



## Hobbling the Environmental Protection Agency would threaten Alaska's health, families, jobs and economy

Support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is essential to protecting Alaska's air, water and land. From cleaning up toxic mine sites to supporting tribal environmental programs, EPA grants provided the state with more than \$345 million in funding from 2012 to 2016.<sup>i</sup> Unfortunately, the Trump Administration and many Members of Congress are working to hollow out the EPA and cut its budget to its lowest level since the 1970s, posing threats to millions of Alaskans who depend on the agency to protect their health and the state's tourism and business climate.

EPA's budget will be negotiated in a backroom by a President and EPA Administrator who have laid out a roadmap to cripple the EPA, along with many Congressional leaders who have shown little interest in protecting the environment. The EPA's budget could be bargained away in the blink of an eye, and Alaskans could be the losers.

### Environment and public health are at risk

#### Leaking underground storage tank grants, the enemy underground

**Program at risk: Leaking underground storage tank categorical grants. Proposed cut: Eliminated**

Across the country, thousands of underground storage tanks and accompanying pipes—many of them made from older corroded steel—hold and carry a variety of fuels and chemicals. When tanks are at risk of leaking harmful chemicals such as oil, gas, benzene and toluene into soil and ground water, drinking water is fouled, backyards and businesses become dangerous, community health is jeopardized, and economic development is crippled.

Alaska has a backlog of more than 300 leaking underground storage tanks, and, from 2012 to 2016, the state received more than \$2.3 million in EPA grant funding to assist in leaking underground storage tank cleanup. EPA has supported essential programs in Alaska to monitor these tanks, detect leaks of petroleum products, address the causes of leaks, repair damage to soil or groundwater and hold polluters for paying their fair share of cleanup costs. The Trump Administration's proposed budget would cut 48% from the overall Leaking Underground Storage Tank program.

#### Fewer clean-ups and economic development at polluted properties

**Program at risk: Brownfield grants. Proposed cut: 28%**

Brownfield sites are properties where contamination prevents economic development and threatens public health and safety. But they have the potential – once cleaned up – to generate new jobs. Research has shown that residential property values near restored brownfield sites increased between 5 and 15 percent and can increase property values in a 1.24-mile radius of that site. A study analyzing data near 48 brownfield sites shows an estimated \$29 million to \$97 million in additional tax revenue was generated for local governments in a single year after cleanup. This is two to seven times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to those brownfield sites. Before cleanup and redevelopment can happen safely and be permitted to go forward, brownfield sites must be assessed and tested for soil contamination. The risk of hazardous substances, petroleum or asbestos being released when disturbing soil at the site or dismantling properties. To carry out this assessment work, EPA funds pay for expert tests of soil, ground water, sediment, surface water and vapors. EPA grants also help pay for the actual cleanup.

The Trump administration's proposed budget would cut brownfield restoration programs by 28 percent. These cuts could hamper cleanups at more than 100 Brownfield sites in Alaska. From 2012-16, Alaska received \$18.5 million in EPA grants that have helped local counties and communities clean up polluted properties to protect people's lives and spark job-creating economic redevelopment.

## Leaving tribes more vulnerable to environmental threats

**Program at risk: Tribal environmental general assistance program. Proposed cut: 32%**

Alaska tribes received \$123.5 million from 2012 to 2016 through EPA's Tribal Environmental General Assistance Program—almost half of all money awarded nationwide under the Program. Congress established the program in 1992 to help Indian tribes establish environmental programs and develop and implement plans for handling hazardous waste. Grants to Alaska tribes have helped them manage solid and electronics waste, research seawall upgrades, backhaul abandoned vehicles and lead acid batteries, package hazardous wastes and recyclables, research local threats, build management and response capacity, educate and organize their communities. The Trump administration's budget would cut these grants by 32 percent.

## More dangerous runoff in the water

**Program at risk: Water pollution control grants. Proposed cut: 33%**

EPA Water Pollution Control can support a wide variety of water pollution prevention and control programs and activities, including monitoring and assessing water quality, Developing water quality standards, identifying impaired waters and total maximum daily loads, managing national pollutant discharge elimination system permits, ensuring compliance, implementing enforcement actions, protecting source water, and managing outreach and education programs. Alaska received \$1.8 million in such grants from 2012 to 2016; the Trump administration's proposed budget would cut these grants by 33 percent.

## More Code Red days

**Program at risk: State & Local Air Quality Management Grants | Tribal Air Quality Management Grants  
Proposed cut: 33% | 30%**

For decades, the Clean Air Act and EPA grants have helped states and communities make historic strides in reducing air pollution, with EPA grants covering almost 30 percent of state and local air monitoring costs. Cleaner air means more productive workers, fewer Code Red days where parents must keep kids indoors, and fewer attacks for the more than 41,000 adults and 12,000 children in Alaska diagnosed with asthma.

## Less money for environmental research

**Program at Risk: Science to achieve results. Proposed cut: Eliminated**

EPA's Science to Achieve Results Program, or STAR, provides funding for research projects and graduate fellowships that help address pressing scientific challenges and build the workforce of future environmental scientists. Alaska received \$888,282 in STAR grants from 2012 to 2016. The Trump administration's proposed budget would eliminate the program.

**Learn more at [edf.org/EPAcuts](https://www.edf.org/EPAcuts)**

---

<sup>i</sup> \* FY12-16 funding totals obtained from <https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/Default.aspx>