

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460
zeldin.lee@epa.gov

Jessica Kramer
Assistant Administrator
Office of Water
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460
kramer.jessical@epa.gov

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Dear Administrator Lee Zeldin:

As health care and public health professionals or an organization representing health care and public health professionals, we are writing to express our grave concern regarding the pervasiveness of microplastics and their presence in our nation's drinking water. We therefore urge the EPA to include microplastics in the Sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6).

Microplastics are a public health crisis that can no longer be ignored. Every day, people across the United States ingest these particles; it is estimated that the average person consumes 4,000 or more microplastic particles annually from drinking water alone.

The clinical and scientific evidence regarding the health impacts of microplastics is deeply concerning:

- **Systemic Accumulation:** Microplastics can accumulate in human cells, tissues, and organs, potentially causing cellular damage, allergic responses, and early cell death.¹
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Infants and children are at heightened risk due to exposure in the womb and a lack of developed defense mechanisms.² Early-life exposure is linked to lung inflammation, impaired kidney function, and potential

¹ E. Dzierżyński et al., "Microplastics in the human body: Exposure, detection, and risk of carcinogenesis: A state-of-the-art review," *Cancers*, 16, 21 (2024): 3703, <https://doi.org/10.3390/cancers16213703>; Y. Lee et al., "Health effects of microplastic exposures: Current issues and perspectives," *Yonsei Medical Journal* 64, 5 (2023): 301, <https://doi.org/10.3349/ymj.2023.0048>.

² N. H. Amran et al. "Exposure to microplastics during early developmental stage: Review of current evidence." *Toxics* 10, 10 (2022): 597. <https://doi.org/10.3390/toxics10100597>.

neurodevelopmental impairments.³ Studies have confirmed plastic particles can cross the placental barrier to reach the fetus.⁴

- **Chronic Health Risks:** Research has linked microplastic exposure to various cancers, immune system disruption, and developmental or reproductive harm.⁵ Recent research has identified microplastic accumulation in lung, breast, and colorectal cancerous tissues.⁶
- **Unequal Impacts:** Low-income, marginalized communities of color are disproportionately affected by microplastic pollution, often exposed at greater rates due to factors like diets, locations near sources, and tendencies to rely more on bottled water.⁷ The historically extractive nature and lifecycle of general plastic pollution makes the contamination of air, water, and soils in overburdened communities largely unavoidable.⁸

We have a right to know what is in our drinking water. Studies suggest that current water treatment plants are unable to remove microplastics completely, and bottled water often contains even higher concentrations than tap water.

The EPA has a critical opportunity to protect public health. It should grant the 2024 petition from more than 175 organizations and 2025 petition from seven state governors requesting the inclusion of microplastics in the UCMR 6. Monitoring drinking water for microplastics is a necessary first step toward transparency and future regulation.

We urge you to prioritize the health of our communities and include microplastics in the UCMR 6.

³ Plausible Mechanisms of Injury: Numerous studies using animal models and human cell and tissue culture suggest multiple pathways by which microplastic particles could disrupt human DNA and normal cellular function. For example, Dzierżyński et al. "Microplastics in the human body;" R. E. Zurub et al., "Microplastics exposure: Implications for human fertility, pregnancy and child health," *Frontiers in Endocrinology* 14 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fendo.2023.1330396>.

⁴ N. H. Amran et al. "Exposure to microplastics during early developmental stage: Review of current evidence." *Toxics* 10, 10 (2022): 597. <https://doi.org/10.3390/toxics10100597>; Zurub et al., "Microplastics exposure."

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⁶ Dzierżyński et al., "Microplastics in the human body."

⁷ Alia Dharssi, "Newsletter: Plastic pollution is a social justice issue," *Discourse*, (2018); Jennifer F. Provencher et al., "Future monitoring of litter and microplastics in the Arctic — challenges, opportunities, and strategies," *Arctic Science*, Vol. 9. (2022): 216; Samiksha Singh et al., "Microplastic exposure disparities in California communities through bottled water consumption," *Microplastics & Nanoplastics* 5, No. 43. (2025): abstract, 6–8.

⁸ *Neglected: Environmental Justice Impacts of Marine Litter and Plastic Production* (United Nations Environment Programme, April 2021), 36.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kay Ahaus, M.A., P.T.

Judith L. Albert, MD

Carrie Angelo, BS, RCSN

Anthony Antonucci, Retired NYS Department of Health

Jill D. Aquino-RN, MS

Sierra Arnold, clinical staff

Ankush K Bansal, MD, DCM, MPH

Kathleen Bartlett, MD

Betty Barton, MS, RD, LD

Grant Barton, MD

Danielle Bass, MD

Janet Bellamy, MEd., OTR ret.

