

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2025

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

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

As Members of Congress representing New Jersey, we are deeply opposed to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") proposed rule to rescind the 2009 Endangerment Finding, and we are gravely concerned about its potential consequences for the health and safety of New Jersey's communities.

The Clean Air Act ("CAA") gives the EPA a clear statutory mandate to control pollution that endangers the health and welfare of American families. In 2009, the EPA issued the Endangerment Finding, a legal and scientific finding under the CAA establishing that "greenhouse gases in the atmosphere may reasonably be anticipated both to endanger public health and to endanger public welfare."¹ The Endangerment Finding now serves as a basis for the EPA's efforts to protect Americans from greenhouse gas emissions.

We strongly oppose the recent proposed rule to rescind the Endangerment Finding and repeal all greenhouse gas standards for light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles issued since 2010. Questioning the statutory and scientific bases of the Endangerment Finding, as the EPA attempts to do in this proposed rule, demonstrates alarming disregard for both the scientific consensus on climate change and the lived experiences of New Jersey families.²

The selective junk "science" used in this proposed rule does not refute the reality that greenhouse gases drive rapid, anthropogenic climate change that is damaging New Jersey's cities, coastlines, and communities. Climate change fuels extreme weather and alters weather patterns. Rising global temperatures strengthen hurricanes, generate higher rainfall, and contribute to sea level rise.³ There is no doubt that greenhouse gas emissions are already harming New Jersey and states across the country and that the dire consequences of climate change will continue to accelerate in the absence of meaningful and comprehensive action.

Our New Jersey constituents live on the front lines of the climate crisis. In 2012, Superstorm Sandy, intensified by rising seas and a worst-case storm track, destroyed homes and infrastructure, brought historic flooding, led to extended power outages and other environmental hazards, and resulted in the tragic deaths of 40 New Jersey residents.⁴ Thanks to robust climate research, we now know that anthropogenic climate change caused an additional \$8 billion in damages and exposed 71,000 more people to flooding in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.⁵ The scale of Sandy's destruction – raw sewage in streets and waterways, homes destroyed, families living for days without power – was a harbinger of the escalating severity of climate-fueled natural

¹ Environmental Protection Agency. "Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases Under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act," *Federal Register* 74, no. 239 (2009), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2009-12-15/pdf/E9-29537.pdf>.

² Environmental Protection Agency. "Reconsideration of 2009 Endangerment Finding and Greenhouse Gas Vehicle Standards," *Federal Register* 90, no. 146 (2025), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-08-01/pdf/2025-14572.pdf>

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023: Sections. In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf.

⁴ "Deaths Associated with Hurricane Sandy — October–November 2012." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2013. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6220a1.htm>; Strauss, B.H., Orton, P.M., Bittermann, K. *et al.* Economic damages from Hurricane Sandy attributable to sea level rise caused by anthropogenic climate change. *Nat Commun* 12, (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-22838-1>.

⁵ Strauss *et al.* 2021.

disasters.⁶ Thirteen years after Sandy, net global greenhouse gas emissions have only continued to increase, and New Jerseyans have been affected by 40 more billion-dollar weather and climate disasters, including a major disaster caused by the remnants of Hurricane Ida.⁷ Research indicates that the strength of hurricanes will continue to worsen as a result of greenhouse gas pollution, increasing the risk of more disasters like Ida and Sandy.⁸ While rebuilding and coping with the tragic aftermath of these disasters, New Jersey must also expend significant resources to prepare for the next superstorm.

Sea level rise also endangers New Jersey's coastal communities, which are cultural, touristic, and economic engines in our state. Rising ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, and flooding put marine species at risk, threatening both biodiversity and our state's \$3.45 billion in fisheries.⁹ In a high emissions scenario, New Jersey could experience a sea level rise of up to six feet.¹⁰ Any level of sea level rise will worsen both acute and chronic flooding, leading to a loss of coastal habitat and coming at an economic and social cost to the 80 percent of New Jerseyans who live in our state's low-lying coastal regions.¹¹ Because of rising oceans, 23,000 more homes and buildings in New Jersey are at risk of frequent flooding than in 1980.¹² This figure will continue to grow: 250,000 homes may be at risk of chronic flooding by the end of the century, with damage concentrated in coastal regions.¹³ Sea level rise can generate costly and catastrophic property damage, worsen environmental contamination, and damage coastal critical infrastructure. It will threaten the lives and livelihoods of New Jersey residents who operate businesses, attend school, and live in our coastal regions. Left unchecked, it is possible that sea level rise will inundate entire neighborhoods, forcing communities to retreat away from the coast.

