

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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House of Representatives
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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Cutting EPA Spending”
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
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Today, we examine EPA’s budget. It’s a lean one for an agency with so many crucial responsibilities.

In February of this year, the President submitted his proposed budget for fiscal year 2012, requesting \$8.9 billion for EPA. That is a 13% decrease over FY2010 enacted levels.

The President had to make some hard choices in this budget. The President proposed cutting almost \$1 billion from the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, which help states improve municipal wastewater and drinking water systems.

He proposed cutting \$125 million from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and \$70 million from the Superfund toxic waste cleanup program. The Administration also targeted several categories of administrative spending at EPA to achieve \$40 million in additional savings.

Some of these cuts are excessive. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund should be getting an increase because it makes investments in infrastructure that create jobs.

Thus, the notion that EPA is not sacrificing its fair share is false.

Despite these painful cuts, EPA has set ambitious goals for this fiscal year. Taking action on climate change. Improving air quality. Protecting America’s waters. Ensuring the safety of chemicals. Preventing pollution. Enforcing America’s environmental laws.

These are important objectives that benefit every American in every state across the country. Americans know that their family’s health and quality of life depend on a clean

environment. They know we need a strong EPA to stop polluters from poisoning our air, land, and water.

Today we will hear that EPA should be doing more to squeeze out extra savings. While I am sure EPA could find additional reductions and efficiencies along the margins, I am equally sure that that still wouldn't be enough for my Republican colleagues.

Their goal isn't a careful, line-by-line review of the budget. Their goal is to prevent EPA from requiring dirty power plants, chemical plants, oil refineries, and other large industrial sources to stop polluting the air with toxic mercury and other dangerous emissions.

The Republicans' approach to EPA's budget is less about targeted reductions and more about "slash-and-burn" politics. The Republican budgets we have seen this year are the most sweeping and reckless assault on health and the environment that we have seen in decades.

The FY2012 Interior Appropriations bill that stalled in the House late this summer would slash EPA's budget to \$7.1 billion, which is 20% less than the President requested. This would deny the agency the resources it needs to carry out the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and other critical public health protections.

But that's not all. Every week, we consider another bill on the House floor that stops EPA from doing its job to protect our environment. In fact, the House has voted 83 times this year to undermine the Environmental Protection Agency.

In total, the House has voted 159 times to undermine environmental protections. If the Republicans had their way, the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act would be gutted. And the EPA would be rendered powerless to keep our air clean enough to breathe and our water safe enough to drink.

I am glad we have EPA's chief financial officer here today, and I look forward to her testimony. She will be able to tell us what the impact of the Republicans' approach to EPA's budget would be on her agency and for public health and the environment. It is not a budget that is good for our environment, our health, or American families.