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Emerald Cities Collaborative Urges Court to Reinstate Revoked EPA Funding

Legal filing highlights critical harm to nonprofit organizations and communities they serve

WASHINGTON, July 17, 2025 – Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC) and 15 other national non-profits, community-based organizations, and local governments are urging a judge to restore federal grant funding that the Trump administration abruptly terminated. The groups directly rely on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant funds and filed a legal brief in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in Appalachian Voices v. EPA.

“The termination of the EPA’s Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program is not just a bureaucratic setback—it’s a direct blow to frontline communities who have historically borne the brunt of environmental injustice,” said Meishka L. Mitchell, President & CEO of Emerald Cities Collaborative. “This decision undermines years of trust-building between government and grassroots organizations, and it jeopardizes urgently needed investments in environmental health, economic opportunity, and racial equity. ECC stands with our partners in calling on the court to restore these critical funds, so that communities most impacted by pollution and climate change can lead in shaping the solutions they need and deserve.”

ECC and the groups behind the brief are subrecipients of EPA grants. Although not formal plaintiffs in the case, we depend on the revoked funds to carry out environmental justice, public health, climate resilience, and pollution mitigation projects in communities across the country. The termination of the grant, on the cusp of delivering on promises to many communities, will have long-term consequences, sowing distrust and making it even more difficult to reengage people and repair damaged relationships.

The brief explains that while primary grant recipients are bringing the lawsuit, many of those recipients passed federal funds to trusted, community-based partners, educational institutions, and local governments. These subrecipients are responsible for implementing on-the-ground work and continue to suffer the consequences of the funding cuts.

ECC and the other organizations filing the supportive brief are jointly represented by attorneys at Conservation Law Foundation (CLF). The nonprofit environmental advocacy organization is

providing pro bono legal counsel to 16 organizations across the country that have had their funding revoked.

“These groups are the beating heart of environmental justice work across our country,” said Britteny Jenkins, CLF’s vice president for environmental justice. “Cutting their funding isn’t just bureaucratic cruelty – it’s a targeted strike on the people most impacted by pollution and climate change. When you cut off the grassroots, you cut off progress, well, at its roots.”

Experts are available for further comment.

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