

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 26, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write with alarm that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has suspended all of its grants and contracts, which provide vital resources dedicated to air and water quality monitoring and improvement, the remediation of sites contaminated by toxic materials, and a variety of other activities that keep Americans and their families healthy and safe. We urge you to immediately reverse this troubling action.

Time and time again, you have promised Americans that you would keep their air clean and their water safe. In November 2015, you called into MSNBC's Morning Joe and said, "I want to make sure we have clean air and clean water." Last May, when you presented your "America First Energy Plan" in North Dakota, you told Americans that "from an environmental standpoint, my priorities are very simple: clean air and clean water." And your White House website declares: "President Trump will refocus the EPA on its essential mission of protecting our air and water."

The suspension of EPA's grants and contracts does the exact opposite of your stated intention—it puts the air Americans breathe and the water we drink at risk. EPA's grants and contracts support billions of dollars' worth of research and development funding, clean-up of toxic Superfund sites, local air and water quality monitoring and testing, assessments of risks to human health from environmental hazards, measures to enhance water security, radioactive and hazardous waste removal, radiation protection, and containment assessments for underground fuel storage tanks. Moreover, if this suspension applies to existing contracts, re-starting them could prove to be an exceedingly expensive waste of taxpayer funds.

We additionally note that EPA awards most grants on a competitive basis, which must remain merit-based and free from political influence. This action seems likely to result in the opposite outcome. We urge you to immediately lift the suspension that was placed on the EPA's grants and contracts. We also ask for your prompt responses to the following requests for information:

- 1) Please provide a copy of the document that directed this suspension.
- 2) Please provide a list of all grants, contracts and other awards that have been suspended under this directive, including the date, recipient and amount of the grant, contract or other award. Some press reports have indicated that this suspension may be temporary; please also indicate which grants, contracts and other awards are expected to be suspended indefinitely, and when funding for the rest will be reinstated.

- 3) For any existing contract that has been suspended, please provide an estimate of the costs associated with re-starting it, as well as the legal basis for its suspension.
- 4) Please direct the EPA to provide us with a copy of any and all documents related to the decision to suspend contracts, grants and other awards (including any and all written or electronic correspondence, audiotapes, electronic records, videotapes, photographs, telephone messages, voice mail messages, e-mails, facsimiles, daily agendas and calendars, information about meetings and/or discussions, whether in-person or over the telephone, agendas, minutes and a list of participants for those meetings and/or discussions, and transcripts and notes of any such meetings and/or discussions).
- 5) Who approved this action, both within EPA and at the White House?

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator



Thomas R. Carper
U.S. Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senator



Bernard Sanders
U.S. Senator

Cc: Acting Administrator Catherine McCabe