



NEWS RELEASE

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Arizona at Risk: New Report “*State of Risk*” Reveals Adverse Impact on Arizona Communities & Public Health from Threatened EPA Cuts *Congress to Decide Fate of Critical Environmental Operations in Next Month*

(September 5, 2017) [State of Risk: Arizona](#), a new report from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), catalogues far-reaching and grave threats to air, water and land and to the people and economy of Arizona if President Trump’s proposed 30 percent cut to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) budget is enacted this fall. Such cuts would move the agency funding radically backward to its lowest level since the mid-1970s.

The report provides an extensive overview of the EPA’s footprint in Arizona and examines how the proposed cutback plans threaten public health as well as commerce and tourism in the Grand Canyon State. States and local communities would face a terrible choice: stick taxpayers with the bill, drop other projects or watch their communities slide backward and become more polluted and less healthy.

The EPA has provided more than \$315 million in grants alone to Arizona over five years, notes the report.

“President Trump’s plan endangers public health efforts to make the air and water clean and to clean up tracts of land in Arizona that are polluted and undevelopable,” said Elgie Holstein, EDF’s Senior Director of Strategic Planning.

“The president seeks to roll back common-sense environmental safeguards that have protected the health and well-being of Arizona for decades,” Holstein added, “This is not just an assault on an agency. It is an assault on public health and safety.”

Documenting specific local and statewide consequences of the proposed EPA cuts, the report finds that hollowing out the EPA would be disastrous for Arizona. The Trump Administration and some in Congress are working to push the cuts through in the next month, before the federal fiscal year ends on September 30.

“Washington is so broken right now that the Trump road map could be enacted in a blink of an eye in a backroom deal when Congress returns in September,” said Holstein.

The report provides a snapshot of the environmental needs and programs which a fully funded EPA can continue to remedy and support:

- **Water is at risk in Arizona.** Arizona is one of the driest states in the country, and its growing economy depends on a stable, secure, long-term water supply. Its agriculture industry alone provides more than 88,000 jobs (full and part time) and contributes \$17 billion to the state’s

economy. EPA grant funding is essential to combating runoff pollution, which can contain harmful pesticides and industrial chemicals that make their way into streams. Arizona received \$10 million in EPA grants from 2012 to 2016 for efforts to address this runoff or “nonpoint source” pollution. The Trump Administration’s proposed budget would eliminate this program entirely.

- **Breathing is at risk in Arizona.** According the American Lung Association the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale area is the 5th most polluted city in the United States by ozone and the 24th most polluted city by short-term particle pollution; All but one of the counties in Arizona that count high ozone days received an F or D. Yet the Trump Administration’s proposed budget would cut grants to state and local governments help communities address harmful air pollution such as soot and smog by 30 percent.
- **Land is at risk in Arizona.** Arizona is home to nine of the nation’s most polluted “Superfund” sites, as well as more than 400 brownfield sites with potential to be restored into viable job-building commercial land. The Trump budget would cut brownfield and Superfund funding by 30 percent. Arizona also has a backlog of more than 750 underground storage tanks at risk of leaking harmful chemicals into both soil and water; the administration plan eliminates one of two EPA programs to prevent and detect leaks and clean ground and groundwater – and cuts in half the second program.
- **Tribal communities are at risk in Arizona.** EPA’s Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) helps tribal governments build their environmental programs and their capacity to address environmental challenges, benefitting both tribal communities and their neighbors. The Trump Administration’s budget would cut these grants by 30 percent.

A U.S. House of Representatives committee’s alternate budget would, if passed, partly restore some EPA programs but still leave many major programs unfunded, provide for significant staff cuts and leave other parts of the president’s plan to demolish EPA unchanged.

Holstein, who formerly oversaw environment and science budgets for the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, said Arizona’s Congressional delegation will find in the new report hundreds of ways in which EPA has been helping the state manage risk.

“Congress can and must stop the madness of these proposed cuts,” Holstein said. “Anything less than full EPA funding for 2018 would hobble the environmental protections on which Arizonans and others across the United States rely as the foundation for building a better life.”

State of Risk: Arizona is one in a series of Environmental Defense Fund reports cataloguing the impact of president Trump’s proposed cuts to EPA funding. The reports are available at www.EDF.org/EPAcuts.

Arizona and EDF experts are available to provide further context and comment about the EPA budget; please contact Keith Gaby KGaby@edf.org, (202) 572-3336

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