



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM AFGE COUNCIL #238 URGE CONGRESS TO FULLY FUND AND STAFF THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY DURING AFGE'S NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE (FEBRUARY 12-15)**

**Washington, DC (February 12, 2018)** – Hundreds of members of the [American Federation of Government Employees](#) (AFGE), the largest federal employee union representing 700,000 federal and D.C. government workers nationwide and overseas, are in Washington, D.C. from February 12-15 for AFGE's annual Legislative Conference.

[John J. O'Grady](#), national spokesperson for [Save the U.S. EPA](#) and president of AFGE Council 238, which represents over 8,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees nationwide, said his members and local presidents will emphasize that circumventing safety regulations, firing federal workers and exposing citizens to unrestrained industry is not what Americans ask of government during their meetings on Capitol Hill.

"President Trump's proposed 2019 budget will slash the EPA budget by 23 percent," O'Grady explained. "In addition, Mr. Trump proposes reducing the EPA workforce to below 12,000 – from a high of 18,110 employees. That is 36 percent decrease in Agency staffing since FY1999.

"We will urge members of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to fully fund and staff the EPA and essential EPA programs, demand urgent attention to our nation's crumbling infrastructure and emphasize that America's clean air and water resources must be safeguarded, not sold out to the oil and gas industries," he added.

"If we fail to meet the necessary investment needs of the next 20 years, we risk reversing the human health, environmental, and economic gains of the past five decades," O'Grady said. "Our nation's aging infrastructure, if unaddressed, will eventually constrain economic growth."

AFGE Council 238 leaders also will talk to members of Congress about properly funding the critical Superfund program; drinking water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure needs; the proposed rollback of the Clean Power Plan; the impact of the repeal of the Waters of the U.S. Rule; the hiring freeze at regional EPA offices; and dangers associated with increasing the number of federal contractors.

(more)

“Access to clean and safe air, land, and water is a basic and universal human right, not a commodity to be bought and sold – and, more importantly, not a partisan issue,” O’Grady said. “All of us have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and I would like to believe that every American is still concerned about protecting our most vulnerable, especially the next generation.”

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**About AFGE Council 238**

AFGE Council 238 represents over 8,000 U.S. EPA employees nationwide, including environmental protection specialists, engineers, scientists and support staff nationwide through locals at EPA headquarters in Washington, DC, Research Triangle Park in NC, ten regional offices, the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory in Corvallis and Newport, OR, National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory in Ann Arbor MI, and the Robert S. Kerr Research Laboratory in Ada, OK.

**About Save the U.S. EPA**

[Save the U.S. EPA](#) is a national campaign being conducted by AFGE Council 238 and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) in an effort to stop the Trump Administration and EPA Administrator Pruitt from passing a budget that will virtually decimate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by drastically cutting 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