



January 15, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20460

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Mr. Jeff Witte State of New Mexico

Frank Sylvester, Designated Federal Officer,
EPA

Dear Administrator-Designate Zeldin:

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) congratulates you on your nomination to lead the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under President Trump. Through your time in the military and time serving the people of New York in the U.S. Congress, your commitment to public service is clear. As elected and appointed government officials, we understand the dedication required to achieve feats like securing funding for mitigating community health and environmental impacts on Plum Island. We also applaud your time working with the bipartisan Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus and look forward to your continued leadership and commitment to cooperative federalism and supporting community needs at EPA.

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) is a non-partisan federal advisory committee, chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, to provide EPA leadership with targeted advice. For the past 32 years the LGAC has uplifted perspectives of mayors, county officials, city managers, tribal leaders, and state representatives from across the country. Members of our committee are on the front lines of human health and environmental protection, managing economic growth and resiliency, creating jobs, and providing for the overall health and safety of our communities. Our collective experience tackling issues such as clean air, water quality, and waste management enables us to anticipate and mitigate unintended consequences of regulations, and bring practical, grounded solutions to complex environmental problems.

In addition to our unique position as local officials and advisors to EPA, our Small Community Advisory Subcommittee (SCAS) advises on environmental issues and concerns for residents of smaller communities. The SCAS works diligently to offer advice that strengthens

the capacity of small communities throughout the U.S., working collaboratively with federal and state agencies responsible for environmental regulations that impact small communities. What is more, we offer the experience of navigating federal regulations and finding ways to meet environmental protection standards in ways that minimizes the burden on our residents. As you begin your tenure, we are here to serve as your link to local governments.

Over the last several years, our recommendations to the EPA contain several consistent themes.

1. **Infrastructure Funding:** Continued support for infrastructure is critical to not only sustain economic growth, but also to protect human health and safety. Local governments are facing increased hazardous weather (flooding, drought, wildfire) with aging infrastructure that is increasingly unreliable. Emerging contaminants, such as PFAS, also require technological updates and advanced treatment. Removal of lead service lines in water distribution systems is yet another financial burden for many communities. Continued funding to address the confluence of these issues is essential for local governments to meet the needs of Americans and keep crucial services affordable.
2. **Technical Assistance:** Beyond funding, we encourage you to institutionalize technical assistance and support for the men and women working with utilities and local governments to manage the day-to-day challenges noted above. This support can come in several forms, including data-sharing, scientific expertise, financial and managerial technical assistance, compliance support, training, and workforce development, especially in the water sector. Current technical assistance programs provide needed resources to local governments to access available funding, consider and evaluate multiple solutions, and more. These resources are especially important to the small and rural communities that make this country so strong. These types of investments in local communities and in our air, water, and waste infrastructure leads to healthier and stronger people and economies.
3. **Eliminating Waste and Improving Efficiency:** There is tremendous opportunity for efficiency when it comes to processing funding from the federal government to the local level. The people best situated to make decisions regarding health and the environment are the local community members and residents themselves, and we strongly recommend that more funding go *directly to local governments* whenever possible. The American Rescue Plan demonstrated the effectiveness of direct allocation to local governments; the funding was used efficiently and effectively. Where statute requires resources to pass through state governments before going to local governments, we advocate for the use of incentives and deterrents so that states process funds faster and more efficiently, and work with local governments to yield a greater return on investment for the American people. Additionally, there is greater efficiency and efficacy in using existing frameworks and programs in place at EPA and within states, whenever possible.
4. **Producer and Polluter Pay Models:** Wherever possible, we encourage a greater emphasis be placed on “producer-” and “polluter pays” models to ensure local communities are not left with the check for mitigating natural resource damages and human health impacts we neither caused nor created.

Attached you will find an appendix of recent issues and positions that our committee has provided to the Agency. Since the LGAC’s inception in 1994, EPA has fully implemented more than 50 percent of the LGAC’s recommendations, and we are confident that we can continue to serve as a valuable sounding board.

As you transition into your new role, we extend an open invitation to discuss shared goals and opportunities. We are committed to supporting the administration in achieving regulatory efficiency and effectiveness without compromising human health, safety, and environmental standards. We look forward to working together to foster economic prosperity and safeguard the environment for future generations. Again, thank you for your dedication to public service and please know our committee is ready to assist you in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Leirion Gaylor Baird, Chair

Attachments (2)

LGAC Recommendations Summary

SCAS Report on Environmental Priorities for Small Towns

cc: Utech, Dan

Bailey, Kevin

Bowles, Jack

Lieberman, Paige