



NEWS RELEASE

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

(August 31, 2017) [State of Risk: Colorado](#), 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 Colorado 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 Colorado and examines how the proposed cutback plans threaten public health as well as commerce and tourism in the Centennial 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 \$295 million in grants alone to Colorado 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 Colorado 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 Colorado 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 Colorado. The Trump Administration and some in Congress are working to push the cuts through in the next 30 days, before the federal fiscal year ends.

“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 Colorado.** Colorado has more than 105,344 river miles and more than 249,787 lake acres, and the state depends heavily on its rivers. According to a recent U.S Geological Survey study, more than half the flow of rivers in the upper part of the Colorado River Basin is sustained by groundwater. EPA nonpoint source pollution grant funding is

essential to combating runoff pollution, which can contain harmful pesticides and industrial chemicals that make their way into streams. The Trump Administration's proposed budget would eliminate this program entirely.

- **Breathing is at risk in Colorado.** Two of Colorado's major population centers are in the top 15 most polluted cities for ozone - Denver and Aurora are 11th and Ft. Collins ranks 15th. Ten of Colorado's 23 counties got an "F" for high ozone days in 2012-2015. In addition, Denver received an "F" for particle pollution. 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 Colorado.** Colorado is home to 20 of the nation's most polluted "Superfund" sites, as well as more than 450 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. Colorado also has a backlog of more than 500 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.

At a news conference on Thursday, Colorado elected officials offered firsthand evidence on how cutting the EPA budget would put people in the state in jeopardy.

"This is the time for agencies that protect public health and safety to lean forward, not stagger back to funding levels that were inadequate 50 years ago," said Adams County Board Chair Eva Henry. "These proposed cuts are counterintuitive during this time of tremendous growth in Adams County and across Colorado."

"These cuts are real and will impact Colorado's way of life," said Faith Winter, Colorado State Representative for District 35.

"We are likely to see more high pollution days . As a parent, I know that we all will worry more about things like sending our kids off to sports practice and wondering if the air quality will harm their still developing lungs. Or whether the water we use to fill up their water bottles is clean. EPA cleanup funds affect our families' health."

"I am deeply concerned about the defunding of EPA air pollution programs and the impact it will have on overall air quality, particularly for those most vulnerable like children and seniors living in my community," said Christine Berg, Mayor of Lafayette.

"The EPA funds almost 1/3 of state and local program to monitor air quality and lets people know when the air they breathe may be harmful. My constituents didn't ask for the EPA to make America dirty again."

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 Colorado'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 Coloradans and others across the United States rely as the foundation for building a better life.”

State of Risk: Colorado 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.

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

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