

Trump's EPA budget cuts: What's at stake for Latino communities?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has worked to protect our health for more than four decades, cleaning our air, water, and land.

Deep budget cuts [proposed](#) by the Trump administration for the second year in a row would jeopardize Americans' health and safety, reducing funds needed to address pollution from lead, clean up toxic sites, ensure access to clean water, and much more.

If the President succeeds in his plan to cut EPA's budget by over 20 percent, 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?

Clean air

- **The lives of up to 45,000 Americans are saved every year** by EPA programs cutting [air pollution that crosses state lines](#) and [toxic mercury](#).
- Over 24 million Americans have been [diagnosed with asthma](#), including over 3 million Latinos.
- 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.
- Programs to monitor and cut air pollution are [especially important for Latinos](#) in the U.S., nearly half of whom live in counties that frequently violate standards for ground-level ozone, [such as](#) Los Angeles County in California and Maricopa County in Arizona.
- 2.5 million Hispanics live in neighborhoods with one or more commercial hazardous waste facilities.
- Over 1.8 million Latinos in the United States live within a half mile of an oil and gas facility, which emits smog-forming and other harmful pollution. [An analysis found](#) that this pollution is responsible for 153,000 asthma attacks in Latino children every year.
- Latinos also often have reduced access to and awareness of relevant healthcare resources, and are more likely to hold jobs in occupations that expose workers to outdoor air pollution.



A hazy Los Angeles in December 1948 before the EPA was established and the Clean Air Act was passed.

What benefits are at risk from EPA budget cuts?

Clean water

- **124.4 million Americans**, including over 45 million people in the 10 states with the highest proportion of Latinos, 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 states with \$170.9 million to help protect America’s water in FY 2017, a program Trump’s budget proposes to zero out.**
- **EPA also helps keep our beaches clean.** In FY2018 EPA awarded more than \$9 million in grants to help states monitor recreational beaches for pollution and to support programs that alert the public when high bacteria levels put beachgoers at risk for gastrointestinal illness, eye, ear and nose infections, skin rashes and infections, and worse.



Industrial waste discharged to Cuyahoga River, Ohio, 1973

Toxic lead

- There is no safe level of lead, a known neurotoxin that damages children’s IQs for their entire lives.
- 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 Flint Michigan and across the U.S., 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 slash programs that can help these children.**

“The [EPA budget cuts] will be felt by communities across the country and minority, low-income, and other vulnerable communities will be hit particularly hard.”

–Letter from 46 Congressmen

Protection from pesticides

- EPA efforts to protect human health from pesticides are cut by nearly 20% in EPA’s proposed budget. This especially impacts the Latino community, as approximately **88%** of our nation’s farm workers are Latino.
- EPA Environmental Justice grants, a program Trump proposes to cut by over 70%, helps vulnerable communities and have **included** projects such as training farmworkers to protect children from pesticides.

What benefits are at risk from EPA budget cuts?

Environmental justice

- **Trump’s budget would slash the budget for EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice Justice** by more than two-thirds, **a department dedicated to the** “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies”
The Office of Environmental Justice helps to prepare and coordinate information and resources to help communities improve understanding and build capacity to effectively participate in local decision-making regarding their health and surroundings.
“In 46 states, people of color deal with more air pollution than white people do, [EPA] study finds”
- *Headline in Buzzfeed, February 22, 2018*
- Past Environmental Justice grants [include](#) provided organizing support for low-income, predominantly Latino communities to understand and engage in policy decisions regarding their drinking water, and Comunidades Unidas in Salt Lake City, which educates residents on toxic and hazardous substances in homes.
- Significant cuts to this office also reverses a strategy finalized in 2016 known as [EJ 2020](#). This four-year plan focuses on increasingly embedding environmental justice concerns across all EPA programs, expanding relationships with overburdened communities to boost positive results, and deepening efforts to address lead poisoning, air pollution, and other problems suffered by communities who live near waste treatment plants, and other sources of toxins.

“Latinos in particular are especially concerned about environmental issues and their impact on the public health of their communities.”

- Brent Wilkes, National Executive Director, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in the *Huffington Post*, January 19, 2017

Toxic-free communities

- In communities across the U.S., families are threatened by industrial hazardous waste, radioactive materials, and toxic chemicals such as lead, asbestos, and dioxins—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.
- **Despite calling Superfund cleanups a priority, the Trump/Pruitt FY19 budget calls for a six percent cut in spending on Superfund levels compared with the last year of the Obama administration.**
- **There are more than 1,700 sites on a list of the most highly polluted properties nationwide, known as [Superfund sites](#).** In addition, there are more than 450,000 brownfields sites, which may be less hazardous, but are still sufficiently contaminated to require clean-up before the property can be reused. Populations that are minorities, low-income, linguistically isolated, and less educated are [more likely](#) to [live near](#) these sites than the U.S. population as a whole.

EPA budget cuts in states with highest proportions of Latinos

	California	Texas	New Mexico	Arizona	Nevada	Florida	New York	New Jersey	Illinois
Clean air									
Adults with asthma	2,301,495	1,133,050	120,014	486,357	173,759	1,110,252	1,241,312	441,554	676,570
Kids with asthma	649,133	43,631	34,231	175,556	38,075	319,778	338,465	152,050	179,893
Pediatric emergency room visits due to asthma	649,133	62,680	4,682	15,910	6,224	37,318	41,080	19,083	29,629
Estimated incremental direct cost of asthma	\$6.4 billion	\$3.8 billion	\$348.7 million	\$1.3 billion	\$459 million	\$2.6 billion	\$3.5 billion	\$1.5 billion	\$2.1 billion
Lives saved every year by EPA Mercury (MATS) and Cross State Air Pollution rules	n/a	2,904	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,240	2,444	1,522	2,076
Clean water									
State residents relying on surface waters for drinking	7.3 million	11.7 million	281,206	3.3 million	24,000	1.8 million	11.5 million	4.3 million	4.9 million
FY2016 EPA funding for state to deal with runoff pollution	\$8.29 million	\$7.37 million	\$1.9 million	\$2.55 million	\$1.32 million	\$6.09 million + \$495,000 for Florida Healthy Beaches	\$5.28 million	\$2.59 million	\$6.4 million
Toxic sites									
Brownfields sites	1,906	853	134	563	482	1,451	714	425	1,190
Superfund sites	113	68	20	12	2, also 100,000+ abandoned mine sites	81	119	150	55