Peggy Ann Berry PhD, RN, COHN-S, FAAOHN

Karen Bidwell ARNP

Daniel Billings, DNP

Stephanie Bloom, MD, MPH, FAAP

Susan Bonadonna, MD

Kathleen Bonney RN

Tom Boo, MD. FAAFP

Paul Devine Bottone, MD

Kathryn Bourgoïn, MD

Kelly Bouthillet DNP, APRN, CCNS, ACNP-BC, FNP-C

Barbara W. Bandom, MD

Ann Bristow, Ph.D.

Maureen A. Burns-Gorman, RN

Angela Calle, MD

Martha Camacho Rodriguez, MPH

Mary K. Canales, PhD, RN

Lauren Canary MD MPH

Kathleen M Canizaro RN

Scott Carlin, PhD

Susan Catchings, NP

Martha Cheo, MS

Elizabeth E Christian MD

Richard Clapp, DSc, MPH

Virginia Clarke, DVM

Ann Coates, MD

Cynthia Cochran, PT

Laura Collins Zurfluh, DVM
Virginia Corrigan, RN,MSN
Gregory D'Augustine MD
Ruth Dallas RN
David A Davis MD FACS
Edith Dietz, MD
Robert Dodge, M. D.
Megan Doheny WHNP
Glenna Dowling, RN, PhD
Jamie Dwyer RN, BSN, MBA
Larysa Dyrszka, MD
Sydney Engel, NP
Timothy C Fagan, MD
Cathey Falvo, MD, MPH
Robert Feder, M.D.
Jay S Federman MD
Zoe Feilner, PA-C
Brenna Finley, MN, MPH, RN, PHN
Anthony B Fiorillo, MD, FACP
Dr. Flandersia Jones DrPH RN
Nancy Fong, ARNP
Vanessa Forsythe MSN
Felicia French, RN
Alice Freund, M.S.P.H., M.A.T.
Laura Gaffney MD
Daniel J Gallagher, MD
Robyn Gilden, PhD, RN
Madeleine Glick, MS, RDN
Whitney Glowacki, Medical Massage Therapy
Kjersten Gmeiner, MD
Warren Gold MD
Catherine Gould PhD. CNC
Robert M. Gould, MD
Lani Graham, MD, MPH
Nazaneen Grant MD
Mary Gutierrez, MPH
Leah Hallow PsyD
Kim Hanhflores, MA & Emergency Medical Responder
Andrew Hantel, MPH, MD
Aaisha Haque MD

June Haran, RN
Ralph Harder MD
Clara Harding, current MPH student
Patricia Harlow, Ph.D.
Charlene Harrington, Ph.D. RN Professor Emerita
Cary Harrison MD
Denise Hartman, MD, FACOG
Janice Schroeder Health Educator
Donna Heffernan, MD
Ruth Heft, retired RN
Sharon Heichman, MD
Karin Hemmingsen, MD, MPH
Lauren Herrmann, MD
Hilary Hewes, MD
Tarek A. Hijaz, MD
David G. Hill, MD
Michelle Holmes, M.D., FACEP
Mica Hope, MPH
Yvonne Huckleberry, PharmD (pharmacist)
Vanessa Hughes, MHS
Stacy Hull, MD
Martha Hyde, MD
Caroline Jackman, MS
Julie C. Jacobson Vann, PhD, MS, RN
Mary Janssen RN MBA
Hung Jeffrey Kim
Terrika Jordan, PharmD
Mary C Jue, RN, MSN, PHN, Credentialed School Nurse
Antoinette Justice, DO
Thomas Kalinoski, MD
Marla Kasper RN
Lindsey Keenan, PhD, LAT, ATC
Kelley Kellogg DO
Julie Kenkel, RN, MPH, MS
Dr. Kevin Walsh
Emily Killion, MPH
Judy Kimelman, MD
Martha Klein, RN
Arielle Knight, MPH
Karl Knobler, Ph.D.

