

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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June 3, 2025

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

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We write to express serious concerns with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) implementation of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), specifically the allocation of \$27 billion to nonprofit organizations under circumstances that warrant thorough examination. Recent federal court filings, investigative reporting, and testimony from the EPA Acting Inspector General (IG), Nicole Murley, raise significant questions about the transparency, impartiality, and competitiveness of this grant-making process. The EPA and the Administration have also called into question the transparency, accountability, and oversight of the GGRF. Given the gravity of these concerns, we are seeking a formal briefing with EPA staff to better understand the basis for these funding decisions.

In 2022, the EPA received \$27 billion through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to establish and manage the GGRF.¹ The agency distributed this sum across three initiatives: \$14 billion through the National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF) to three recipients, \$6 billion via the Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (CCIA) to five recipients, and \$7 billion through the Solar for All program to sixty recipients.² Despite the unprecedented scale of these awards, Acting IG Murley testified in February 2025 that the EPA conducted minimal due diligence on the qualifications of NCIF and CCIA recipients.³ The IG further revealed that the grant competition lasted just twelve weeks from announcement to application deadline, with funds hastily obligated in December 2024, immediately preceding the Presidential Transition.⁴ Independent investigations

¹ The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-169, § 132, 136 Stat. 2066 (2022).

² See *About the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund*, U.S. Env't Prot. Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund/about-greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund>.

³ *Examining the Biden Administration's Energy and Environment Spending Push: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations of the H. Comm. on Energy and Com.*, 119th Cong. (2025) (statement of Nicole N. Murley, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

⁴ See *id.*

have uncovered similar concerns within the Solar for All program.⁵ This highly compressed timeline raises serious questions about whether the process allowed for adequate competition and thorough evaluation of applicants based on merit.

Particularly alarming is the decision to allocate billions to newly formed or politically connected organizations with limited operational history or financial capacity. NCIF grants provide potent examples of this problem. For instance, Power Forward Communities (PFC), a \$2 billion award recipient, was incorporated only after the GGRF grant application process was announced and reported merely \$100 in revenue in its first four months of operation.⁶ Despite this, PFC's work plan allocates approximately \$490 million in subawards to Rewiring America, an organization that reported only \$621,000 in revenue in 2023 and brought on former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams as special counsel in March of that year.⁷ The Coalition for Green Capital (CGC), which received \$5 billion, has significant connections to previous EPA leadership.⁸ Notably, CGC's former policy director, Jahi Wise, became a Senior Advisor at EPA overseeing the GGRF program under the Biden-Harris Administration.⁹ In January 2025, CGC awarded \$200 million to GreenieRE, a company it helped establish shortly after receiving federal funding.¹⁰ Similarly, Climate United, recipient of approximately \$7 billion, counts among its leadership Phil Aroneanu, who moved from lobbying for the IRA to serving as a strategic advisor at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).¹¹

⁵ See James Varney, *The Greenhouse Gas Windfalls Blew Hard for Solar in the Biden EPA*, REALCLEAR INVESTIGATIONS (Mar. 20, 2025), https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2025/03/20/the_greenhouse_gas_windfalls_blew_hard_for_solar_in_the_biden_epa_1098678.html.

⁶ See *National Clean Investment Fund*, U.S. ENV'T PROT. AGENCY, <https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund/national-clean-investment-fund>; *Power Forward Communities*, INFLUENCE WATCH, <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/power-forward-communities/> (showing that PFC was founded in August 2023, a month after EPA opened the grant application process); *Power Forward Communities*, PROPUBLICA NONPROFIT EXPLORER, <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/932705500/202432199349200308/full>.

⁷ See *NCIF Workplan*, U.S. ENV'T PROT. AGENCY (2024), <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-08/ncif-workplan-pfc.pdf>; *Rewiring America*, PROPUBLICA NONPROFIT EXPLORER, <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/932830316>; Press Release, Rewiring America, Stacey Abrams joins Rewiring America as senior counsel (Mar. 14, 2023), <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/newsroom/press-releases/stacey-abrams-joins-rewiring-america-as-senior-counsel>.

⁸ See *National Clean Investment Fund*, U.S. ENV'T PROT. AGENCY, <https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund/national-clean-investment-fund>.

⁹ Madeline Rowley, *A \$20 Billion Slush Fund—Paid by You to Progressive Nonprofits*, THE FREE PRESS (Mar. 4, 2025), <https://www.thefp.com/p/a-20-billion-slush-fund-nonprofits>.

¹⁰ CGC Invests \$200 Million in GreenieRE to Remove Financing Obstacles and Accelerate Access to Cheaper Power, COALITION FOR GREEN CAPITAL, <https://coalitionforgreencapital.com/cgc-invests-200-million-in-greeniereto-remove-financing-obstacles-and-accelerate-access-to-cheaper-power/>; GreenieRE Company Profile, PITCHBOOK, <https://pitchbook.com/profiles/company/742128-31>; What is GreenieRE?, GREENIERE, <https://www.greeniere.org/>; Press Release, Coalition for Green Capital, Coalition for Green Capital Announces First Network Investment and Major Community Funding Opportunity (Aug. 2024), <https://coalitionforgreencapital.com/coalition-for-green-capital-announces-first-network-investment-and-major-community-funding-opportunity/>.

¹¹ See Press Release, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy (Apr. 4, 2024), <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-20-billion-grants-mobilize-private>.

Similar concerns about conflicts of interest and political favoritism have been identified within the Solar for All program. Hope Enterprise Corp., awarded approximately \$94 million, is led by CEO William Bynum, who served on the Biden-Harris Presidential Transition Team and was later appointed to the Department of the Treasury's Racial Equity Advisory Committee.¹² Grid Alternatives, which received \$311.4 million, was founded by Tim Sears, who was named a "White House Champion of Change for Solar Deployment" during Biden's vice presidency.¹³ The non-profit also centers its business model on "commitments to equity," making it a particularly politically attractive awardee to the previous administration's DOE. Additionally, Groundswell, Inc., recipient of \$156 million, is led by CEO Michelle Moore, who served as President Obama's Chief Sustainability Officer and a Biden-appointed board member for the Tennessee Valley Authority.¹⁴ These improper relationships between federal agencies and grant recipients reinforce concerns that considerations other than merit influenced the selection process.

The NCIF and CCIA's complex funding structure exacerbates these concerns. Rather than using the Department of the Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), a transparent system enabling direct, auditable disbursements, the EPA opted for a "Financial Agency Agreement" with Citibank.¹⁵ Unlike ASAP, which allows grantees to request funds through a public Treasury portal with clear expenditure tracking, the Citibank arrangement places funds in private accounts, limiting public transparency and real-time oversight. This arrangement is unprecedented for the EPA and raises significant questions about whether standard federal oversight protocols were adequately adopted to mitigate the unique risks of this novel approach.¹⁶ The grant program's use of private bank accounts heightens concerns that it prioritizes speed and private investment over transparency and accountability.

The agency's inability to ensure regulatory compliance further underscores the structural problems surrounding the GGRF. The Committee is deeply concerned that the EPA's rushed grant

capital-and-0; see also *Climate United Leadership*, CLIMATE UNITED, <https://weareclimateunited.org/leadership>); E.A. Crunden, *How faith groups helped pass the climate law*, E&E NEWS BY POLITICO (Sept. 7, 2022), <https://www.eenews.net/articles/how-faith-groups-helped-pass-the-climate-law/>; Phil Aroneanu, LINKEDIN (2025), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/philaroneanu>.

¹² Press Release, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Biden-Harris Administration Announces the Hope Enterprise Corporation to Receive \$93, 670,000 (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-hope-enterprise-corporation-receive-93670000>; William J. Bynum, HOPE CREDIT UNION, <https://www.hopecu.org/our-team/william-j-bill-bynum/>.

¹³ Press Release, Grid Alternatives, EPA Awards Grid Alternatives Solar for All Grant (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://gridalternatives.org/learn/press/press-releases/epa-awards-grid-alternatives-solar-all-grant>; Tim Sears, OBAMA WHITE HOUSE ARCHIVES, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/champions/solar-deployment/tim-sears>.

¹⁴ *Solar for All*, U.S. ENV'T PROT. AGENCY, <https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund/solar-all>; Michelle Moore Bio, KY. ENERGY & ENV'T CABINET, <https://eec.ky.gov/Documents%20for%20URLs/Michelle%20Moore%20-%20Bio%20-%20130%20Words%20-%202005282023.pdf>.

¹⁵ See Press Release, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Administrator Zeldin Announces that Billions of Dollars Worth of "Gold Bars" Have Been Located at Outside Financial Institution (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/administrator-zeldin-announces-billions-dollars-worth-gold-bars-have-been-located>.

¹⁶ See Letter from W.C. McIntosh, Acting Deputy Adm'r, U.S. Env't Prot. Agency, to Nicole M. Murley, Acting Inspector Gen., U.S. Env't. Prot. Agency (March 2, 2025), <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-03/epaigrequest030225.pdf>.

process undermined the fundamental principles of fairness and accountability that should guide all federal procurement and grants management. Particularly troubling is EPA's and its awardees' inability to meet subrecipient oversight obligations under the Uniform Guidance for Federal Awards. These regulations mandate rigorous oversight of subrecipients, including risk assessments and corrective actions, but the EPA's accelerated \$27 billion grant process appears to have bypassed many of these critical safeguards.¹⁷ Moreover, recent testimony from the Acting IG indicated that EPA officials may have lacked the capacity or training to properly enforce compliance requirements at such a large scale, casting further doubt on the agency's readiness to provide adequate oversight over the program.¹⁸

The Committee supports EPA's decision to refer these concerns to the Office of Inspector General.¹⁹ As stewards of taxpayer dollars, we must address GGRF's structural vulnerabilities through administrative and congressional reforms. Transparency, impartiality, and competitive rigor are not optional features of federal spending. They are prerequisites.

To gain a more complete understanding of GGRF's implementation and structure, we respectfully request a formal briefing with EPA staff as soon as possible. We have also requested a separate briefing with EPA's OIG staff. We appreciate your attention to these important matters and look forward to working collaboratively to restore credibility and trust in the management of taxpayer-funded grant programs. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Piquero of the Committee's majority staff at 202-225-6371.

Sincerely,



Brian Babin
Chairman
House Committee on
Science, Space, and Technology



Rich McCormick
Chairman
House Committee on
Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Investigations
and Oversight

¹⁷ See 2 CFR Part 200.

¹⁸ See *id.* at 3.

¹⁹ See *id.* at 13.

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cc: Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; Emilia Sykes, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; Nicole Murley, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Environmental Protection Administration