

United States Senate

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November 20, 2019

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

I write to express my concerns with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement that it would end operations at its Las Vegas Finance Center (LVFC) on March 21, 2020. This proposed closure would jeopardize the job security and livelihoods of 16 dedicated Nevada employees, as well as their families and local communities. The misguided decision to shutter this well-performing facility follows two other Las Vegas EPA office closures in 2017 and 2018, affecting approximately 70 career EPA employees in Southern Nevada.

As you know, the EPA's Las Vegas Finance Center fulfills funding and monitors payments for critical EPA grants across the nation, including in Nevada. The 16 employees at this office - some of whom have worked and lived in Las Vegas for over thirty years - serve the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment by tracking and conducting diligent review of taxpayer resources and ensuring that the EPA's finances are well managed and responsibly utilized.


I am troubled by the EPA's decision to close the Las Vegas Finance Center, particularly given that Congress has not appropriated funds for the EPA to consolidate or close any of its regional offices. Moreover, neither the Las Vegas Finance Center's employees nor Congress have been appropriately consulted or informed of the EPA's decision-making process. It also has come to my attention that the EPA has not answered the majority of questions from current LVFC staff surrounding the proposed closure. Therefore, I respectfully request that you provide me with written answers to the following questions:

1. What is the EPA's intent and purpose for consolidating the Las Vegas Finance Center?
2. Who approved this consolidation?
3. Why is the Agency circumventing Congress' reprogramming and reorganizing requirements that prevent it from consolidating the Center?
4. Has the EPA approved the use of internal appropriations for the Center's consolidation?

5. If the costs of operations was a factor in proposing closure, was LVFC management given the opportunity to prepare a plan that would decrease costs and manpower, allowing the office to continue operations?
6. Why was the Nevada Congressional Delegation not consulted in advance of the EPA's announcement? Did the EPA consult with other local stakeholders or impacted communities before making its decision to close a facility where 16 Nevadans work?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your swift response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jacky Rosen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator