



# Duckworth warns against dangerous impacts of EPA cuts in Trump's budget

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CHICAGO, IL – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), the senior-most Democrat on the Senate Subcommittee tasked with ensuring access to clean drinking water and helping prevent lead poisoning, today joined Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stakeholders to call attention to the President's proposed cuts to the agency and highlight her new legislation to prevent many of the worst impacts. Her *Recognizing the Environmental Gains in Overcoming Negligence* (REGION) Act would prevent the closure of any EPA regional office, including the Region 5 office in Chicago where 1,000 dedicated employees work tirelessly to protect our environment and the health and safety of Americans living in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

**“We cannot put a price on clean drinking water, contaminated soil remediation or safeguarding our Great Lakes,”** said Duckworth. **“Whether or not the President thinks protecting our children from lead poisoning and toxic air is important, I’ve introduced legislation to safeguard EPA regional offices from closure. Slashing EPA resources puts not only the environment at risk, but our public health and the livelihood of hardworking public servants.”**

Duckworth was joined by representatives from the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO), Sierra Club Illinois, Respiratory Health Association (RHA), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 704 and Moms Clean Air Force.

**“Children in Illinois breathe easier because of the work of the Environmental Protection Agency,”** said Kelly Nichols of Moms Clean Air Force. **“It’s a safety net no parent can afford to take for granted. Our children’s lives are on the line. We are standing up and fighting back.”**

**“The Trump Administration is actively preventing EPA from doing its job of enforcing our nations laws in order to protect the health of all Americans,” said Brian Urbaszewski of Respiratory Health Association. “There are over a million adults and children in Illinois – in every family and in every community - living with chronic lung disease who are extremely vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. The stark truth is that without fully funding the EPA more Illinoisans will get sick and more will die.”**

Duckworth’s *REGION Act* is cosponsored by Senator Tom Carper (D-DE), the Ranking Member of the Environment and Public Works Committee and Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). Citing lessons learned from the Flint water crisis, Duckworth led several colleagues in [writing](#) to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in early May urging Pruitt to commit that none of the agency’s regional offices be closed or consolidated. During Pruitt’s confirmation hearing, Duckworth pressed the nominee on the importance of these regional offices as well as the importance of appointing a permanent leader to head the EPA Region 5. Duckworth also got Pruitt to agree about the need to empower the dedicated men and women who serve in EPA Region 5 in the aftermath of Flint, Michigan, to act proactively when a state fails to protect its citizens.

Duckworth is a member of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee and the Ranking Member of its Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water and Wildlife. The EPA’s regional offices enforce Federal pollution standards, inspect local facilities and serve as a resource for state environmental entities. The Senator met with EPA Region 5 staffers in Chicago earlier this year to discuss the critical work they do to protect the health and safety of Americans living in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

The EPA Region 5 Office is home to the Great Lakes Program Office that executes our international obligations with Canada under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In addition, it leads the nation’s Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), which has funded over 2,000 projects that improve water quality, protect wildlife, and clean up toxic pollutants that threaten our water supply since 2010. To date, the program invested more than \$2.2 billion in Great Lakes restoration projects. Coordinated in both the United States and Canada, GLRI sets the standard for interagency and international cooperation. A 2008 Brookings Institution report shows that every \$1 invested in Great Lakes restoration results in a \$2 return in the form of increased fishing, tourism and home values. The Great Lakes contain 95 percent of America’s fresh surface water and supply drinking water to more than 30 million people in North America.