



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

This email message is being sent to EPA employees.

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that I will be retiring from federal service and that my final day at the Environmental Protection Agency will be Friday, Oct. 4. I am tremendously grateful to Administrator Regan and President Biden for entrusting me to serve as your Deputy Administrator since April of 2021, and for giving me the opportunity to serve alongside each of you at this great agency. I am looking forward to a new chapter in my life, taking me back home to Indiana to be with my family and friends.

Starting Saturday, Oct. 5, Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs Jane Nishida will assume the title of Acting Deputy Administrator.

The American people have depended on our agency since 1970 to make sure that the air we breathe is clean, the water we drink is safe, and the land we live, work, and play on is free from pollution. The work that each of you does to achieve this critical mission inspires me every day. I am so proud of all that we have accomplished together. We have tackled some of the most challenging environmental issues of our lifetimes, from responding to the threat of climate change, to removing lead in drinking water, issuing groundbreaking PFAS regulations, restoring scientific integrity, responding to devastating hurricanes and wildfires, enforcing our environmental laws, defending our regulatory actions in court, and addressing cybersecurity threats. Your work is making peoples' lives better, plain and simple, every single day.

I have also dedicated my time at EPA to the heart of our organization – our workforce. Some of you have heard me say that before I took this job, I hadn't served in a role that focused on personnel, budgets, planning, contracting, grants, facilities, and the other kinds of work that are absolutely essential for an organization to function smoothly. Who knew – not me – that I would find so much satisfaction in working to support all of you, especially those of you who work in our mission support and budget offices across the agency.

Together we stood up a once-in-a-generation program to award billions of dollars in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act investments. We increased our hiring, keeping our focus on planning for the future of the agency. We launched a paid internship program, giving the best and brightest students a chance to work at EPA. We worked, and will continue to work, with our unions on new Collective Bargaining Agreements, providing greater protections for our workforce. We opened the National Environmental Museum and Education Center that hundreds of people have already visited. We issued a new Strategic Plan that renewed our commitment to three foundational principles – follow the science, follow the law and be transparent – and added, for the first time, a new principle – advance justice and equity. We built stronger relationships with our state partners. And, we celebrated all that our Tribal partners have taught us about caring for the earth and the resources it provides.

I'm proud to have visited every regional office, more than 40 states, every AAship here in Washington D.C., multiple labs and satellite offices, and many, many local stops in between.

Lastly, and perhaps most important to me, we helped each other through a historic national public health emergency that changed the way we work, changed the way we interact with each other, and changed our lives. When I came onboard in 2021, we were working from home. Our spirits were low. It was a challenging time for our country as we grappled with how to get our important work done despite the uncertainties and anxieties of the pandemic. We didn't let that stop us. We moved forward together, as one EPA, and I am so proud of where we are today.

I shared our plans in those early days of the pandemic through regular agencywide emails. Through these mailers, I found my EPA voice and I rekindled my passion for working as hard as I could to support each of you. So, it just feels right to send this final message to you today, to thank you for your support, to celebrate our progress, and to acknowledge all you've done to make my time as your Deputy Administrator so meaningful and utterly unforgettable.

I retire knowing that this agency is stronger than ever and set up for more success delivering on our critical mission. I'll be cheering for you from my garden or from a little league field watching one of my grandsons rounding second base. If you are ever in Indianapolis, please stop by. As always, and for one last time, thank YOU for everything that you do every day to protect public health and the environment.

A large, bold, black handwritten signature, likely "Lee M. Zeldin", is written across the bottom of the page. The signature is stylized with thick, expressive strokes.