

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 18, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We write regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to terminate approximately \$40 million in funding intended to prevent localized pollution and mitigate the effects of flooding in Hampton, Virginia, and to support economic development, enhance resilient infrastructure, and lower energy costs across seven counties in Southwest Virginia. We strongly urge you to reverse this decision that will impact efforts to improve resiliency, environmental conservation, energy efficiency, and economic outcomes in communities across the Commonwealth.

The *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) provided approximately \$2 billion to EPA to establish the Community Change Grants Program. Congress intended this funding to be used to support projects that increase community resilience, reduce pollution, and build community capacity. In 2024, EPA selected 105 projects, including two projects in Virginia.

The City of Hampton, Virginia, was awarded just over \$20 million to address significant flood risk in the historic Aberdeen Gardens neighborhood. In a locality where 22 percent of properties are in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-designated Special Flood Hazard Areas, the city and their nonprofit partner, Wetlands Watch, planned to leverage federal funding to advance 51 projects to update stormwater infrastructure, initiate stream-restoration projects, and construct community rain gardens. These projects were intended to mitigate flood risk, lessen the financial burden of flooding on the neighborhood's residents, and improve environmental and public health outcomes.

The United Way of Southwest Virginia and the University of Virginia were awarded nearly \$20 million to fund eight projects across the Virginia coalfields. Funding would have supported the construction of flood-resilient housing infrastructure in Buchanan County and a new community center and flood shelter in Dickenson County, two communities that have been devastated by flooding and extreme weather in recent years. Additionally, the grant would support energy efficiency upgrades at childcare facilities in eight counties, enabling thousands of dollars of energy cost savings to go towards childcare worker salaries.

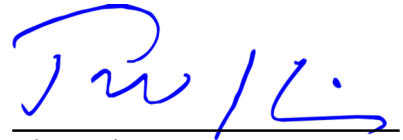
In terminating these grants, EPA wrote to awardees that, “the objectives of the award are no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities.” We are deeply concerned that the EPA no longer considers community resiliency, environmental conservation, and economic development to be administration funding priorities. EPA’s decision to terminate these grants will leave communities in Virginia less resilient, less prosperous, and more vulnerable to extreme weather-related disasters. We urge you to reinstate this critical funding for communities throughout Virginia.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress