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Faced with Hostile EPA Actions, Clean Air Coalition Launches Fundraiser to Support Environmental Justice Advocacy

As the EPA pulls support for environmental initiatives, Clean Air is working to keep its mission alive

The impact of the Trump administration’s sweeping budget cuts are being felt across federal agencies and nonprofit organizations alike. The Clean Air Coalition, a local environmental nonprofit established in 2009, is no exception to this financial strain.

In recent years, philanthropic organizations have reduced their direct support for environmental justice initiatives, encouraging nonprofits like Clean Air to seek funding from the unprecedented resources available through [the Inflation Reduction Act](#). Subsequently, Clean Air, alongside several other local nonprofits, successfully secured a \$20 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in fall 2024. This funding was intended to help prepare Western New York for the worsening effects of climate change and reduce the risk of loss of life from extreme weather events like the 2022 Christmas Blizzard. This grant marked a historic investment in climate and environmental justice, and Clean Air [celebrated this win](#) alongside its partners late last year.

However, these promised funds never materialized. Despite having a signed contract with the EPA, Clean Air has been unable to access its portion of the grant, which accounted for over half of its operating budget in 2025. This withholding of funds has led to a severe cash flow crisis for the organization. To fill this budget gap, Clean Air Coalition has launched an [emergency fundraiser](#), aiming to raise \$30,000 in grassroots donations by May 1st.

“Clean Air has shown that community organizing with those directly affected can stop pollution and save lives—just as we did with Tonawanda Coke, Battaglia Demolition, and now Goodyear in Niagara Falls. Amid funding cuts and the dismantling of EPA protections, organizations like ours need financial support to continue this critical work,” explains Chris Murawski, Executive Director of Clean Air.

This action by the EPA is part of a broader agenda to defund environmental and climate justice initiatives while rolling back regulations designed to protect communities from pollution. In a [recent statement](#), EPA Administrator, Lee Zeldin, announced the organization’s plans to reconsider a swath of environmental regulations. Among the rules under threat are [regulations on PM 2.5 or airborne](#)



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[particulate matter](#), a known health hazard, and the [2009 Endangerment Finding](#) that legally recognizes the harm to human health and the environment caused by fossil fuel burning. These attacks target long-standing regulations that have saved lives and reduced chronic diseases across the U.S. — including here in Western New York. [insert Bridge quote]

Meanwhile, Zeldin declared climate change advocacy a “religion” that the EPA is intent on destroying, suggesting more woes to come for nonprofits like Clean Air that have been targeted by the EPA’s anti-climate agenda.

The EPA’s recent actions not only impact environmental agencies and nonprofit organizations, they also have serious consequences for communities across the nation — especially Western New York. Since its founding, the Clean Air Coalition has been instrumental in holding polluting industries accountable and advocating for public health protections alongside local residents. In 2009, Clean Air played a critical role in urging regulators to [investigate emissions from the now-closed Tonawanda Coke plant](#). These emissions were found to contain carcinogens like benzene that jeopardized health of nearby homeowners. In 2011, Clean Air successfully organized with residents of Buffalo’s Lower West Side to prevent the expansion of the Peace Bridge Truck Plaza, which would have demolished Front Park and surrounding homes. Currently, Clean Air operates six campaigns in the City of Buffalo and Tonawanda, and consults on two campaigns in Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda.

“It’s been through the work of advocates and organizations like Clean Air that many of our communities have been able to improve their air quality and [...] the environment,” says Ashley Smith, a Clean Air member and Buffalo resident.

Nevertheless, Clean Air remains committed to protecting the environment and public health in Western New York. As part of its ‘May Day’ fundraiser, Clean Air is seeking local businesses interested in sponsoring its Annual Dinner on May 1st. This year, all of the sponsorship donations will go towards supporting Clean Air’s work. Despite the challenges it faces ahead, Clean Air’s efforts to create a healthier, sustainable, and vibrant future for our region goes on.

The Clean Air Coalition builds power by developing grassroots leaders who organize their communities to run and win environmental justice and public health campaigns in Western New York. We are currently open to media inquiries and can be contacted at the email address and phone number listed above.