

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
On the Interior, Environment  
and related Agencies  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
On the Interior, Environment  
and related Agencies  
128 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We write to respectfully request that you include robust funding for the priorities that follow this note in the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2021. If enacted, these priorities will help our constituents who are advocating to improve the health of their communities deliver on their goals.

Environmental justice is a movement that seeks to address the unfair distribution of pollution that low-income communities and communities of color bear. As members who care deeply about environmental justice issues, we support the programs listed at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Interior (DOI) for their assistance to overburdened and vulnerable populations. By providing this funding, Congress can ensure that these agencies have the tools they need to protect our most vulnerable communities.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact Radha Adhar at [Radha\\_Adhar@duckworth.senate.gov](mailto:Radha_Adhar@duckworth.senate.gov), Adam Zipkin [Adam\\_Zipkin@booker.senate.gov](mailto:Adam_Zipkin@booker.senate.gov) or Kenneth Martin at [Kenneth\\_Martin@epw.senate.gov](mailto:Kenneth_Martin@epw.senate.gov) with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

---

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

---

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

---

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

---

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

---

Jeffery A. Merkley  
United States Senator

---

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

---

Robert P. Casey Jr.  
United States Senator

---

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

---

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

---

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

---

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

---

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

---

Tina Smith  
United States Senator

---

Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

---

Doug Jones  
United States Senator

**Fund EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance at \$552 million:** EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) is the Agency's program dedicated to improving compliance and enforcing the Nation's environmental laws. When warranted, OECA will take criminal or civil enforcement action, working with state and Federal partners, to deliver the benefits of environmental laws to the American public. Without an active and vigorous enforcement program, EPA cannot implement its mission of protecting public health and the environment. Far too often, enforcement action is lacking in environmental justice communities.

We also request the following report language:

*The Committee directs OECA to perform a full enforcement inspection at least once at all facilities in 2020. No later than October 2020 and continuing for at least one year, OECA will implement or ensure implementation of continuous fence-line monitoring for hazardous air pollutants at all sources that have reported emissions in the Toxic Release Inventory or the National Emissions Inventory of chloroprene or ethylene oxide. OECA will use the best available monitoring technology for these pollutants and will release or ensure the release of results of the monitoring data at least weekly on a publicly available website.*

*OECA will also report to congress on their enforcement at chemical, petrochemical, and refineries, including following the major releases during and after Hurricane Harvey.*

**Fund EPA's Environmental Justice Program activities at \$15 million:** This program is necessary for the Environmental Justice (EJ) Program at EPA to build its internal capacity for environmental justice policy and decision making at the Agency. The program will also ensure that environmental justice communities have access to EPA's capacity and skills and can benefit from specialized agency programs.

We also request the following report language:

*Within the available funds, the Committee directs a minimum of \$5 million be used to fund the Environmental Justice Small Grants program, a minimum of \$3 million should be directed to fund the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program and a minimum of \$1 million should be directed to fund the Interagency Federal Working Group on Environmental Justice.*

*The Committee recognizes the Agency's increasing responsibilities related to the protection of public health and the environment, especially on frontline, traditionally disadvantaged communities. The Committee directs EPA to continue publishing EJSCREEN and to use nationally consistent data, environmental data and demographic data which includes data relating to race, ethnicity and income, when developing the tool. The Committee directs EPA to ensure that EJSCREEN has the capacity to produce maps and reports by geographical area. The Committee directs the Agency to submit to*

*Congress within 180 of enactment of this bill a report detailing the progress made on addressing the unique environmental challenges faced by EJ populations.*

**Robustly fund EPA’s Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP):** This Partnership reconnects urban communities—particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed—with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies. The UWFP joins federal agency science and community-led revitalization efforts to improve our Nation’s water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.

**Fund EPA’s State and Tribal Assistance Grants at \$5 billion:** Indigenous communities face severe disparities in water-related infrastructure maintenance and improvement and water contamination. Tribal systems also face unique concerns associated with insufficient funding, complex jurisdictional challenges and legal and regulatory gaps. The State and Tribal Assistance grants help alleviate these disparities by providing funding for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), providing safe water for small and disadvantaged communities, reducing lead in drinking water, and providing lead testing in schools.

**Fund EPA’s Small and Disadvantaged Communities Drinking Water Grant Program at \$60 million:** This program helps ensure environmental justice communities have the resources they need to comply with the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Eligible projects include household water quality testing and assistance that primarily benefit a community on a per-household basis. EPA is required to give underserved communities preference for this program and make grants to public water systems, tribal water systems, or states on behalf of an underserved community. EPA may waive all or some of the 45% nonfederal share of project costs.

**Fund EPA’s Drinking Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Grant Program at \$5 million:** The Drinking Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability grant program provides funding for small and disadvantaged communities to combat the effects of climate change on drinking water infrastructure that are often disproportionately shouldered by our most vulnerable populations. Communities can use this money to enhance water-use efficiency, modify or relocate existing drinking water infrastructure that is being impaired by natural hazards, enhance energy efficiency or use of renewable energy, and develop implementation measures to increase the resilience of the community to natural hazards.

**Fund EPA’s Lead Risk Reduction Program at \$20 million:** This program is critical to reducing lead exposure, which is a significant and widespread threat to people’s health, especially for children. The risks, which include behavior and learning problems such as reduced IQs and ADHD; slowed growth; hearing and speech problems; anemia; and in rare cases, seizures, coma and even death, are very serious and debilitating. Studies have found that children’s health may be affected adversely even at extremely low blood lead levels, and no level of lead in blood is considered safe.

**Fund EPA's Brownfield program at \$200 million:** Brownfields are abandoned properties that are not being re-purposed because of the likely presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants. Brownfield result in neighborhood "blight;" they make people feel unsafe and they drag down property values. EPA's Brownfield's program drives economic growth by providing funds and technical assistance to assess and clean-up contaminated property sites for redevelopment and helps promote successful local economic development in communities across the United States. Using funds from the Brownfields program, communities are able to convert liabilities into productive local assets. In the past, Brownfield funds have successfully laid the groundwork for manufacturing plants, commercial spaces, housing, community recreation facilities and parks. Redeveloping contaminated properties creates jobs, improves environmental quality as well as boosts local and state tax revenues.

**Fund EPA's Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program at \$90 million:** EPA administers grants to companies seeking to replace their old diesel engines for cleaner-burning models. Over the past 10 years, EPA has granted about \$700 million worth of DERA funds. The Agency estimated the program has upgraded 73,000 vehicles or pieces of equipment and saved 450 million gallons of diesel. This program is especially important for environmental justice communities, who are often adjacent to major highways.

**Fund the National Park Service's (NPS) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) initiative at \$30 million:** This program allows the National Park Service to award dozens of grants to communities around the country to improve outdoor recreation infrastructure, revitalize local economies and enhance quality of life in neighborhoods. In low income communities and communities of color, there is a tremendous need for outdoor recreational opportunities. Priority is given to shovel-ready projects involving public-private partnerships, underserved communities and those that provide youth with employment or job training opportunities. This initiative leverages non-taxpayer dollars by awarding matching grants at a minimum of 1:1 ratio and allows states to put forward the projects they believe best meet the outdoor recreation needs of their communities.

**Fund NPS's Historic Preservation Fund at \$150 million:** This program provides money to state historic preservation offices, the boots on the ground in communities all across the country who work with communities to identify and preserve resources important to all Americans. A funding increase for the Fund would ensure that more resources like money, people and time are available to help people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to understand how preservation programs work and benefit their communities, and thus enhance the number of black and brown people actively participating in historic preservation.

**Fund NPS's National Heritage Area program at \$40 million:** This program helps protect stories that are regionally distinct and nationally significant. Of the 55 congressionally designated heritage areas several including the Gullah Geechee National Heritage Corridor, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, preserve and interpret elements of the African American, Latino American and Native American experience. Increasing funding for Heritage Areas will allow the program to provide additional grant money to its partners who in turn would offer more programming highlighting the contributions of traditionally underrepresented and deliberately overlooked groups to the development of this country.

**Fund the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment program at \$10 million:** This program provides support to non-profit, state, and local government youth and veteran serving organizations to develop educational experiences in natural resource careers to young people in underserved communities and Veterans. This program focuses on communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation activities and gives participants hands-on experience and mentoring at a variety of USFWS national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries and ecological services offices.

**Fund the FWS's Tribal Wildlife Grants Program at \$6 million:** This program provides funding for federally recognized Tribal governments to develop and implement programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat, including species of Native American cultural or traditional importance and species that are not hunted or fished. These grants can be used to provide technical or financial assistance and enable Tribes across the country to develop and implement projects that benefit their fish and wildlife resources.

**Robustly fund DOI's Pathways Program:** This program represents three developmental programs tailored to promote employment opportunities for students and recent graduates of all ages and backgrounds in the Federal workforce. This includes the Internship Program for current students; the Recent Graduates Program for people who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs (2 years from the date the graduate completed an academic course of study); and the reinvigorated Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program for people who obtained an advanced degree (e.g., graduate or professional degree) within the preceding two years.

**Robustly fund DOI's Diversity Change Agent Program:** The Department of the Interior established the Diversity Change Agent Program to affect and mobilize a critical mass of stakeholders to embrace and enact its Inclusive Workplace Strategy. The agents are trained to assist in efforts to educate the workforce and position diversity and inclusion as a mission critical imperatives. The primary objectives of the program are to diplomatically draw Interior's workforce into the inclusivity debate; have agents serving as catalysts for change; and to get managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees to a point where embrace diversity and inclusion as strategic opportunities. Essentially, the program fosters a diverse, inclusive and welcoming Department of the Interior.