



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR**

April 25, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

I am writing to urge you to reconsider plans to eliminate the EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD). ORD, the scientific research arm of EPA, provides EPA with the knowledge it needs to protect human life, minimize the negative impacts of environmental pollutants, and improve environmental and public health outcomes. EPA's Research Triangle Park (RTP) campus houses the largest EPA research facility in the nation, and its closure would have immediate adverse consequences on North Carolina's public health, environment, and economy.

Eliminating ORD would also significantly impair EPA's ability to make science-based decisions. Scientific research informs nearly every decision made by the EPA, including rulemaking, permitting, cleanups, emergency response, enforcement, planning, and funding priorities. Thorough and accurate research by ORD scientists ensures that our efforts to protect human health and the environment are as efficient and effective as possible.

North Carolina relies heavily on ORD assessments to protect its residents from environmental harm. For example, it was EPA researchers at RTP who discovered toxic chemicals known as PFAS in the Cape Fear River in 2017. ORD's scientific research is also economically beneficial. In recent years EPA RTP scientists developed faster, more efficient, and far less costly ways to test and screen chemicals than traditional methods. With traditional toxicity testing methods, only 50-100 chemicals can be tested annually at a cost of approximately \$1 million each. Thanks to the Agency's ToxCast program, it takes just three years and roughly \$30,000 to screen approximately 1,800 chemicals for possible effects on the endocrine system.

ORD research has also contributed to disaster relief efforts in western North Carolina. EPA ORD recently helped to develop the Water-On-Wheels Mobile Emergency Water Treatment System (WOW Cart), which was deployed at many locations in western North Carolina following Hurricane Helene. The carts treated and distributed 43,883 gallons of water to locals, a volume equivalent to 184 pallets of water, which would have cost \$91,000 and required nine flatbed trucks. In a single deployment, the ORD-developed WOW Carts more than paid for themselves and significantly reduced solid waste and wear and tear on the narrow country roads. Across the board, scientific advancements lead to increased efficiency through the cost-saving discoveries they produce.


RTP is recognized internationally as one of the world's most productive environmental research facilities. It houses 15 EPA offices and employs more than 2,000 federal employees. ORD activities here have significant impacts on the RTP region, including advancing science, stimulating the economy, and contributing to the regional community through education and outreach. The closure of ORD would slow scientific breakthroughs and hinder our state's ability to attract research and development funding and talent.

The proposed cuts would have far-reaching effects on many stakeholders across North Carolina. The total economic impact of EPA's annual operations on the Triangle and the state in a given year is sizeable, contributing hundreds of millions of dollars to North Carolina's economy. Our world-renowned facilities are also an invaluable resource for STEM education. EPA RTP employees spend between 1,500 and 2,000 hours per year working with local students to share their passion for science, technology, engineering and math. They also provide tremendous opportunities to engage in research for students from North Carolina's dozens of esteemed universities.

I strongly encourage you to halt the closure of ORD and allow our scientists to continue their vital work of keeping Americans safe and strong.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. If I can provide any additional information on the important contributions of the ORD to North Carolina and to our nation, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Josh Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" and last name "Stein" clearly distinguishable.

Josh Stein
Governor