

President Trump's proposed 23% budget cut* to EPA will mean more pollution and serious threats to health

Any cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) would hobble their ability to carry out their core function to protect human and health and the environment.

As he did last year, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt is asking Congress to eliminate 47 programs in Fiscal Year 2019 and deeply slash funding for EPA's core missions – including some of the very programs he is claiming to prioritize. From lead to air pollution to toxic waste to water, the Trump-Pruitt proposal to hollow out the EPA would mean more asthma attacks for our kids, more cancer and diabetes, and thousands more deaths from pollution.

The radical proposal comes despite the fact that EPA's budget in real terms has been cut by more than half over the last four decades. Many of the cuts would dump critical challenges on state taxpayers.

As Environmental Defense Fund president Fred Krupp said “The Trump administration budget released today is a blueprint for a less healthy, more polluted America. A budget shows your values – and this budget shows the administration doesn't value clean air, clean water, or protecting Americans from toxic pollution.”

Here are just a few examples of the Administration's budgetary assault on public health:

Air quality

Millions of Americans depend on state and local air quality monitoring to tell them whether their air is unsafe for children with asthma and seniors with heart conditions. About 25 million Americans have been diagnosed with asthma, and hundreds of thousands of asthmatic children are rushed to emergency rooms every year. This budget would put them at greater risk.

Almost 30 percent of the funding for state and local air quality monitoring comes from EPA. The Trump-Pruitt budget would **cut that assistance by almost a third.**

Undercutting a “war on lead”

There is **no safe level** of lead – a known neurotoxin that damages children's brains for their entire lives. Over the past 50 years, EPA has made steady progress through lead education, science, and remediation programs. As a result, we have cut blood-lead levels in America's children by 90 percent.

But the job is far from complete. More than half a million kids in the U.S., a disproportionate number of whom are poor, have elevated lead levels in their bodies – mostly from lead paint and old pipes. Despite Pruitt's rhetoric about a war on lead, the EPA budget proposes **a 33% cut in grants to states to supervise public water systems and would eliminate the Lead Risk Reduction Program and grants to train lead removal contractors**, leaving children and families without the help they need.

*The Trump administration is proposing to slash EPA by a devastating 23%. Their original hope was a 34% cut, until the congressional budget deal forced them to modify it somewhat.

Removing the environmental cop from the beat

EPA's enforcement program, which helps prevent and punish wrongful dumping and leaks of toxic chemicals, dangerous pesticides, and oil and gas, would be **cut by 12 percent** under the Trump-Pruitt budget. The cuts come after new figures show that polluters were fined only \$1.6 billion in FY17, compared with \$5.7 billion the year before. Pruitt has also been appointing EPA regional administrators with reputations for weakening enforcement actions against polluters. [EDF enforcement fact sheet here.](#)

Clean up of dangerous superfund and brownfields sites

There are more than 1,300 Superfund sites around the country in need of cleanups. Many are laced with mercury, lead, and radioactive contamination. [EDF Superfund fact sheet here.](#)

The longer these sites sit unaddressed, the greater the danger to communities from continued leakage. Their mere presence can stunt efforts to stimulate economic growth and to attract new jobs.

With this toxic legacy hanging over families and communities nationwide, EPA has a special responsibility to ensure that polluters are held responsible for paying their fair share of cleanup costs. EPA must also ensure that the cleanups are designed so that communities and workers will be safe from contamination.

But despite calling Superfund cleanups a priority and announcing a tiny (less than one percent) increase in funding for Superfund cleanups over FY18 levels, Pruitt's budget calls for **a 6 percent cut in spending on Superfund** levels compared with the last year of the previous administration. Meanwhile, the EPA Inspector General concluded that **the Superfund program is "insufficiently" staffed**. To manage it, Pruitt appointed an inexperienced banker friend (who has been banned from banking for life by the FDIC).

In addition, there are more than 450,000 brownfields sites, which may be less hazardous, but which are still sufficiently contaminated to require clean-up before a property can be reused. But Administrator Pruitt calls for **cutting these critical cleanup grants by 27 percent**. [Meanwhile, Pruitt is cutting back on protections from toxic substances: fact sheet here.](#)

Safe waters

Administrator Pruitt's budget **eliminates millions of dollars of funding for cleaning up critical waterways** like the Gulf of Mexico, the Florida Keys and Puget Long Island Sounds. And it would cut funding for cleanups of the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay by 90 percent.

These are the waterways in which children and families swim, boat, and fish. Many provide drinking water for millions of Americans who will now be at risk from algal blooms and chemical pollution.

Most water pollution comes from run-off of insecticides, oil and grease, excess fertilizer, and faulty septic systems. This "non-point source" pollution finds its way to the nation's waterways, including waterways that serve as drinking water sources for 124 million Americans. Of the \$169.7 million that EPA used to fund cleanup of these pollution sources last year, Administrator Pruitt wants to **cut every dime**.

In places like Florida and many other coastal states, EPA provides funding to help states monitor recreational beaches for fecal pollution, algal tides, and other sources of dangerous bacteria. The Trump-Pruitt budget would **completely eliminate this support to protect beaches, which totaled \$9.5 million in FY18**.

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