

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 14, 2026

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

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

We write to express our serious concerns with the recent announcement that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to take up a surveillance study to track the presence of the medication abortion drugs mifepristone and misoprostol in drinking water. This action is a stark departure from past EPA practice and serves to further this administration's attacks on reproductive health care and distracts from your agency's critical role protecting Americans from known chemical pollutants in our water systems.

Mifepristone has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in medication abortion in combination with misoprostol since 2000. Decades of scientific research have repeatedly shown that both mifepristone and misoprostol are safe and effective for patients, with mifepristone having been used safely by more than 7.5 million people in the United States since then. Mifepristone's approval followed a robust scientific review of both the drug's human safety and environmental health impacts. In 1996, the FDA conducted an Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assess the potential impacts of mifepristone on the environment. This NEPA assessment resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact and "concluded that the product can be manufactured, used, and disposed of without any expected adverse environmental effects."¹ This finding was reaffirmed by the FDA as recently as January 2025.² Further, over three decades of scientific research have repeatedly shown that both mifepristone and misoprostol are safe and effective for patients. Misoprostol was first approved by the FDA to treat gastric ulcers in 1988 and has been approved for use in medication abortion in combination with mifepristone since 2000. There is no scientific evidence – recent or otherwise – that demonstrates a need for an EPA surveillance study on misoprostol.

While there is no scientific evidence that would support mifepristone and misoprostol as candidates for surveillance by the EPA, there has been a targeted political pressure campaign by anti-abortion activists to urge the agency to use the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and other environmental authorities to surveil and regulate medication abortion drugs. In January 2025, *Politico* reported that the anti-abortion rights organization Students for Life was encouraging its supporters to weaponize environmental laws to attack medication abortion. Students for Life

¹ https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/nda/2000/20687_Mifepristone_EA.pdf

² <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FDA-2023-P-1528-0005>

leadership described this novel use of the SDWA and other environmental authorities as “using the devil’s own tools against them.”³ In November 2025, leaders in the EPA’s Office of Water met with the group and encouraged Students for Life to have its members contact the agency and pressure it to regulate abortion medications.⁴ When asked about this effort, Students for Life’s head of policy ludicrously stated that “people need to understand that they are likely drinking other people’s abortions” — a categorically false statement.

At a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on May 13, 2026, to review your budget request for Fiscal Year 2027, you were directly asked about these conversations given the House Republican language that was specifically *not* included in the Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations bill. You replied, “I’m not aware of the agency doing anything with that.”⁵ In spite of this assurance, the EPA announced this September that it would, for the first time, include mifepristone and misoprostol and their metabolites in a surveillance study on emerging contaminants. Students for Life celebrated this announcement as victory for its political pressure campaign, saying in an interview that the group is “finally being heard” by the EPA.

It is deeply alarming that this kind of radical, anti-science campaign might have an audience at the EPA. This study is a departure from the EPA’s historic role in protecting our water and air from actual threats to human health and the environment. Instead, this study opens the door to new attacks on safe and accessible reproductive health care, undermining the safety and privacy of patients around the country. We are also concerned that the EPA’s new focus on medication abortion drugs pulls resources and attention away from PFAS, pesticides, and other well-documented contaminants that years of research have shown pose an actual threat to human health and the environment.

No credible evidence shows mifepristone is a threat to America's drinking water, but there's plenty of evidence that anti-abortion groups have been asking EPA to concoct bogus studies that say otherwise. Taxpayers fund EPA to protect their health and the environment, not to advance a political campaign against women's health care.

We strongly urge you to revise this study to remove mifepristone and misoprostol and their metabolites from the list of emerging contaminants targeted for surveillance. Additionally, we request that you provide the following information no later than October 31, 2026:

1. Your agency’s justification for the surveillance of mifepristone and misoprostol and their metabolites in this study, including the statutory, regulatory, and scientific basis for its inclusion.

