Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0198-2026	**Version:**	*	**Name:**	Making the Environmental Protection Agency a federal executive department led by a cabinet secretary.
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Committee
				In control:	Committee on Environmental Protection and Waterfronts
On agenda:	2/12/2026				
Enactment date:				**Enactment #:**	
Title:	Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass, and the president to sign, legislation making the Environmental Protection Agency a federal executive department led by a cabinet secretary				
Sponsors:					
Indexes:					
Attachments:	1. Res. No. 198, 2. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 2-12-26, 3. February 12, 2026 - Stated Meeting Agenda				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/12/2026	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
2/12/2026	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	

Res. No. 198

Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass, and the president to sign, legislation making the Environmental Protection Agency a federal executive department led by a cabinet secretary

By Council Members Gennaro, Restler, Nurse and Louis

Whereas, The United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") is an independent agency responsible for national environmental protection matters; and

Whereas, The EPA performs various functions, including scientific research, administration of grant programs, and enforcement of national standards under environmental laws, such as the United States Clean Water and Clean Air Acts; and

Whereas, Since 1970, when the EPA was established by the executive order of President Richard Nixon, the agency has protected the environment and public health by affecting the removal of pollutants, including the removal of poisonous metals from drinking water and toxic chemicals from tailpipe emissions; and

Whereas, The EPA has also produced tools, data and analyses that help other federal agencies, as well as

powered by Legistar™

state and local governments, to protect ecosystems and advance healthy and sustainable communities; and

Whereas, The Cabinet of the United States ("Cabinet") is the principal official advisory body to the president and is comprised of the vice president, the heads of federal executive departments, and additional Cabinet-level officials; and

Whereas**,** Despite the importance of the EPA, the agency is not a Cabinet department, which is an executive department led by a secretary or attorney general, but rather is an independent agency led by the EPA administrator; and

Whereas, Making the EPA a Cabinet department could signal a national commitment to environmental protection and sustainability, facilitate coordination between the EPA and other federal agencies, and increase the EPA's legitimacy and ability to enforce environmental legislation; and

Whereas, If the EPA were a Cabinet department, the United States could more effectively coordinate international responses to environmental issues, as most peer nation governments have a position that would be equivalent to a United States Secretary of Environmental Protection; and

Whereas, In general, executive orders may be revoked by the president without approval from the United States Congress, although the EPA has since been referenced directly in several federal laws; and

Whereas, Federal legislation requiring the formal establishment of a Department of Environmental Protection could limit a president's ability to try to weaken environmental protection policies by revoking, amending, or issuing any executive order establishing or reorganizing the EPA, and ensure the continuity of grants and programs vital to states and municipalities; and

Whereas, Elevating the EPA to the Cabinet level could help New York City ("NYC" or "City") reduce pollution and improve public health, as the EPA has awarded the City with grants and rebates to support local programs; and

Whereas, These include a $1 million grant awarded to NYC to plan innovative strategies to cut climate pollution in May 2023 and $1.8 million in grants awarded to five NYC community organizations through the

EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving program in October 2023; and

Whereas, Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the EPA made rebate awards worth $18.3 million available to three NYC school districts for the purchase of zero emission school buses, which will help the City meet its climate goals and reduce the incidence of asthma and other medical issues caused in part by air pollution for children and young adults; and

Whereas, Making the EPA a Cabinet department could allow the agency and its head to champion and continue these grant and rebate programs more effectively, which would help NYC achieve its environmental policy goals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Council of the City of New York City calls on the United States Congress to pass, and the president to sign, legislation making the Environmental Protection Agency a federal executive department led by a cabinet secretary.

AGB
LS# 16101
Res. #0367-2024
1/2/2026 1:25 PM