



Eugene Hudson, Jr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

J. David Cox, Sr.
National President

Augusta Y. Thomas
NVP for Women & Fair Practices

March 2, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

On behalf of the thousands of federal employees who work at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I am writing to express our strong concern about recent reports in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has recommended to the Trump administration deep cuts in the FY 2018 EPA budget to help fund a substantial \$54 billion increase in Department of Defense (DoD) funding.

OMB has recommended, according to these reports, that:

- The EPA budget be slashed by 25% or \$8.2 billion down to \$6.1 billion.
- The EPA staff be cut by 20% in the first year, or 15,000 down to 12,000.
- EPA grants to states, including its air and water programs, be cut by 30%.
- 38 separate EPA programs be totally eliminated. Programs designated to be zeroed-out include climate-change initiatives, environmental justice programs, funding for Alaskan native villages, and a national electronic manifest system for hazardous waste.

While AFGE supports increases in DoD funding that enhance readiness, the EPA budget should not be further eviscerated to achieve that goal. EPA already has been cut to the bone this past decade as a result of harmful austerity policies. For example, EPA funding has been reduced by over 20% since 2011 and it is operating today at 1989 staffing levels. In addition, further cuts could leave EPA with not enough federal employees to do the required work, forcing the agency to outsource work to more costly private contractors – negating much of the financial benefit from the cuts in the first place.

Our nation has made tremendous progress in ensuring that every American has clean air to breathe, clean water to drink and uncontaminated land on which to live, work and play. Indeed, anyone who visits Beijing is reminded of what some U.S. cities once looked like before the founding of EPA in December 1970. Much of EPA's work today involves preserving those gains, which should not be taken



for granted. There are also emerging new threats as well serious gaps in our environmental safety net, as the drinking water crisis in Flint, MI, painfully demonstrates.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter. Please feel free to contact Alan Kadrofske in our Legislative Department (202-639-4000; kadroa@afge.org) if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Kahn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Kahn
Legislative Director