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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

April 28, 2014

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

The Honorable Gina McCarthy  
Administrator  
The United States Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

I am writing to express my strong disappointment with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement that you will discontinue the highly successful "Coastal Crusader" helicopter monitoring program. I respectfully request that you reconsider this ill-advised decision or provide a suitable alternative for the mission currently performed by the Crusader.

For New Jersey's coastal communities, including the roughly 20 towns along the shore in the Fourth Congressional District, the water quality of our beaches and waterways has considerable and far-reaching implications. In addition to the direct impact on public health, economic vitality and overall quality of life for residents, the millions of visitors and vacationers from around the country who travel to these areas each year provide economic benefits for the local towns.

I am, therefore, both surprised and dismayed by EPA's decision. Few governmental programs come with such a relatively low price tag and high rate of return at the Coastal Crusader.

Many of my constituents and I can vividly recall the massive beach closures of the 1980s, when miles and miles of beaches were shut down due to garbage including medical waste washing ashore. By EPA's own estimation, since the initiation of the Floatables Action Plan in 1989 and its continual success, beach closures due to floatable debris have been minimal. The 2012 report states that from 1989 to 2012, approximately 440 million pounds have been removed from the local area as a result of the plan. In 2012, New Jersey beaches experienced only one minor incident causing beaches to close temporarily. The implementation of the Floatables Action Plan—of which the Coastal Crusader is an important component—was a major contributor to maintaining this improved beach status.

Furthermore, I believe it is both shortsighted and imprudent to public health and well being to cancel the helicopter program without first having in place a working plan to continue the monitoring and water testing previously done by the helicopters.

While I understand that efforts to reduce our ballooning national debt require deliberate and aggressive action and reductions must be made to ensure we do not pass these deficits along to our children and grandchildren, the Coast Crusader is a low-cost and effective program. I am hopeful that you will agree that \$250,000 annually is a small price to pay for the benefits provided by this targeted investment in our coastal communities—and the residents and businesses who call the Jersey Shore home.

I look forward to your response on efforts to continue these critical monitoring efforts. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H SMITH  
Member of Congress