

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2025

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

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We are deeply concerned about the recent U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal<sup>1</sup> to eliminate the 2009 Endangerment Finding and what that will mean for the health and safety of our constituents in Virginia. The Endangerment Finding requires the EPA to protect people from the pollution that causes climate change. Denying the danger of climate change cannot change the facts. Pollution from fossil fuels heats our planet, makes extreme weather disasters more severe, and harms us all—especially the most vulnerable.

It is well-documented how climate change fuels extreme weather. Rising global temperatures due to climate change contribute to stronger hurricanes, extreme heat, and flooding.<sup>2</sup> The threats have never been more dire or clearer to communities across the country, including ours. Extreme weather events impacting Virginia have increased in frequency and cost billions of dollars. In 2024 alone, Virginia experienced 10 extreme weather events that caused \$1 billion or more in damage.<sup>3</sup> Hurricane Helene caused immense damage,<sup>4</sup> devastating many farms and was estimated to have caused almost \$160 million in agricultural damage.<sup>5</sup>

Sea level rise impacts the daily lives of coastal Virginians. The Hampton Roads region is experiencing the fastest rate of sea level rise on the Atlantic Coast,<sup>6</sup> and storm surges from extreme weather and land subsidence further worsen its impacts. In Norfolk, the sea level in parts of the city, like Sewells Point, has already risen over a foot,<sup>7</sup> and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration projects that the city will face an additional 1-3 feet of sea level rise by 2050. Over 100,000 people, 54,000 homes, and \$17 billion in property value are in areas of Virginia less than five feet above sea level,<sup>8</sup> which places them at extreme risk of flooding. Increased flooding also fuels a financial crisis as flood insurance rates skyrocket across the Commonwealth.<sup>9</sup> Not only does this threat create serious problems that cities and their residents will have to grapple with, but sea level rise also poses a significant risk to the readiness of the region's military installations.<sup>10</sup> Democrats and Republicans in the Virginia Delegation recognize this issue and have worked together to support the coastal

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<sup>1</sup> [epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-releases-proposal-rescind-obama-era-endangerment-finding-regulations-paved-way](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-releases-proposal-rescind-obama-era-endangerment-finding-regulations-paved-way)

<sup>2</sup> [science.nasa.gov/climate-change/extreme-weather](https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/extreme-weather)

<sup>3</sup> [ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/state-summary/VA](https://ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/state-summary/VA)

<sup>4</sup> [12onourside.com/2024/09/29/its-devastating-recovery-efforts-continue-va-following-hurricane-helene](https://12onourside.com/2024/09/29/its-devastating-recovery-efforts-continue-va-following-hurricane-helene)

<sup>5</sup> [news.vt.edu/articles/2024/10/cals-vce-final-hurricane-estimate.html](https://news.vt.edu/articles/2024/10/cals-vce-final-hurricane-estimate.html)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/virginia-map-shows-where-state-could-underwater-sea-level-rise-1896429>

<sup>7</sup> [tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends\\_station.shtml?id=8638610](https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?id=8638610)

<sup>8</sup> [riskfinder.climatecentral.org/state/virginia.us](https://riskfinder.climatecentral.org/state/virginia.us)

<sup>9</sup> [wtkr.com/news/in-the-community/norfolk/new-report-shows-dramatic-increase-in-homeowners-insurance-nationwide](https://wtkr.com/news/in-the-community/norfolk/new-report-shows-dramatic-increase-in-homeowners-insurance-nationwide)

<sup>10</sup> [defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/article/2703096/dod-navy-confront-climate-change-challenges-in-southern-virginia](https://defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/article/2703096/dod-navy-confront-climate-change-challenges-in-southern-virginia)

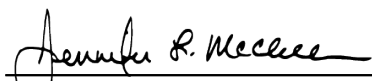
resilience of our bases. Inaction towards addressing sea level rise jeopardizes the progress stemming from this bipartisan collaboration and threatens our national security.

While coastal Virginians feel the direct effects of sea level rise, the entire Commonwealth is impacted by extreme heat. In June 2025, much of Virginia was placed under an extreme heat warning. This heat wave broke records: Richmond reached 100° and Dulles Airport and Wallops Island had their hottest days on record at 99° and 95°, respectively.<sup>11</sup> June also broke the monthly record for heat related illnesses, with over 2,800 reported cases of heat-related illness throughout the month,<sup>12</sup> and almost 250 cases on a single day.<sup>13</sup> Extreme heat also continued into July.<sup>14</sup> These heat waves are extremely dangerous, especially for those who are most vulnerable—individuals with pre-existing conditions, children, seniors, unhoused people, low-income families, communities of color, and outdoor workers. Without meaningful action on climate change, heat waves will continue to worsen.

By eliminating the Endangerment Finding, the Trump Administration aims to undermine other protections against climate pollution: clean car and truck standards, power plant rules, oil and gas rules, landfill rules, 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 more pollution, especially in communities already overburdened by pollution, health harms, and higher costs.

We urge the EPA to maintain the Endangerment Finding and protect the health and welfare of Virginians and communities across the country.

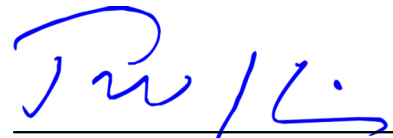
Sincerely,



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



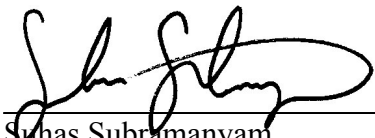
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

<sup>11</sup> [axios.com/local/richmond/2025/06/24/extreme-heat-warning-virginia](https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2025/06/24/extreme-heat-warning-virginia)

<sup>12</sup> [wric.com/weather/severe-weather/virginia-heat-related-emergencies-spike-safety-tips](https://www.wric.com/weather/severe-weather/virginia-heat-related-emergencies-spike-safety-tips)

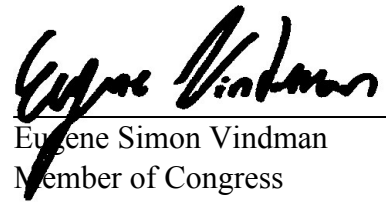
<sup>13</sup> [vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/syndromic-surveillance/hri-surveillance](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/syndromic-surveillance/hri-surveillance)

<sup>14</sup> [abcnews.go.com/US/dangerous-heat-continues-80-million-americans/story?id=124097159](https://abcnews.go.com/US/dangerous-heat-continues-80-million-americans/story?id=124097159)

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suhas Subramanyam'.

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Suhas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eugene Simon Vindman'.

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Eugene Simon Vindman  
Member of Congress

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James R. Walkinshaw  
Member of Congress