Statewide, higher rainfall, warmer water temperatures, and worsening flooding will create new challenges and hazards that endanger public welfare. Maintaining and building infrastructure that can withstand climate change remains a challenge. Rainfall has increased by an estimated 2.5 to 10 percent since 1999 and will likely increase by another 20 percent by 2100.¹⁴ That rain often comes in short, intense storms that New Jersey's dense, predominantly concrete urban areas and aging water infrastructure are not yet equipped to handle.¹⁵ More rainfall, coupled with sea level rise, presents a serious threat to our state's homes, neighborhoods, and infrastructure. Many properties currently experience nuisance flooding, and that number is projected to continue growing.¹⁶ Upgrading wastewater and stormwater management to respond to climate change is capially

⁶ Kenward, Alyson, Daniel Yawitz, and Urooj Raja. "Sewage Overflows from Hurricane Sandy." Climate Central, April 2013. <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/11-billion-gallons-of-sewage-overflow-from-hurricane-sandy-15924>; Barron, James. "After the Devastation, a Daunting Recovery." *New York Times*, October 30, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/31/us/hurricane-sandy-barrels-region-leaving-battered-path.html>.

⁷ Climate Trace. "February 2025 Emissions Data," April 25, 2025. <https://climatetrace.org/news/climate-trace-releases-february-2025-emissions-data>; "U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters, 1980 - Present (NCEI Accession 0209268)." NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.25921/STKW-7W73>.

⁸ Knutson, Tom. "Global Warming and Hurricanes: An Overview of Current Research Results." National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory, November 20, 2024. <https://www.gfdl.noaa.gov/global-warming-and-hurricanes/>.

⁹ Kitchel, Zoe, and Doug Zemeckis. "Climate Change Impacts on New Jersey's Marine Fisheries." Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, June 2021. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/e369>.

¹⁰ "New Jersey's Rising Seas and Changing Coastal Storms." Rutgers University 2019 Science and Technical Advisory Panel. November 2019. <https://scholarship.libraries.rutgers.edu/esploro/outputs/report/New-Jerseys-Rising-Seas-and-Changing/991031549912404646>

¹¹ Hess, H., D. Michael, A. Hamidi, T. Houser, R. Kopp, I. Bollinger, S. Hsiang, M. Greenstone. 2019. New Jersey's Rising Coastal Risk, Rhodium Group. <https://pudding.cool/2019/10/nj-climate/>.

¹² Hess et. al 2019.

¹³ "Underwater: Rising Seas, Chronic Floods, and the Implications for US Coastal Real Estate." Union of Concerned Scientists, June 2018. <https://www.ucs.org/sites/default/files/attach/2018/06/underwater-analysis-full-report.pdf>.

¹⁴ DeGaetano, Art. "Projected Changes in Extreme Rainfall in New Jersey Based on an Ensemble of Downscaled Climate Model Projections." Cornell University, 2021. <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sab/projected-changes-rainfall-model.pdf>; DeGaetano, Art, and Harrison Tran. "Changes in Hourly and Daily Extreme Rainfall Amounts in NJ since the Publication of NOAA Atlas 14 Volume." Cornell University, 2021 <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sab/nj-atlas-14.pdf>

¹⁵ Flanagan, Brenda. "NJ Towns, Cities Battle Increasing Bouts of Heavy Flooding." *NJ Spotlight News*, August 20, 2024. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-towns-cities-battle-increasing-bouts-of-heavy-flooding/>.

¹⁶ Marxen, Lucas, Ashley Spector, Jonathan DeLura, K Shrivani Reddy, and Marjorie Kaplan. "Current and Future Flood Exposure to New Jersey Properties and Associated Assessed Property Value at Risk." Rutgers New Brunswick New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center, May 2025. <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Current-and-Future-Flood-Exposure-to-NJ-Properties-05022025-2.pdf>.

intensive and potentially costly to ratepayers. Furthermore, our state is a linchpin for warehousing and e-commerce, hosting major ports, airports, rail systems, and highway interconnections.¹⁷ Major flooding or other natural disasters that compromise this critical infrastructure could have serious implications for our nation's supply chains.

There are many other ways that changing weather and increased flooding endanger New Jersey families. New Jersey's drinking water supply, as well as its recreation areas, are further threatened by the increasing prevalence of harmful algae blooms driven by warming water and storms.¹⁸ New Jersey also has the nation's highest density of Superfund sites, many of which are or will become located in floodplains, in or near underserved communities.¹⁹ This trend heightens the risk of contamination and will require ongoing monitoring to ensure that remedies remain protective. Markets recognize the risks associated with a changing climate, even if this Administration does not: flood insurance has become prohibitively expensive, and private insurers have begun to exit certain markets in New Jersey and other coastal states.²⁰ As Members of Congress, we hear frequently from constituents who view the cost of flood insurance as a major hurdle to owning a home or business in our state. These examples represent just a few of the myriad ways that increased flood risk, directly attributable to greenhouse gas emissions, makes life less affordable and less safe for the families that we represent.