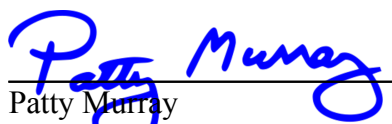
³ <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/01/30/abortion-opponents-environmental-laws-00201423>

⁴ <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/12/15/new-anti-abortion-campaign-takes-aim-at-epa-water-testing-rules-00682098>

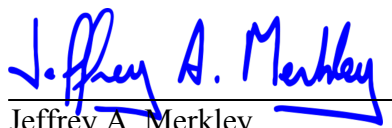
⁵ <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-review-of-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2027-budget-request-for-the-environmental-protection-agency>

2. Your agency's process for determining which pharmaceuticals and chemicals were included in this surveillance study.
3. The anticipated timeline for this study and information on how the study's results will be shared.
4. How this study may be used in relation to the regulatory process under the SDWA.
5. A full list of all meetings between EPA staff and outside organizations to discuss the potential surveillance or regulation of mifepristone and/or misoprostol and its metabolites, including under the Safe Drinking Water Act or any other statute or regulation enforced by your agency.
6. All correspondence between EPA staff and Students for Life since January 20, 2025.

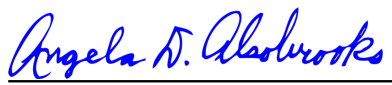
Sincerely,

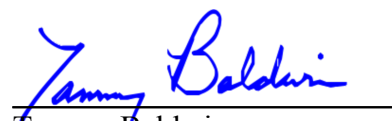

Patty Murray
United States Senator


Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

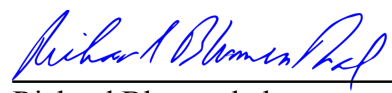

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator

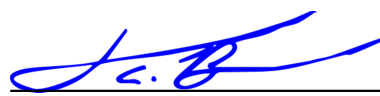

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



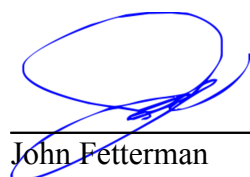
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



John Fetterman
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



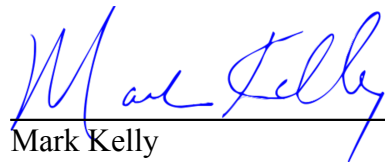
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



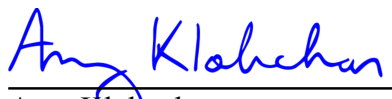
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



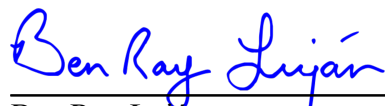
Andy Kim
United States Senator



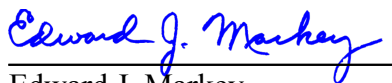
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



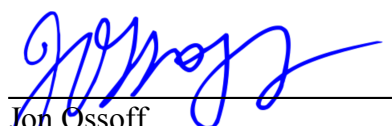
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



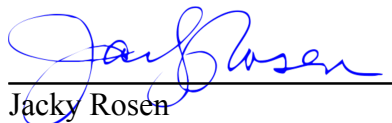
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



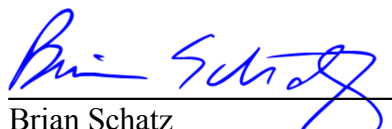
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



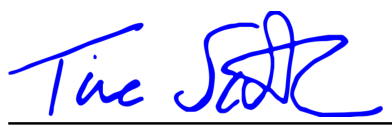
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator


Brian Schatz
United States Senator

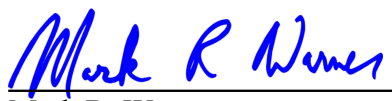

Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator

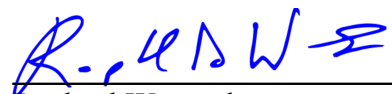

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator


Tina Smith
United States Senator

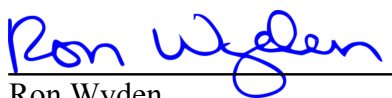

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator


Mark R. Warner
United States Senator


Raphael Warnock
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Peter Welch
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator