



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OurEnvironment.org Gives Americans a Voice to Speak Out Against Cuts to the EPA and Environmental Programs

Washington, D.C. (December 5, 2017) — With the December 8 deadline to fund the U.S. government quickly approaching, [AFGE National Council of EPA Locals #238](#), the [Center for American Progress](#), [Environmental Defense Fund](#), [Moms Clean Air Force](#), [Indiana Wildlife Federation](#), [Natural Resources Council of Maine](#), and [Dakota Resources Council](#) today launched [OurEnvironment.org](#), a new website and initiative to highlight testimonies from Americans who depend on environmental and public health programs to keep their families safe.

“After passing a tax plan that will give breaks to millionaires and corporations, President Trump and his allies in Congress are now poised to pass a budget that includes devastating cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and programs that protect our air, water, land and endangered species,” said [AFGE 238 President, John J. O’Grady](#). “Without fully funding the EPA, U.S. communities will be even more vulnerable to contaminated drinking water, climate change, and toxic pollution.”

[OurEnvironment.org](#) highlights voices from across the country who have shared why we need to strengthen—not weaken—enforcement of our nation’s bedrock environmental laws. The testimonies featured on the website include Americans from across the country—working mothers, health advocates, oystermen and tribal leaders from Indiana to Virginia and Montana—who are connected by a single message: policymakers must stand up for our families’ health and fight for future generations.

- **Paul Novak, AFGE #704, Great Lakes, OH:** At 9 years old, Paul could see the smoke plume from the Cuyahoga River on fire. He has now become an advocate for clean water and the restoration of both Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River to spur recreation and economic activity in Cleveland. (Watch the [30-second video](#) and [60-second video](#))
- **Melissa Nootz, Livingston, MT:** Melissa, who previously lived in a Superfund site, experienced two miscarriages. Her daughter tested with lead levels in her blood.
- **Kim Miller, Virginia Beach, VA:** A mother of four daughters born and raised in Hampton Roads, Kim works with frontline communities to address the effects of climate change in Southern Virginia.
- **Tracy Williams, Norfolk, VA:** Tracy, whose son suffers from asthma, lives next door to a Norfolk Southern plant. Her home and neighborhood are regularly covered in coal dust, requiring her to change the filters in her house on a weekly basis.
- **Alden Cleanthes, Chesapeake, VA:** An organizer, publicly appointed local official, and mother, Alden advocates for environmental protections motivated by her son, who suffered from pancreatitis at nine months old, likely due to contaminated drinking water.

(more)

- **Greg Harger, Indianapolis, IN:** Head coach for the Indiana Invaders, Greg is a conservation advocate who has helped develop more than five miles of urban wilderness trails and 210 acres of natural wildlife habitat along the White River over the past decade and a half.
- **Melanie Donnell, Springfield, MO:** A school teacher in Springfield, Melanie and her daughter Vivienne, who has cystic fibrosis, are advocating together for clean air. When the air pollution is bad, it makes breathing even more difficult for her daughter.
- **Nanda Sparks, Joplin, MO:** A health educator and phlebotomist, Nanda has seen many kids with high levels of lead in their systems, including her own daughter. After the big E5 tornado came through Joplin in 2011, lead-contaminated soil from an old Superfund site was picked up and thrown around. Many children, including her grandson, experienced high levels of lead in their blood. A lack of EPA funding for cleanup would leave even more children in Joplin susceptible to high lead levels.
- **Bill Mook, Walpole, ME:** Bill is the owner of Mook Sea Farms and an oyster hatchery in Maine. He has worked head on to address the threats of ocean and coastal acidification on Maine's shellfish industry. Bill is an advocate for the idea that environmental health is critical for the growth of aquaculture.
- **Lidie Robbins, Parker Pond, ME:** A native of Vienna, Maine, Lidie began her career as a National Park Service Ranger in Yellowstone and Denali National Parks. After living in six other states, she returned to Maine and Parker Pond, where her family has lived for eight generations. She spends her time off biking, hiking, kayaking, and Nordic skiing with her husband Josh and daughter Brynne.
- **Joletta Bird Bear, Mandaree, ND:** Joletta is an enrolled member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation. She resides in Mandaree with her grandson. She has been working on environmental and government issues since the early 2000's. Joletta currently serves as the vice president of Fort Berthold POWER and is a member of Dakota Resource Council (DRC).

###

About Save the U.S. EPA

[Save the U.S. EPA](#) is a national campaign being conducted by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the National Council of EPA Locals #238 to stop the Trump Administration and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt from passing a budget that will drastically cut or eliminating jobs and programs that are vital to the health and safety of America's air, water, land and endangered species.

MEDIA CONTACTS

[Aric Caplan](#)

(301) 943-9525

[Martha Kiley](#)

(631) 988-7196