

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Protect state's water

Why should you care about the EPA? As a physician, I am very concerned about plans to cut or eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency.

We are blessed in Michigan by our Great Lakes with one-fifth of the life-giving fresh water in the world. They supply an economy richly based on agriculture, hunting, fishing, tourism, and transportation.

However, we also have glaring examples of the terrible effects of corporate and government greed endangering our state's waters and our lives. In St. Louis, MI, the ongoing cleanup of cancer-causing contamination of our water and soil with PBBs dates back to the 1970s uses funds from the EPA. On the other hand, the lack of regulations to control fecal contamination of animal waste spread onto farm land in very large volumes from Concentrated Animal Farming Operations is choking the life out

of our Pine River.

The water in Flint, contaminated in the last few years with lead, has only begun to show its permanent neurologic effects on 6,000-12,000 infants and young children. At the same time 87 people in Flint became sick with a dangerous, but unusual, water-borne infection called Legionella. Ten died.

These are examples of why we need strong, science-based regulations to protect our environment and health. The EPA, with all its flaws, is essential to protecting our air and water quality. The EPA needs to be strengthened, not cut. President Trump is proposing more than 30% cut to the EPA and HR 861, introduced by Florida Representative Matt Gaetz, would eliminate the agency entirely. Any legislation to defund or weaken the EPA will hurt real people now and for a long time to come.

We and our children have a stake in the decisions being made by our leaders in Washing-

ton and Lansing. Make your concerns known. Call your U.S. legislator. In MidMichigan, that would be John Moolenaar (202) 225-3561. If unsure of your U.S. representative's name and number, call (202) 225-3121 with your zip code, or go online to www.house.gov/representatives/find/

When you call, ask for the staff person in charge of environmental concerns, then explain why you are in support of the EPA. Tell them regulation is NOT a bad thing; we need the EPA.

Want to be a bigger part of the solution? Get involved with a local environmental group. The Pine River Superfund Task Force meets the third Wednesday each month, 7 p.m., at St. Louis City Hall. The Friends of the Pine River meetings vary, so check their website: www.friendsofhepine.org

Speak up. Please help protect our state's priceless water and the health of our families.

*Vicki Chessin
Alma*