



UUSJ Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Instructions for Preparing Your Letter

Elements of an Effective Letter:

- Decide who you are writing to: your Senators and Representative or both.
- Focus on our topic: Maintain and increase funding for existing staff, programs and research & development activities of the EPA and NOAA.
- Do some research, and thank your Senator or Representative if he/she has previously been a supporter of EPA/NOAA funding. [NOTE: You can actually download and view your Congressional delegation's voting record on environmental issues at <http://scorecard.lcv.org/>].
- Be brief and clearly state the issue, specific concern and your position.
- Be original and speak from the heart; if possible describe a personal experience or story on the subject; or include 1-2 talking points, in your own words, to support the main message.
- Include a specific action request(s). "I urge you to..."
- **Include the date, your name and full address.**

**SAMPLE LETTER TO CONGRESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:
SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED FUNDING OF THE EPA and NOAA**

Personalize your letter. Include your full address. Do not put individual letters in a sealed envelope.

TODAY'S DATE

NAME OF MEMBER OF CONGRESS OR
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

NAME OF SENATOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

I am a Unitarian Universalist [optional: from Name of Congregation and/or city] guided by my faith [as a person of conscience] that clean air, clean water, safe food, and a livable climate are human rights. As stewards of the earth we must take care of our natural bounty for our children and their children. I hold a reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of life.

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Administration's proposed FY2018 budget cuts of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The work of these agencies is essential and **I strongly urge you to vote for their continued full funding and even increase their funding for the protection of our public health, preservation of our natural resources, and the protection of the environment.**

[insert a personal experience, story, or pick 1-2 talking points, in your own words, to support the main message. Or... "We need a healthy environment and healthy economy. Budget cuts to these two agencies will lead to major reductions in: the standard of living for all Americans; and reduction of jobs necessary in many local communities that clean up hazardous waste, provide clean water, preserve our natural resources and develop a more equitable and sustainable world.']

I strongly support the work of the EPA and NOAA to restore ecosystems, mitigate climate change and ensure environmental justice for impacted communities from industrial and agricultural pollution. **I urge you to speak up and maintain the existing funding levels for EPA and NOAA for FY2018.** Their mission is critical.

Thank you for your consideration of my [concerns/story]. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
YOUR NAME and FULL STREET ADDRESS!

Background and Talking Points

Continue Our Federal Investments in Promoting Environmental Justice and a Sustainable World: Oppose Proposed Cuts to FY2018 Budget for the EPA and NOAA

ISSUE: Recent proposed Administration budget cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) & the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) jeopardize our national commitment to protecting the environment, preserving our natural resources, advancing human rights of frontline communities, and improving public health. Such devastating cuts are in direct conflict with the UU vision of building a sustainable world, as outlined in our 7th Principle.

ASK: We urge members of Congress to maintain and increase the budgets for the EPA and NOAA, thus reinforcing our federal commitment to critical research, programs and enforcement efforts aimed at building a sustainable world.

BACKGROUND: The President's fiscal year 2018 Budget Blueprint proposes approximately \$3.5 billion in cuts to research, programs, and enforcement activities conducted by the EPA and NOAA. These proposed massive budget cuts severely compromise the existing federal commitment to protecting our country's natural resources and the public's health. Such cuts will lead to the elimination of numerous federal-state-local partnerships as well as thousands of jobs. As we have seen in the past, these consequences disproportionately impact our most vulnerable populations and further reinforce the great inequalities and disparities that we are currently facing as a nation.

The \$3.5 billion in proposed cuts include:

- Decreasing grants to help states monitor public water systems from \$102M to \$71M.
- Reducing spending on civil and criminal enforcement against corporate and individual offenders of federal environmental laws by 60%.
- Eliminating \$400M for coastal waterway regional cleanup programs, including the Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound, Puget Sound, San Francisco Bay, South Florida, and the Great Lakes.
- Reducing overall funding for the Superfund program (focused on cleaning up sites contaminated by hazardous substances and pollutants) by 45%, and for the Brownfields program (which provides funding to local communities to repurpose former industrial sites to environmentally sound community options) by 30%.
- Eliminating a \$6M research and screening effort targeting chemicals classified as "endocrine disrupters", which have been linked to breast cancer in women, birth defects in children, and other diseases and chronic conditions.
- Zeroing out over \$250M in targeted NOAA grants and programs supporting coastal and marine management, research and education. NOAA budget cuts endanger climate science research and data collection, and coastal resilience programs to help communities adapt to the increased risk of extreme weather and sea level rise.

Talking Points:

- **I oppose the proposed \$3.5B cuts to the 2018 budget for the EPA and NOAA.** These cuts greatly dilute our nation's commitment to protecting the environment and completely devastate the ability of EPA to support states and local communities to address environmental challenges and enforce national environmental laws.
- **We must protect our environment for future generations.** Federal investments and collective responsibility in protecting the environment and promoting a sustainable world for current and future generations is critical. Severe cuts will deny our future generations clean air, clean water and the natural beauty of this great country.
- **We need to maintain a healthy ecology and healthy economy - cutting the budget of the EPA and NOAA is bad policy.** The proposed cuts will:
 - **Result in loss of thousands of jobs** created through various federal-state-local partnerships supported by EPA and NOAA, thus jeopardizing the economic stability of local communities.
 - **Deny services provided by EPA-funded programs to local communities**, including flood protection and erosion control; wildlife food & habitat; healthy fisheries; water quality and safety.
 - **Compromise the health and well-being of vulnerable populations** who will lose access to EPA environmental justice local grant funds and may be at risk of contaminated land, air and water.