



ASEH, UW Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences  
1900 Commerce Street  
Tacoma, WA 98402

April 8, 2016

Administrator Gina McCarthy  
USEPA Headquarters  
William Jefferson Clinton Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Mail Code: 1101A  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The members of the American Society for Environmental History greatly appreciate your participation in our 2015 meeting in Washington. In your comments, you discussed the historical importance of the EPA in improving the American environment and the health of U.S. citizens. Moreover, you explained how history informs innovations in EPA policy. For these and other reasons, we urge the Environmental Protection Agency to re-establish its History Program.

EPA's initial History Program began on March 14, 1992 with EPA Order 1000.27. The objective of the Program, as stated in the Order, "is to preserve the Agency's institutional memory and thereby provide EPA managers and staff with a clear perspective of the past as an aid in dealing with current and future problems." In the 1990s, this Program helped preserve the Agency's core documents and interviewed Administrators William Ruckelshaus, Russell Train, Douglas Costle, and William Reilly, and others. Every year EPA loses institutional memory with the retirement of employees who have spent 20 or more years at the Agency; their memories should be preserved.

Now is the time for EPA to act. The Agency will commemorate its 50th Anniversary in 2020. The History Program will help the EPA join the conversations that scholars, media makers, policymakers, and diverse publics will have as they examine these first 50 years.

Page 2

Historians in federal agencies fulfill a variety of responsibilities and can complete the same important tasks for EPA:

- Writing about an agency's history for the public and for an agency's employees;
- Performing oral history interviews;
- Collecting artifacts and documents;
- Constructing museum displays and exhibits;
- Directing people to resources on an agency's history;
- Giving tours of the facilities to student groups and other visitors; and
- Clarifying an agency's history when someone misrepresents it.

In conclusion, I write with the unanimous support of the executive committee of the American Society for Environmental History to urge you to re-open the EPA History Program. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Brosnan  
President