

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

Hearing on “Fiscal Year 2024 Environmental Protection Agency Budget Request”

May 10, 2023

I want to thank Administrator Regan for joining us today to discuss President Biden’s Fiscal Year 2024 budget request for the Environmental Protection Agency. Since our last EPA budget hearing, I know that you have been working diligently to implement new programs authorized by Congress. I look forward to hearing about the Agency’s progress in that regard and EPA’s critical work to protect public health and the environment.

Last Congress, Democrats delivered historic wins for the American people that are directing investments into communities across the nation. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invested \$1.2 trillion to modernize our nation’s aging and crumbling infrastructure. It included EPA funding to ensure Americans have access to safe and clean water by making infrastructure upgrades and replacing lead pipes to reduce harmful exposure. The law is also revitalizing communities by cleaning up Superfund and Brownfield sites.

The Inflation Reduction Act will help us lead the world in the transition to a clean energy economy by producing homegrown clean energy, combating the climate crisis, creating millions of good paying jobs, lowering energy cost for families, and building a healthier, more sustainable future for all Americans.

This law was enacted nine months ago and is already producing major results. Projects valued at tens of billions of dollars are already underway – more than half of them are in Republican Congressional districts. And more than 142,000 clean energy jobs have been created.

And yet, not one Republican on this Committee supported either of these laws. Instead, my Republican colleagues have spent the first months of their majority fixated on undermining these investments at every turn. And now they are threatening a default crisis with their Default on America Act that puts polluters over people. Republicans have made their agenda clear: repeal the Inflation Reduction Act and provide broad carveouts to bedrock environmental laws for polluters at the expense of the health and safety of workers and families. This path is unpopular, shortsighted, and puts the economy at great risk.

In sharp contrast, the President’s budget request builds on the success of these unprecedented investments and reflects Democrats’ commitment to the health, safety, and prosperity of all American families.

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To combat the climate crisis, the budget increases funding for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping communities build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate. It also allocates \$1.4 billion to improve air quality across the country. EPA will also drive down super pollutants with methane reduction programs and the implementation of the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act - a bipartisan law to curb the production and use of potent hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in our atmosphere.

The budget request supplements the reinstatement of the Superfund tax to fund more cleanup activities. I fought for decades to reinstate this tax, and thanks to these two new laws it is once again a reality. Over 20 percent of Americans live within three miles of a Superfund site, and remediating and revitalizing contaminated properties will create jobs, mitigate threats to human health, and directly benefit the communities affected by these sites.

The budget also bolsters EPA's work to advance environmental justice by using the new Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights to help deliver on its commitments to the communities who have struggled with legacy pollution for far too long.

I am also pleased to see that the budget devotes \$170 million to combating PFAS pollution and increases funding to effectively implement the Toxic Substances Control Act – allowing the agency to evaluate and manage risks from toxic chemicals, protecting workers and families.

This is a budget request that will ensure EPA can fulfill its mission to protect human health and the environment.

Thank you again, and I yield back.