

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2026

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

We write regarding your reported role in President Trump’s decision to grant Troy Lake a full presidential pardon.¹ Public reports of high-profile individuals—including yourself—appealing directly to the President on behalf of pardon recipients risk subversion of the established pardon review processes by financial influence and political access.

In June 2024, Mr. Lake pleaded guilty to conspiring to violate the Clean Air Act.² His conviction arose from allegations that Mr. Lake and his company, Elite Diesel Service Inc., disabled the monitoring components of emissions control systems on hundreds of heavy-duty commercial trucks.³ Mr. Lake was sentenced to approximately one year in custody and a fine of \$2,500.⁴ Elite Diesel Service was also sentenced to five years of probation and ordered to pay fines totaling \$50,000.⁵ On November 7, 2025, President Trump granted Mr. Lake a pardon.⁶ He subsequently granted a corporate pardon to Mr. Lake’s company on February 12, 2026.⁷

Article II, Section 2, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution authorizes the President to “grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.”⁸ The U.S. Supreme Court has characterized executive clemency as “an act of grace” exercised for the “public welfare.”⁹ President Trump’s use of this authority appears to deviate from this traditional purpose.

¹ See Marisa Taylor, *Forget the DOJ; For a Trump Pardon, Call ‘Bobby’ and Other Influencers*, REUTERS (June 11, 2026), <https://www.reuters.com/investigations/forget-doj-trump-pardon-call-bobby-other-influencers-2026-06-11/>; Alex Guillén, *Diesel Mechanics Queue Up for Trump Pardons*, POLITICO (June 14, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/06/13/clean-air-act-diesel-pardon-trump-00960608>.

² See Press Release, *Windsor, Colorado Business Owner and Company Sentenced for Conspiring to Delete Emissions Controls on Hundreds of Heavy Duty Diesel Trucks in Violation of the Clean Air Act*, U.S. Att’y’s Off., CO (Dec. 9, 2024), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-co/pr/windsor-colorado-business-owner-and-company-sentenced-conspiring-delete-emissions>.

³ See *id.*

⁴ See *id.*

⁵ See *id.*

⁶ Executive Grant of Clemency, *Donald J. Trump to Troy Lake* (Nov. 7, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/pardon/media/1417081/dl?inline>.

⁷ Executive Grant of Clemency, *Donald J. Trump to Elite Diesel Service, Inc.* (Feb. 12, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/pardon/media/1427766/dl?inline=&utm>.

⁸ U.S. CONST. ART. II, § 2, CL. 1.

⁹ *Ex parte Garland*, 71 U.S. 333 (1866); *Biddle v. Perovich*, 274 U.S. 480 (1927).

According to public reporting, two friends of Mr. Lake petitioned you in an August 2025 email, urging you to reach out to the President to request a pardon.¹⁰ Mr. Lake's wife publicly attributed progress on her husband's pardon efforts to your subsequent intervention.¹¹ Such progress included a phone call with Sean Hayes, a White House attorney who works closely on pardons.¹²

Congress has a compelling interest in ensuring that the constitutional pardon power is exercised with fairness and transparency. Given these circumstances, we are seeking additional information to better understand the extent to which influence and access have overridden the standard pardon review process. Please provide written responses to the following questions no later than October 20, 2026.

1. What is the nature of your relationship with Mr. Lake?
2. Did you, directly or through others, ask President Trump, directly or through others, to grant a pardon to Mr. Lake or his company, Elite Diesel Service, Inc.?
3. Did Mr. Lake, or anyone else, request that you appeal to the President or the Trump Administration on his behalf to secure a pardon for himself or his company?
4. Have you spoken with any lobbyists regarding a pardon for Mr. Lake or any other person?
5. Did you have conversations regarding Mr. Lake or his company with President Trump or any White House staff?
6. Have you advocated for or been involved in any other clemency decisions during this administration? If yes, please describe the nature of your involvement, including the individual or company you advocated for and any financial or political connections you may have to this individual or company.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Dave Min
Member of Congress

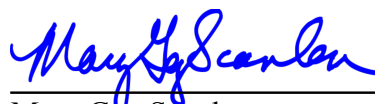
¹⁰ See Taylor, *supra* note 1; Guillén *supra* note 1.

¹¹ See Taylor, *supra* note 1.

¹² See *id.*; Guillén *supra* note 1.



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress