



Why We Need EPA:

STATEMENTS FROM LOCAL, WESTERN ELECTED OFFICIALS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EPA FUNDING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

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Pete McKay, County Commissioner in San Juan County, Colorado

“Silverton and San Juan County continue to strengthen our relationship with the EPA during this critical discovery period and we hope that our combined knowledge will lead to successful remediation in our basin. We would like to use a success here as a template for much needed cleanups in other parts of Colorado, as well as throughout the entire West. Full funding for the EPA in general, and for superfund projects in particular, is an absolute necessity if we are to accomplish these goals.

“In February 2016, the governing boards of San Juan County and Silverton unanimously supported superfund designation for the mining network in our community and committed to work with the EPA on cleanup. These efforts cannot advance without the agency’s financial support.”

Jill Ryan, County Commissioner in Eagle County, Colorado

“It’s concerning that an agency so crucial to human health is facing severe budget cuts. The proposed 2018 federal budget could render the EPA at the lowest funding level since the 1970s and lowest staffing levels since the Reagan administration. Remember Flint, Michigan? Lead contamination in the drinking water was responsible for ‘irreversible’ effects to the city’s children. Issues like this are not more widespread because of the EPA.

“A not-so-distant local example occurred in 1984, with the flooding of the Eagle Mine above Minturn. The heavy metals turned the Eagle River orange, killing the fish and threatening the valley’s drinking water. As a result, the mine and the town of Gilman were placed on the EPA’s Superfund Site list, and cleanup began.”

Cindy Riegel, County Commissioner in Teton County, Idaho

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“Teton County, Idaho, lies on the west side of the Tetons, where snowmelt from the mountains is captured in a large wetland basin with the Teton River at its core. The Teton River is the lifeblood of our community and supports a diversity of agricultural operations and recreational opportunities. EPA funding has been instrumental in maintaining a healthy Teton River watershed and healthy local economy. Key projects have included cutthroat trout habitat restoration, a wastewater treatment facility and soil health initiatives to improve farming practices.”

Ed Noonan, City Commissioner in Helena, Montana

“One of the unknown facts of EPA funding is how it is available for community development in urban and rural locations that suffered under industrial pollution. In Helena, Montana, community organizers were able to help renew the city’s old railroad district, helping to lead to tax increment grants to businesses in that area.”

Debra March, Mayor of Henderson, Nevada

“Maintaining a healthy environment and safe drinking water are both critical to the wellbeing of families in Henderson and across our nation. Slashing EPA funding could place programs at risk that are helping to protect air and water quality and that are part of efforts to revitalize areas such as brownfields where environmental contamination has stopped economic development. The city of Henderson is using an EPA brownfields grant to fund site research and environmental assessments on eligible properties along our historic Boulder Highway corridor, and it’s this type of important investment in revitalization and reuse efforts that could be eliminated if budgets are cut.”

Kalen Jones, City Councilor in Moab, Utah

“The EPA and its funding are critical to ongoing efforts to protect the air and water quality of Moab. Just a month ago, the EPA led a local training to prepare for a possible oil spill on the Colorado River, an unfortunate but necessary contingency to plan for on a river that provides water to millions of downstream users. Visitors and residents come here for our clean air, and the EPA plays a central role in addressing our growing regional haze issue. Moab’s culinary water comes from a sole source aquifer, and participation by the EPA helps steer development in a responsible direction while protecting our watershed.”