

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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April 11, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Attorney General Bondi and Administrator Zeldin:

The Subcommittee on Federal Law Enforcement is investigating the weaponization of overly burdensome regulatory enforcement against the American people, specifically environmental enforcement actions by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Under the Biden Administration, many American businesses and citizens were the target of politically motivated regulatory enforcement and “environmental justice” directives, with agencies demanding overly restrictive consent decrees with costly requirements as a condition of terminating litigation.¹ The Subcommittee requests information from DOJ and EPA on the steps being taken to reexamine these tyrannical consent decrees and ensure that DOJ and EPA personnel are enforcing federal criminal and civil laws fairly and without political bias.

During the past four years, DOJ and EPA weaponized consent decrees to retaliate against businesses and individuals who spoke out against the Biden Administration. In some instances, these federal consent decrees were based on state laws rather than federal laws and regulations.² Failing to comply with the requirements, which are often extremely expensive for small businesses, all but ensured DOJ and EPA would force the business to close, potentially leaving countless Americans without jobs.³ In one case, a consent decree caused a seafood processing plant in a small Alaskan town to close, throwing “a community of about 800 people, into turmoil.”⁴ In another case, a federal consent decree placed a costly California state requirement

¹ *United States v. Hino Motors, Ltd., Hino Motors Manufacturing U.S.A., Inc., and Hino Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc.*, 2:25-cv-10144 (E.D. Mich. 2025); Notice of Lodging of Proposed Consent Decree Under the Clean Air Act, 90 Fed. Reg. 7705 (Jan. 22, 2025); *United States v. Power Performance Enterprises, Inc. and Kory B. Willis*, 2:22-cv-693 (W.D. La. 2022); and Notice of Lodging of Proposed Consent Decree Under the Clean Air Act, 87 Fed. Reg. 15455 (Mar. 18, 2022).

² *Id.*

³ Thad H. Westbrook et al., *Consent Decrees’ Hidden Costs to Businesses and Consumers*, WASH. L. FOUND. (July 30, 2021).

⁴ Yereth Rosen, *Settlement requires corrective actions at two Alaska plants formerly operated by Peter Pan Seafood*, ALASKA BEACON (Dec. 9, 2024, 5:58 AM).

on a company that does not market or sell its product in California.⁵ If the company failed to meet the requirement, it could have faced bankruptcy and closure.⁶

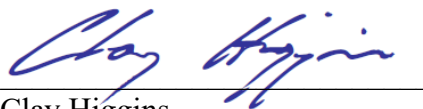
Thankfully, President Donald Trump is restoring the freedoms that were stripped away during the past four years. For that reason, President Trump directed the DOJ to suspend all new and pending environmental litigation and rescinded overly burdensome environmental justice directives.⁷ Additionally, the President's action "halt[ed] all pending settlements and consent decrees."⁸ Despite this action, countless American businesses and citizens that were forced to enter into Biden-era consent decrees are facing continued enforcement actions by DOJ and EPA; actions which could have detrimental financial and downstream economic impacts.

To assist with the Subcommittee's investigation and oversight of this matter, I request a staff-level briefing from DOJ and EPA by April 25, 2025. Briefers should, at a minimum, be prepared to address the following:

1. What is being done to ensure consent decrees related to environmental regulations which were entered into during the Biden Administration are reviewed for overly restrictive and costly requirements that harm American businesses and citizens; and
2. What is being done to ensure the weaponization of overly burdensome regulatory enforcement against the American people, specifically environmental enforcement, is no longer occurring.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. To schedule the briefing or to ask any related follow up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Law Enforcement

cc: The Honorable Summer Lee, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Law Enforcement

⁵ Letter from Daniel A. Kramer, Partner, Lundy LLP to Nicole Veilleux, Senior Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice, Environmental and Natural Resources Division (Mar. 12, 2025) (on file with committee).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Sarah N. Lynch, *Trump administration halts environmental litigation, sidelines lawyers, sources say*, REUTERS (Jan. 24, 2025, 5:00 PM EST).

⁸ *Id.*