Van Knox, VMD, DACVR
Miriam Komaromy, MD
Diane Koropchak, RN
Stephanie Kubala, MD
Kam Lam, MD MPH MS
George Latta, M.D.
Allen Lavee, MD
Bridget Lee MD
Ja-Tee Irene Lee, NP
B. R. Lemonik, Psychotherapist
Mary Grace Jue Leong, RD, CDCES
Dr. leslie klein, D.O.
Marcia Liberson MPH, MSW
Anna Linakis, MPH
Virgene Link-New, DDS
Luanne Linnard-Palmer RN MSN EdD CPN
Robert Little MD
Judy Lord
Ben Lounsbury MD
Angelene Luke, RN, BSN
Cynthia Mahoney, MD
Eliah Malka DO
Claire Mangan, RN
Linda Maracich, RN
Stephen W Marcella, MD, MPH
Tracy Marien MD
Grace Marino BSN, RN, CPN
Matthew D. Mathias M.D.
Joseph McCabe, MD
Maeve McCormack, OTD, OTR/L
Cheryl McDaniel RN BSN, BA (Retired)
Renee McKinney, MD
Heather McLean, MD
Caroline Merck, MPH
Erika Meyer, MPH
Liz Mizelle, PhD, RN
Ruth Mizu, MD
Shirley A Moore RN
Sadie Moss, CNM
Peter H Moyer, MD

Charles Murphy, MD FCCP
Robert K. Musil, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Scott Nass, MD MPA FAAFP AAHIVS
Heather Nelson, RN
Patricia A. Nobel MD, FAAP
Kathleen Nolan, MD, MSL
Gabriella Nunez, RN, MSN
Brenda Nuyen, MD
Janette O'Sullivan, CNM, LM, RN, MS
Mary B. Oates, BSN, RN, BC
Daniel Oppenheim, MD, PhD
Sonda Oppewal, PhD, RN
Carmi Orenstein, MPH
Tracy Ouellette MD
Ya Chang Owens, PharmD
Morgan Park, DNP, RN
Philip Paros OD
Anita Peñuelas MD, MPH
Christine Perez RN, PHN
Dr. Kiley Petersmith, DNP, RN
Arlene Pfaff, RN, PHN
Matthew Pierce, MD
Alyssa Piljan-Gentle, MD
Susan a pohl, Dietitians/nutritionists
Allegra Ponshock, MD
Ed Pontius, MD
Jacqueline Potts, MD
Paul Potvin MD
Frank M. Powell, Ph. D.
Sanjay Premakumar, MD, MPH
Stephanie W. Putzier, MD
Steven Radwany MD
Julia Radwany, MD
Sharghi Rahmanian, PharmD
Zoe Rammelkamp, MD
Jim Recht, MD
Arthi Reddy MD
Michael J. Reilly, MD
Sue Robertson RN, PhD
Filip Roos, MD

Megan Rose, DO
Cathy G. Rosenfield, MD
Karen Russell, PA-C retired
Colleen Ryan, MD
Barbara Sattler, RN, DrPH, FAAN
Timothy Schacht, DVM
Ted Schettler MD, MPH
Christine Schmitthenner RN
Barton Schoenfeld, MD, FACC
Judith Schultz, RN, MS
Elizabeth Scott, RN, BSN
Kelly Scriven Weiner MD
Steve Serlin MD & Professor
Stephen C. Shannon, DO, MPH
Kathleen Shapley-Quinn, MD
Iris Silverstein, MD
Susan A Simon, RN
Carrie Siracuse, MD
Richard Solomon, PhD
Susan Sommer, RN
Rita Soni, PharmD
Donna M. Staton, MD, MPH, FAAP
Karen E Steinberg MD
Dina S Stolman, MD, MSPH
Ann Suellentrip MS RN
Laura Supper, BSN, RN
Cartier Taranto, BS, chef, Community Health Worker
Catherine Thomasson, MD
Han Timmermans, RN, BSN
Wilma Torres RN, Public Health Nurse
Laurie Towne MD
Christine Townsend, MD
Priyanka Tripuraneni, MD
Walter Tsou, MD, MPH
Peri Unligil, M.D.
Lois Van Ottingham, RN
Robert Vinetz, MD
Mark Vossler, MD
Kristin Vyhnal, DVM, MS, DACVP
Annmarie Walton RN

Edward Z Walworth MD
Evan Weger, M.S.
David Weiner, MD
Marie Weinstein, PhD
Robert Weiss MD
Cassandra White, ACSW
Katherine C. White, M.D.
Teresa Wilmoth-Olson, RN, MPH
Jonathan Witte, MD
Karen Wolf
Megan J. Wolff, PhD MPH
Jean Woo MD MPH MBA FAAP
E.Y., RN
Julie Beth Yelin MD
Aroub Yousuf, MD candidate (medical student)
Brian Youth, MD
Jacob Zinn, MD