

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA) proposal to eliminate the Endangerment Finding and what that will mean for the health and safety of our constituents in Illinois.

The Endangerment Finding, promulgated in 2009 under the Clean Air Act, requires the US EPA to protect people from the pollution that causes climate change and its impacts. This administration's denial of the overwhelming scientific consensus, reached through decades of peer-reviewed research, does not change the facts: pollution from fossil fuels is trapping more of the sun's energy in the atmosphere, heating our planet, increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather disasters,¹ and thereby endangering every American – especially the most vulnerable among us.

While coastal hurricanes and western wildfires may draw more national attention, climate change is increasing the number and severity of extreme weather events in the Midwest as well. In 2024 alone, Illinois experienced twelve extreme weather events which caused \$1 billion or more in damages in Illinois and neighboring states, with a toll of at least 129 lives.²

Climate change is increasing the number and severity of extreme heat events, with the Chicago area far exceeding the average number of 90-degree days this year.³ Extreme heat is the number-one weather-related killer,⁴ a fact we well know after the 1995 heat wave, which caused 500 deaths in Chicago alone and hundreds more across the Midwest.⁵ As we learned then, extreme heat disproportionately harms vulnerable individuals,

¹ National Aeronautics and Space Administration, "Extreme Weather and Climate Change: As the climate changes, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events are increasing," <https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/extreme-weather/>, accessed August 22, 2025.

² National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Centers for Environmental Information, "Illinois Summary," <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/state-summary/IL>, accessed August 22, 2025

³ FOX 32 Chicago (2025, August 11), "Revisiting Chicago's sizzling summers: Tracking 90-degree days through the years," <https://www.fox32chicago.com/weather/chicago-summer-data>, accessed August 22, 2025.

⁴ Scientific American (2023, July 1), "Extreme Heat Is Deadlier Than Hurricanes, Floods and Tornadoes Combined," <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/extreme-heat-is-deadlier-than-hurricanes-floods-and-tornadoes-combined/>, accessed August 22, 2025

⁵ National Weather Service, "Historic July 1995 Heat Wave," https://www.weather.gov/lot/1995_HeatWave, accessed August 22, 2025

including children, the elderly, low-income households, those with pre-existing medical conditions, outdoor workers, and communities of color.⁶

Climate change is making Illinois wetter,⁷ contributing to extreme rainfall and dangerous flooding. This summer, in both July and August, Chicago and other parts of Illinois experienced flash flooding, which damaged infrastructure, including roads and houses.⁸

Changing temperatures and weather patterns impact agriculture,⁹ which is so vital to Illinois' economy. Heat, water stress, and extreme weather events are greatly damaging to crops; changing temperatures can have negative impacts on weed and pest distribution; and changing precipitation patterns and higher temperatures can have negative impacts on soil health.

Finally, climate change has negative impacts on Lake Michigan, among our most precious natural resources. Warmer temperatures, less ice cover, and extreme weather events are damaging the lake ecosystem,¹⁰ making algal blooms more likely,¹¹ and worsening erosion, beach loss, and shoreline damage.¹²

Rescinding the Endangerment Finding is part of the administration's politically-driven scheme¹³ to undermine clean car and truck programs and roll back standards for global warming pollution from power plants, oil and gas operations, and more. It means giving polluters a free pass to pollute at the expense of families across the country. It means our constituents will face more climate chaos and, especially in communities already overburdened by pollution, greater health risks and higher medical costs. It even means that our constituents will pay more for energy, given the cheaper clean energy alternatives to fossil fuels that are currently available.

We urge you to maintain the Endangerment Finding and, in general, do your job of protecting the health and welfare of Illinoisans and Americans all across the country.

⁶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), "Extreme Heat," <https://www.epa.gov/climatechange-science/extreme-heat>, accessed August 22, 2025

⁷ Wuebbles, D., J. Angel, K. Petersen, and A.M. Lemke, (Eds.), 2021: An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change in Illinois. The Nature Conservancy, Illinois, https://doi.org/10.13012/B2IDB-1260194_V1

⁸ CBS News (2025, July 25), "Flash flooding in Chicago, southwest suburbs washes out roads, floods basements," <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/chicago-weather-flash-flood-warning-storms/>, accessed August 22, 2025. DeBat, Don, Loop North News (2025, August 25), "As floods rise, is Chicago the Windy City, or the Water City?" <https://www.loopnorth.com/news/floods0825.htm>, accessed August 25, 2025.

⁹ The Nature Conservancy, "Climate Change in Illinois: Agriculture," https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/IL_AgricultureClimateFactSheet.pdf, accessed August 22, 2025

¹⁰ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Climate-driven shifts in deep Lake Michigan water temperatures signal the loss of winter," <https://www.epa.gov/climatechange-science/extreme-heat>, accessed August 22, 2025

¹¹ GLISA, a NOAA Cap Team, "Algal Blooms," <https://glisa.umich.edu/resources-tools/climate-impacts/algal-blooms/>, access August 22, 2025

¹² Environmental Law and Policy Center, "Rising Waters: Climate Change Impacts and Toxic Risks to Lake Michigan's Shoreline Communities," <https://elpc.org/resources/rising-waters-climate-change-impacts-and-toxic-risks-to-lake-michigans-shoreline-communities/>, accessed August 22, 2025

¹³ Lefebvre, Ben, Politico, "Trump pressed oil executives to give \$1 billion for his campaign, people in industry say" (2024, May 9), <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/05/09/trump-asks-oil-executives-campaign-finance-00157131>, accessed August 22, 2025.

Sincerely,



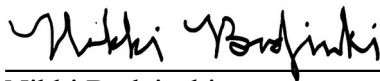
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



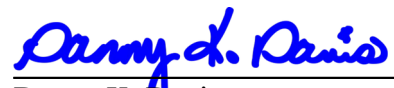
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



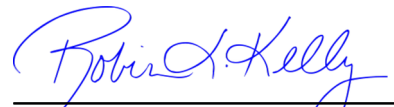
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