic waste sites, and protect air quality.
- The elimination of critical federal tools and resources, such as EPA's Environmental Justice Screen (EJScreen) Mapping & Screening Tool and Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). These tools were vital for identifying areas with high pollution levels. Their removal hampers efforts to address environmental harms, particularly in communities already burdened by pollution.

Waterkeeper Alliance stands ready to work with you and your staff to ensure all communities have access to clean, safe water and a healthy environment. We urge you to reconsider and reverse these decisions in order to uphold EPA's commitment to protecting public health, ensuring everyone's right to clean air and water is protected for generations to come, and

fulfilling your stated mission of providing access to clean, safe water and a sustainable, equitable future.

Sincerely,

Alamosa Riverkeeper  
Anacostia Riverkeeper  
Assateague Coastkeeper - Assateague Coastal Trust  
Atchafalaya Basinkeeper  
Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper - Blue Water Baltimore  
Bayou City Waterkeeper  
Big Blackfoot Riverkeeper  
Bitterroot River Protection Association, a Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate  
Black-Sampit Riverkeeper  
Black Warrior Riverkeeper  
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper  
CA Urban Streams Alliance-The Stream Team, a Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate  
Cahaba Riverkeeper  
California Coastkeeper Alliance  
Calusa Waterkeeper  
Cape Fear Riverkeeper - Cape Fear River Watch  
Casco Baykeeper - Friends of Casco Bay  
Charleston Waterkeeper  
Chautauqua-Conewango Consortium, a Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate  
Chester Riverkeeper - ShoreRivers  
Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper  
Choptank Riverkeeper  
Collier County Waterkeeper  
Colorado Riverkeeper  
Columbia Riverkeeper  
Cook Inletkeeper  
Coosa Riverkeeper  
Congaree Riverkeeper  
Dan Riverkeeper  
Detroit Riverkeeper  
Emerald Coastkeeper  
Flint Riverkeeper Inc.  
French Broad Riverkeeper - MountainTrue  
Grand Riverkeeper  
Grand Traverse Bay Waterkeeper - The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay  
Great Basin Waterkeeper  
Great Salt Lake Waterkeeper  
Great Swamp Watershed Association, a Passaic River Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate

Gunpowder Riverkeeper  
Hackensack Riverkeeper  
Hudson Riverkeeper  
Humboldt Waterkeeper  
Hurricane Creekkeeper  
Kansas Riverkeeper - Friends of the Kaw  
Kentucky Riverkeeper  
Kissimmee Waterkeeper  
Lake George Waterkeeper  
Las Vegas Water Defender, a Colorado Riverkeeper Affiliate  
Long Island Soundkeeper  
Los Angeles Waterkeeper  
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association  
Lumber Riverkeeper  
Matanzas Riverkeeper  
Miami Waterkeeper  
Miles-Wye Riverkeeper  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Monterey Waterkeeper  
Narragansett Bay Riverkeeper - Save The Bay  
North Sound Waterkeeper  
Ogeechee Riverkeeper  
Pearl Riverkeeper  
Peconic Baykeeper  
Potomac Riverkeeper - Potomac Riverkeeper Network  
Puget Soundkeeper Alliance  
Raritan Riverkeeper  
Rogue Riverkeeper  
Russian Riverkeeper  
San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper  
San Diego Coastkeeper  
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper  
Satilla Riverkeeper  
Savannah Riverkeeper  
Seneca Lake Guardian, a Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate  
Shasta Waterkeeper  
Shenandoah Riverkeeper  
Snake River Waterkeeper  
Sassafras Riverkeeper - ShoreRivers  
St. Johns Riverkeeper  
Suncoast Waterkeeper  
Spokane Riverkeeper  
Spring Creek Coalition, a Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate

Suwannee Riverkeeper  
Tampa Bay Waterkeeper  
Tar Creekkeeper  
Three Rivers Waterkeeper  
Tualatin Riverkeepers  
Twin Harbors Waterkeeper  
Upper Allegheny River Project, a Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate  
Upper Coosa Riverkeeper  
Upper Potomac Riverkeeper - Potomac Riverkeeper Network  
Watauga Riverkeeper - Mountain True  
Waterkeeper Alliance  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake  
West Virginia Headwaters Waterkeeper  
White Oak Waterkeeper  
Willamette Riverkeeper  
Yadkin Riverkeeper  
Youghiogeny Riverkeeper  
Yuba River Waterkeeper