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February 11, 2025

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

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

We are writing to express our deep concerns regarding reports on the recent reassignment of senior attorneys from the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) to focus on immigration enforcement that targets sanctuary cities. There are also reports the entire Law and Policy section of ENRD is being eliminated. This shift in DOJ priorities, and the attempted removal of dozens of staff, jeopardizes the enforcement of critical environmental protections and undermines the mission of ENRD to protect vulnerable communities from pollution and environmental harm.

The attorneys reassigned have decades of experience addressing pollution, wildlife crimes, property rights, and worker safety issues. Their work has been instrumental in safeguarding disadvantaged communities—often the most impacted by illegal pollution and environmental neglect. Diverting and dismantling resources away from enforcing environmental laws weakens accountability for polluters and risks emboldening those who violate environmental regulations.

The impact of these decisions will especially harm communities of color and low-income communities already overburdened by environmental injustices. Firing environmental attorneys, and forcing senior attorneys who have spent decades defending these communities to now focus on immigration enforcement will weaken the environmental protection of disadvantaged communities, and send a message it is no longer a priority for the DOJ.

Given these concerns, we request answers to the following questions regarding this personnel shift:

1. What criteria were used to select these attorneys for reassignment?
2. How does the DOJ plan to maintain its enforcement capacity for criminal violations of environmental laws despite these reassignments and reductions in staff?
3. What steps is DOJ taking to ensure that polluters do not take advantage of diminished oversight and enforcement?
4. How will you assure that DOJ has the resources and expertise necessary to adequately defend the nation's environmental laws from challenges by regulated parties?

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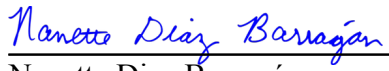
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5. Did DOJ conduct any analysis of the potential impacts on the Department's capacity to enforce existing environmental laws and seek justice for disadvantaged communities disproportionately harmed by pollution before attempting to fire attorneys, and before reassigning attorneys from ENRD to immigration enforcement matters?
6. How will DOJ address the reduction in experienced personnel within ENRD to meet its statutory obligations to enforce environmental laws?


Shifting ENRD's focus away from its core mission is not only detrimental to clean air and water, but also places an additional burden on communities that are already suffering from systemic inequities. We urge you to prioritize enforcement of environmental laws that protect communities from polluters and ensure those who violate environmental laws are held accountable when their illegal actions.


We look forward to your prompt response and to engaging in further discussions about how DOJ can refocus its efforts on protecting our communities and environment.

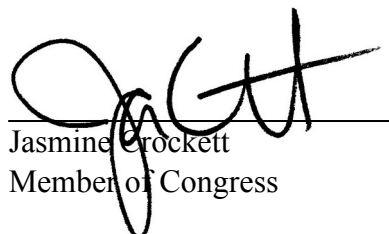
Sincerely,


  
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
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Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress

  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

  
Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress

  
Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress

  
Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress

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