In addition to sea level rise and worsening flooding, our community members must also cope with the public health impacts of extreme heat. New Jersey is the nation's third-fastest warming state, and from 1994 to 2023, the yearly average heat wave frequency doubled.²¹ Heat has well-documented negative health impacts.²² This year, 150 people were treated for heat exhaustion at a high school graduation in Paterson, and in 2023, 635 people visited New Jersey's emergency rooms as a result of heat-related illness.²³ Heat also worsens air pollution. Research estimates that as a result of global warming, by 2050, New Jersey will experience twice as many unhealthy ozone days, worsening air quality and increasing our communities' exposure to harmful and dirty air.²⁴ Heat and drought will also make wildfires more frequent and severe, particularly in the fire-prone Pinelands, threatening adjacent communities and sending more particulate matter into the air our families breathe.²⁵ During an unprecedented fire season in the Northeast in which climate change heightened tinderbox conditions, April's Jones Road Fire spread over 15,350 acres.²⁶ Finally, as with many of climate change's impacts, heat will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable members of our communities. Children, seniors,

¹⁷ "Logistics Hub: New Jersey's Leading Role in Warehousing." New Jersey Office of Research and Information, September 2024. https://www.nj.gov/labor/labormarketinformation/assets/PDFs/pub/RP-19%20LMS_Warehousing.pdf.

¹⁸ Goldner, Brandon. "Harmful Algal Blooms Threaten New Jersey Waterways Used for Drinking Water." CBS, April 8, 2024. <https://www.cbsnews.com/philadelphia/news/how-to-report-harmful-algal-blooms-new-jersey-department-of-environmental-protection/>.

¹⁹ Reina, Barbara. "Climate Change Bringing Challenges for Superfund Site Cleanup." *The New Lede*, January 9, 2024. <https://www.thenewlede.org/2024/01/climate-change-bringing-challenges-for-superfund-site-cleanup/>; "Superfund: EPA Should Take Additional Actions to Manage Risks from Climate Change." Government Accountability Office, October 18, 2019. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-73>.

²⁰ Flanagan, Brenda. "Climate Change Risk Hits NJ Homeowners' Insurance." *NJ Spotlight News*, January 15, 2025. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/climate-change-risk-hits-nj-homeowners-insurance/>.

²¹ Wiley, Brett, and Lori Lester. "A 30-Year Heat Wave Analysis in New Jersey." New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, July 8, 2025. <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/dsr/heat-wave-analysis.pdf>.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Helmore, Edward. "More than 150 Fall Ill from Extreme Heat at New Jersey Graduations." *The Guardian*, June 24, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/24/new-jersey-extreme-heat-mass-casualty-incident>; New Jersey State Health Assessment Data. "Complete Health Indicator Report - Emergency Department Visits Due to Heat-Related Illness." <https://www.doh.nj.gov/doh-shad/indicator/complete/HeatED.html>.

²⁴ Horn-Muller, Ayurella, Michael Sol Warren, and Dish Raychaudhuri. "N.J. Is Warming at An Alarming Rate and It's Making Our Air Harder to Breathe." Climate Central, April 19, 2019. <https://www.climatecentral.org/partnership-journalism/n.j.-is-warming-at-an-alarming-rate-and-its-making-our-air-harder-to-breathe>.

²⁵ Friend, Chris. "Climate Change and Wildfires: Are the Pinelands at Risk?" *South Jersey Climate News*. December 6, 2021. <https://sjclimate.news/2143/county/burlington-county-news/climate-change-and-wildfires-are-the-pinelands-at-risk/>.

²⁶ Fay, Laura. "Jones Road Fire in Ocean County, New Jersey, Is 100% Contained, Officials Say." CBS, May 12, 2025. <https://www.cbsnews.com/philadelphia/news/jones-road-fire-ocean-county-new-jersey-contained/>; Parshley, Lois. "The New Jersey Wildfire Signals New Era for Northeast." *NJ Spotlight News*, May 1, 2025. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/05/the-new-jersey-wildfire-signals-new-era-for-northeast/>.

individuals living with respiratory conditions, and overburdened communities will bear the health and financial harms of rising temperatures.

Revoking the Endangerment Finding will open the door to eliminating protections against climate change-causing pollution. New Jerseyans do not believe that polluters should receive free passes to pollute at the expense of the health and futures of our working families. Should the EPA move forward with this rule, our constituents, especially those who live in fenceline and overburdened communities, may suffer worse health outcomes, higher costs, and degradation of their property and livelihoods.

It is clear that greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare, both now and in the future. Those dangers will worsen if the EPA chooses to destroy its own policy tools to meaningfully address climate change. We cannot abandon New Jersey families to the harm of climate-driven extreme heat, deadly storms, catastrophic flooding, and less resilient, less healthy futures. So, we strongly urge you to abandon this dangerous proposal, uphold the 2009 Endangerment Finding, and return to the EPA's core mission to protect human health and the environment for the sake of all New Jersey communities.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



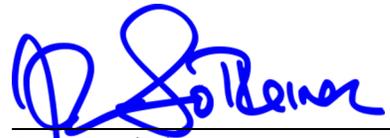
Cory A. Booker
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Andy Kim
United States Senator



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
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