



Whitehouse and Casten Introduce Environmental Health Restoration Act with Protect Our Winters, as EPA Rolls Back Power Plant Climate Protections

New legislation would reestablish critical environmental safeguards, strengthen scientific integrity, and rebuild EPA enforcement

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 17, 2026)— With [Protect Our Winters](#) athletes, including three-time Olympic skier Tommy Ford standing alongside them on Capitol Hill, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Representative Sean Casten introduced the **Environmental Health Restoration Act**, legislation designed to restore and strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency’s core mission of protecting public health and the environment.

The bill comes two days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized the repeal of most provisions of the Biden administration’s 2024 greenhouse gas standards for fossil fuel-fired power plants and proposed eliminating the remaining greenhouse gas standards for the power sector.

The Environmental Health Restoration Act would refocus key environmental safeguards, strengthen the role of independent science in EPA decision-making, rebuild the agency’s enforcement capacity and prioritize communities facing disproportionate pollution burdens.

“The Trump EPA has fully abandoned its decades-long duty to protect Americans’ health and safety. Its relentless attacks on science have delivered for big political donors while poisoning our air and water and speeding up the climate crisis,” said Whitehouse. “Our bill would jumpstart the long process of restoring the science, the scientists, and the original mission guiding the EPA.”

The legislation would reinstate protections for pollution from power plants, vehicles, and oil and gas operations that were in effect on January 19, 2025. It would also require EPA decisions to

be grounded in peer-reviewed science and rebuild independent scientific advisory bodies. Senator Jeff Merkley has signed on as an original co-sponsor.

For Protect Our Winters, which represents athletes, outdoor professionals and the 180 million people who recreate outdoors in the U.S., the issue is both environmental and deeply personal. Clean air and clean water are fundamental to people's ability to live, work and recreate outdoors, while changes in snowpack, waterways and air quality increasingly affect outdoor communities and the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy.

Throughout the day, POW Alliance Athletes, including professional cyclist Barry Wicks, runner Jenny Jurek, skiers Sierra Quitiquit and three-time Olympic Alpine racer Tommy Ford, and Stuart Nissenbaum, former EPA scientist and member of the POW Science Alliance, met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to discuss the legislation and the importance of environmental protections to the outdoor community.

"As an Olympian training in the mountains all over the world, I've seen less and less snow, glaciers shrinking at a not-so-glacial pace, and volatile air quality," said Tommy Ford, three-time Olympian and World Cup Champion. "This directly affects people's health and the economy. A stronger, more durable EPA is essential for clean air, clean water and a strong, healthy way of life."

Rep. Casten said the legislation is intended to reestablish science-based environmental protection as a central function of the agency.

"At a time when the Trump Administration is ignoring the climate crisis and undermining Americans' ability to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and enjoy the outdoors, it is more important than ever to restore a commitment to science-based environmental protection at the EPA," said Rep. Sean Casten. "The EPA was created to protect public health and our environment. I'm proud to introduce this legislation to refocus the agency on its core mission."

The Environmental Health Restoration Act would:

- **Restore key pollution protections** for power plants, vehicles, and oil and gas operations that were in effect on January 19, 2025.
- **Strengthen scientific integrity** by requiring EPA decisions to be grounded in peer-reviewed science and restoring independent scientific advisory bodies.
- **Rebuild EPA enforcement capacity** by restoring civil and criminal enforcement resources and requiring annual accountability reporting to Congress.
- **Prioritize overburdened communities** by directing monitoring and enforcement toward communities facing disproportionate pollution burdens.

- **Require public-health and cumulative-impact analyses** for EPA actions affecting air and water quality.
- **Protect state authority** by preserving states' ability to adopt environmental standards stronger than federal requirements.
- **Strengthen access to the courts** by allowing people harmed by EPA's failure to comply with the law to seek relief in federal court.

POW Vice President of Campaigns Ben Gubits said the legislation provides a framework for rebuilding environmental protections around public health, science and accountability.

"Rolling back environmental protections has real consequences for the places and experiences that define the outdoor community," said Ben Gubits, Vice President of Campaigns at Protect Our Winters. "It means dirtier air, greater climate pollution, more threats to public health and accelerating damage to our winters, waterways and public lands. The Environmental Health Restoration Act draws a clear line: the EPA must follow science, enforce the law and put people ahead of polluters. This is a positive vision for the future looking well beyond the Trump years."

The League of Conservation Voters has also endorsed the Environmental Health Restoration Act.

"We appreciate Senator Whitehouse and Representative Casten for fighting to restore the EPA's mission and safeguards to protect public health, the environment and our climate in the face of the Trump administration's reckless and dangerous rollbacks. People want more protections for their families and our air, water,