



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

September 22, 2020

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City of New York
New York, New York 10007

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
State of New York
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Governor Cuomo:

I am writing to express my deep concern with the destructive impacts associated with continued demonstrations in close proximity to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's offices at 290 Broadway in Manhattan.

As you know, the "Occupy City Hall" protests lasted for many days in early July and led to the looting of businesses in the immediate area of our offices and the defacing of the 290 Broadway building itself on July 3rd and 4th. These protests continued through the month of July, culminating on July 23rd when the Federal Protective Service notified the EPA of an increased police presence around 290 Broadway, and the General Services Administration confirmed that the police set up a command post on Reade Street, restricting access to the street after clearing protesters from the area. Additionally, we were notified by FPS that a firearm was discharged, and a projectile penetrated the street-level glass of our building.

On September 15th, the EPA was alerted that law enforcement sensitive information was shared by the New York Police Department advising that an individual/organization wanted to create a "Portland like" demonstration targeting 26 Federal Plaza, located on the same campus as our office, in protest of the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement offices. FPS also advised that the NYPD was significantly increasing the police presence in and around the area. Because of this, we advised staff scheduled to come into the facility to telework. On September 16th, the EPA was alerted by FPS that there was a crowd of 80-100 demonstrators at 26 Federal Plaza. The demonstrators engaged in unwarranted, violent activity at the facility, breaking windows and defacing/destroying government property. In the extreme, protestors smashed a turnstile door and forcefully entered the lobby of 26 Federal Plaza.

Throughout these incidents, FPS has engaged the EPA and other tenants to keep us informed of potential threats. However, maintaining law and order in New York City is not their responsibility; it is yours. Public safety is a core mission of state and local governments, and your failure to fulfill that mission is putting EPA employees at risk. While during the pandemic we have encouraged employees to telework, there are employees that must access the office as part of emergency response efforts and for other reasons.

If you cannot demonstrate that EPA employees will be safe accessing our New York City offices, then I will begin the process of looking for a new location for our regional headquarters outside of New York City that can maintain order. I have an obligation to our employees, and if the city is unwilling or

incapable of doing its job, I will do mine and move them to a location that can competently fulfill the basic mission of a local government. Before taking that step, I would like for appropriate city or state representatives to brief our regional leadership on what steps you will be taking to ensure the safety of EPA employees working in New York City.

I look forward to your prompt response on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew R. Wheeler", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew R. Wheeler