

After much soul searching, it is with reluctance that I accept [the early out offer](#) from the USEPA. In my 20 years at the California Region 9 office, I have served alongside the most committed and passionate of environmental specialists, and it has been extremely rewarding. However, important issues have made it untenable for me to continue working in the current environment.

On a personal level, the [unhealthy air quality](#) in the office space has taken a toll on my health. While working at home has allowed me to continue working effectively, the loss of working with colleagues on a daily basis has been detrimental to professional development opportunities, as well as being a great personal disappointment. During recent discussions with management, I was told there would be a higher burden of proof for me to continue to work in a safe environment and that despite data showing lingering elevated levels of indoor air contaminants, there is no plan in place to address the problem further.

On a program level, the cuts to [Superfund](#) have had their toll. Beginning [in 2010, EPA has noted](#) that [there is no longer a 'Fund'](#) to fiscally support the program, and keep pace with the numerous new contaminated sites that are added to the list each year. Earlier cuts in staffing and budget have left scientists and engineers doing more with fewer resources, and rather than reinstating the pay-as-you-go fees on corporations, [Scott Pruitt's](#) team is instead focusing on ["streamlining the superfund program"](#). The 5 goals of the streamlining task force focus on eliminating steps and saving corporate monies, yet fail to mention the mission of the agency: to protect human health and the environment. During recent discussions with management, I was told that as the project manager of a superfund site currently under scrutiny, I should strive for compromise and try to be as "invisible as possible".

On a philosophical level, the [recent political pressures and bureaucracy](#) have created an atmosphere that is at odds with our Agency's stated mission. I fear that my talents, as well as those of many of my colleagues, will no longer be utilized in a positive manner and additional cuts will be experienced. My duty as a scientist calls for me to seek opportunities that are more in line with my personal and professional goals of addressing the challenges of a changing climate. It is indisputable that there are now [410 parts per million of CO2 in the atmosphere](#). Scientists' warnings fall on the deaf ears of our legislators, while greenhouse gas emissions continue beyond a level to which human society can adapt unless something is done to reverse emissions and ensure a sustainable future.

I have savored our time together. My experience and knowledge have flourished over the years working in various programs (TSCA, EPCRA, RCRA, CERCLA/Superfund) and I have enjoyed the chance to ensure enforcement and community involvement, and to develop new programs (TRI schools & Tribes, Regional Science Council, Region 9 Climate/Energy Team, WasteWise, C2P2, Green Cities, and more!). We have fought diligently for science---and for our communities--and I will continue to do so in other capacities. My highest regard, respect, and thanks to all of the fabulous employees who believe in what we do!

My last day at USEPA is Thursday, August 31, 2017.

Thank you.
Lynda Deschambault
Environmental Scientist
Remedial Project Manager
USEPA Region 9

"In every deliberation, we must consider its effects on the next seven generations"

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