

Proposed Cuts To EPA Budget Threaten Human Health And The Environment in South Carolina

The Environmental Protection Agency has worked to protect human health and the environment for more than four decades, cleaning our air, water, and land. During that time, we have experienced a growing economy and an expanding population, with millions more cars on the road. Deep budget cuts [proposed](#) by the Trump administration would jeopardize Americans' health and safety, reducing funds—including the [\\$43 million/year in EPA grants to South Carolina](#)—needed to clean up lead pollution and toxic waste sites, to protect lakes, rivers, air quality, and much more. If the President succeeds in his plan to cut EPA's budget by almost a third, the result will be more asthma attacks among children, more toxic pollution in our communities, and more lead in our drinking water.

What benefits are at risk from EPA budget cuts?

Cleaning up dirty air

- **1,293 South Carolinians are saved every year** by EPA programs cutting [air pollution](#) and [toxic mercury](#).
- **207,986 adults and 62,830 children in South Carolina have been diagnosed with asthma.** Asthma attacks were the cause of [9,937 pediatric emergency room visits and over \\$769 million in associated medicals costs](#) in South Carolina in 2008.
- EPA grants cover almost 30% of state and local air quality monitoring. Almost a third of those EPA grants would disappear under the Trump budget.
- EPA protections help reduce the occurrence of “code red” days – when air pollution is so bad that children and seniors are advised not to spend time outside.
- Over the past five decades, EPA has worked to reduce or eliminate the use of lead in gasoline, paint, plumbing pipes, and soil. The results: blood lead levels across the country have [declined more than 90%](#) since the mid-1970s.
- But more needs to be done: More than half a million kids in the U.S. today, a disproportionate number of whom are poor, have elevated levels of lead in their blood, primarily from lead paint and pipes. **The Trump budget would eliminate programs that can help these kids.**

Ensuring safe, clean water

- **1.9 million South Carolinians rely on** headwater, rain-fed, and seasonal streams for their **drinking water**.
- EPA helps deal with [“runoff” pollution](#) – including excess fertilizers and insecticides, grease and toxic chemicals from urban streets and energy production, acid drainage from abandoned mines, and bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes and faulty septic systems – that drains into our waterways. **EPA provided South Carolina with \$2.5 million to help protect South Carolina's water in FY 2016, a program Trump's budget proposes to zero out.**
- In communities across the U.S., families are threatened by industrial hazardous waste, radioactive materials, and toxic chemicals such as lead, asbestos, and dioxin—causing cancer, reproductive harm, and other damaging health impacts.
- Contaminated land and water also imposes economic burdens and hardships on communities. Abandoned industrial pollution sites sink real estate values, discourage investment, and undermine the efforts of local communities to re-develop and revitalize their economies.
- There are more than 1,330 sites on a list of the most highly polluted properties nationwide, known as [Superfund](#), **including 25 Superfund sites in South Carolina.**
- There are **267 brownfield sites in South Carolina** that need cleaning up so that they can be used or redeveloped.
- **Yet the Trump administration is proposing to slash EPA's clean-up programs—the Superfund by a third and Brownfields by more than 20%.** With communities and states fighting to protect their citizens and re-develop their economies, this is no time to shut down EPA's hazardous waste clean-up programs.

Reducing lead

- There is no safe level of lead, a known neurotoxin that damages children's IQs for their entire lives.