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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

RICHARD M. RUSSELL, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
GABRIELLE BATKIN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

September 14, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

We write to request information regarding workforce reductions at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA workforce has already been shrunk by about 10 percent in recent years, from 17,106 full-time employees (FTEs) in FY 2012 to 15,408 FTEs in FY 2016<sup>1</sup>. We are concerned that adoption of the Trump Administration's proposed FY 2018 25 percent cut (3,785 FTEs) to EPA's workforce and further White House direction to plan for additional longer term down-sizing<sup>2</sup> would damage EPA's ability to carry out its Congressionally-mandated mission to protect public health and the environment.<sup>3</sup>

According to media reports, EPA has already begun actively reducing the work force by offering termed buyouts (for voluntary separation from the agency) and early-outs (for voluntary early retirement) to up to 1,227 employees, who would then have to leave EPA by September 2, 2017.<sup>4</sup> EPA's Office of Research and Development could lose up to 183 people, the office handling contaminated Superfund and other hazardous waste sites could lose up to 94 employees, the office handling chemical safety could lose 50 employees, and the enforcement office could lose up to 51 employees. Regional EPA offices could also be impacted. For example, there could also be up to 159 buyouts and early-outs in Region 3, which is based in Philadelphia and covers the mid-Atlantic, and up to 147 buyouts and early-outs in Region 6, which is based in Dallas and covers Texas and the surrounding states.

To evaluate the impact of the ongoing and planned personnel cuts, we request information on EPA reorganizations, FTE ceilings and staffing levels, the specifics and impacts of ongoing buyouts and early-outs, and the plans for further workforce reductions. Please answer the following questions and provide the requested information no later than September 29, 2017.

1. Since the submission of the FY 2018 budget, has EPA initiated any reorganizations to address programmatic changes (including more narrowly targeted reorganizations, such as changes to EPA offices and divisions or changes to reflect the elimination of climate-focused efforts)? If so, please identify the changes in positions, staffing levels, and types of program work that have or would be affected by each initiated reorganization. Please also update your response to this request on a quarterly basis going forward.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/budget>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/memoranda/2017/M-17-22.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-06/documents/fy18-cj-01-summary-tables.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/07/17/stories/1060057454>

2. Please provide the FY 2017 and FY 2018 FTE ceilings by program project (as identified in the Administration's budget request), and by program office and regional office.
3. Provide the most up-to-date numbers on the current workforce levels (i.e., current number of employees onboard) by program project area, and by program office and regional office.
4. Please identify the number of departures since the hiring freeze was put in place in FY 2017, and indicate how many additional departures are estimated for the balance of the fiscal year, including those resulting from voluntary buyouts and early-outs. How many individuals have already submitted their paperwork under voluntary buyouts and early-outs? Please provide these numbers organized by program project area, and by program office and regional office. Please also update your response to this request on a quarterly basis going forward.
5. Have there been any new hires from outside EPA since the hiring freeze was imposed? If so, how many? Please provide these numbers organized by program project area, and by program office and regional office. Please also update your response to this request on a quarterly basis going forward.
6. Please provide EPA's best estimate of the actual number of employees that will be onboard as of October 1, 2017, accounting for the effects of attrition, the projected voluntary buyouts and early-outs, projected hiring, and any other factors that might affect these numbers.
7. Please describe how EPA developed the numbers for the maximum number of voluntary buyouts and early-outs that each program or regional office can offer this summer, along with an identification of the specific programs and types of work that could be impacted by the voluntary buyouts and early-outs. Please also provide the number of employees that would be remaining in each program or regional office if the maximum number of buyouts and early-outs was accepted in that program or regional office.
8. Has EPA conducted any analysis of the impacts on EPA activities, and the resulting impacts on public health and the environment, of reducing the EPA workforce: (a) to the levels projected by EPA for FY 2017; and (b) to the levels projected by EPA in the FY 2018 budget request? If so, provide those analyses. If not, explain why the EPA or the Administration did not believe such analysis was necessary prior to directing offices to offer buyouts and early-outs in FY 2017 and/or prior to developing the EPA budget for FY 2018.
9. Please provide a copy of EPA's Draft Agency Reform Plan, Draft Agency FY 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan, and Draft Workforce Reduction Plan<sup>5</sup> it was supposed to have submitted to OMB by June 30, 2017, as well as a copy of the final Plans once they are submitted to OMB by the September 2017 due date.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://1yxsm73j7aop3quc9y5ifaw3-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Reforming-the-Federal-Government.Flynn\\_.4.17.17.pdf](http://1yxsm73j7aop3quc9y5ifaw3-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Reforming-the-Federal-Government.Flynn_.4.17.17.pdf)

Thank you very much for your attention to this important matter. Please provide your response no later than September 29, 2017. [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



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Thomas R. Carper  
Ranking Member



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



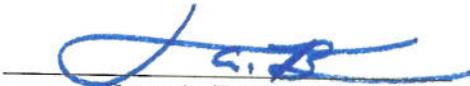
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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



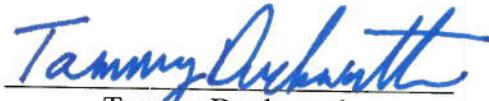
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Jeffery A. Merkley  
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator