

How hobbling the Environmental Protection Agency would threaten New Mexico’s health, families, jobs and economy

Support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is essential to protecting New Mexico’s air, water and land. From cleaning up polluted air and waters to supporting tribal environmental programs, EPA grants provided the state with more than \$111 million in funding from 2012 to 2016. 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 New Mexicans who depend on the agency to protect their health and the state’s tourism and business climate.

EPA’s budget will soon 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 environmental safeguards. The EPA’s budget could be bargained away in the blink of an eye, and New Mexicans could be the losers. If enacted, these cuts would reverse decades of progress cleaning up pollution, including toxic substances, that foul our drinking water, air and soil.

Eliminating and Slashing EPA Programs that Protect New Mexico’s Environment

The Trump Administration’s Road Map

Programs, Grants, and Initiatives	Purpose	Trump Budget	2012-2016 New Mexico Grants
Water Pollution Control Grants	Supports water quality clean up and improvement	Cut 30%	\$14.8 million
Air Pollution Control	Reduces Code Red and Code Orange days	Cut 30%	\$12.6 million
Indian Environmental Assistance	Helps tribes address environmental health hazards	Cut 30%	\$11.6 million
State Public Water System Supervision	Helps states and tribes keep public drinking water clean	Cut 30%	\$4.7 million
Performance Partnership Grants	Helps states with their priority issues	Cut 45%	\$3.2 million
State and Tribal Response Program Grants	Restores polluted Brownfields sites to promote economic development	Cut 30%	\$2.9 million
Leaking Underground Storage Tanks	Protects water and soil from tanks leaking chemicals	Eliminate	\$2.8 million
Trust Fund to Address Backlog of Hazardous Tanks		Cut 50%	\$2.8 million
Consolidated Pesticide Enforcement Cooperative Grants	Reduce risk from pesticide chemicals	Cut 39%	\$2.1 million

Congressional Cuts

The House and Senate are both proposing numerous cuts that would move our nation's public health and environmental quality backwards. Both bills represent a quiet assault on the health of vulnerable children and seniors by undermining EPA's ability to carry out its most basic public health and environmental missions. The more recent Senate Appropriations Chair's mark delivers a big win to the chemical industry by accepting many cuts proposed by the House of Representatives earlier in fall and goes beyond it.

The Senate bill would eliminate a key safety program (the Integrated Risk Information System program) that assesses health threats to families from toxic chemicals, and gives a gift to the fossil fuels industry by cutting the Greenhouse Gas reporting program and reducing EPA research on alternative energy sources. It would also weaken EPA's capacity to enforce environmental laws; keep air clean through research and programs (including tracking of greenhouse gas emissions), engage in research to keep water safe, and eliminate public health risks facing America's most disadvantaged communities.

Major Congressional EPA Cuts		
Programs, Grants, and Initiatives	Purpose	Budget Cuts
Chemical Safety		
Integrated Risk Information System	Provide assessments of chemical toxicity needed to make health decisions and to take actions protect American families from everyday chemicals around their homes and in their communities	Eliminated
Chemical Safety for Sustainability	Research to produce safer chemicals; improve the safe production, use, and disposal of chemicals; and manage chemical risks.	Cut 10%
Environmental Enforcement		
Office of Enforcement	Holds polluters accountable through investigations, settlements and court actions.	Cut 10%
Legal/science/regulator/economic review	Supports EPA enforcement hearings	Cut 10%
Clean Air		
Clean Air programs	Help states and communities make reduce air pollution	Cut 10%
Greenhouse Gas reporting	Track emissions from fuel and industrial gas suppliers.	Cut 10%
Air and Energy Production Research	Analyze energy sources derived from plant matter.	Cut 10%
Safe and Sustainable Water	Research to keep our waterways and drinking water safe from chemical, physical and biological threats.	Cut 10%
Office of Environmental Justice	Eliminate public health risks facing America's most disadvantaged communities.	Cut 10%
Safe and Healthy Communities	Research to support environmental decision-makers	Cut 10%
Information Exchange/Outreach	Improves decision-making by sharing data among EPA partners	Cut 9.3%
Children and other sensitive populations	Promotes EPA coordination of efforts that protect children's environmental health	Cut 10%
IT/Data Management/Security	Ensures high-quality data for decision-making	Cut 11.8%

Almost 2.1 million New Mexicans, almost half of them Latino and more than 10 percent of them Native American, depend on a safe and healthy environment to live a good life. Since New Mexico is the 5th largest state by square miles, keeping up with its environmental challenges requires an effective partnership with the federal government. Over the last five years, New Mexico has received more than \$111 million in grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to protect the state's environment and economy. Millions more have gone to support state and local environmental and public health efforts, including assistance in the form of science and technology, legal expertise and enforcement.

But the Trump Administration and many Members of Congress are working to cut the EPA's budget by 30 percent. These historic cuts would reverse decades of progress in cleaning up the toxic substances that foul drinking water, air and soil, posing grave threats to health and safety. They would strip the EPA of decades of scientific and technical expertise that New Mexico has turned to time and again to support state and local cleanups of dangerous pollution, as well as the legal support to go after polluters.

The threats are serious. Cleanup of hazardous Superfund sites could be delayed, and corroding underground storage tanks could leak more harmful chemicals into both soil and water. New Mexico's drinking water and rivers and streams could be more vulnerable to harmful runoff of pesticides and industrial chemicals. There would be fewer tools to address polluted air.

For every family, especially their vulnerable children and seniors, these cuts would move New Mexico's environment backward to a dirtier and more dangerous era: More poisons in the soil and toxic substances in the water, and more of the cancers that follow. More asthma attacks and smog, and more "Code Red" bad-air days where kids and seniors should stay indoors. More mercury, arsenic, lead and other toxic substances that have no place in anyone's lungs or drinking water. More pesticides in food, water, and the environment. More unaddressed waste sites that threaten community health and sap economic development. And fewer investigations to make polluters pay for the costs of cleaning up their waste.

For New Mexico's Latino, Native American and other minority populations, these cuts would do extra damage, in part because minorities are more likely to live near hazardous waste sites. Vulnerable communities would have a harder time cleaning up hazardous waste sites. The Trump Administration is even trying to shut down a modest program, EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, which has enjoyed bipartisan support for its efforts to ensure that everyone gets equal protection from environmental and health hazards.

As the Congress moves towards a December decision on the budget, cuts have already been proposed by both the Administration and by Appropriations Committee members in Congress. Many vital spending decisions will be made behind closed doors as members horse-trade and make deals with an administration that is eager to jettison pollution prevention and cleanup programs. Why is it so important to understand which anti-pollution programs are being targeted for deep cuts or outright elimination? So that New Mexicans can weigh in with their Members of Congress to ensure that EPA funding is fully preserved, including offering support to longtime EPA champions like Senator Tom Udall, the ranking member on the EPA's funding committee in the Senate.

The threat to New Mexico's water

Because New Mexico is so arid, 87 percent of its public water supply comes from ground water.¹ The state has five major river systems, and the Rio Grande, the fourth longest river system in North America, supplies more than half the water needed to support agriculture in the Rio Grande Basin.² But proposed Trump Administration budget cuts would decimate funding for programs that protect rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater across the state.

Clean water has faced serious challenges in New Mexico, where the state Environment Department's Ground Water Quality Bureau reports more than 60 ongoing cleanups of water contamination from chemicals including diesel, nitrates and volatile organic compounds. For example, over nearly two decades hundreds of thousands of pounds of hexavalent chromium, which is highly carcinogenic, were dumped into the Sandia Canyon area near Los Alamos and a regional aquifer.³ And a recent report from the Environmental Working Group revealed that more than 4 in 5 New Mexicans are exposed to radioactive metals and toxic chemicals in their water at levels that may pose health risks.⁴

More dangerous runoff in the water *Program at Risk: water pollution control grants*

EPA Water Pollution Control grants 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.

New Mexico received \$14.8 million in such grants from 2012 to 2016; the Trump administration’s proposed budget would cut these grants by 30 percent.

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Water Pollution Control	\$14.8 Million

EPA State Public Water System Supervision grants help state water systems comply with national drinking water regulations. This money is used to help the state adopt new drinking water regulations, develop and maintain a water system inventory and database, and perform compliance and enforcement of regulations. New Mexico received \$4.7 million in such grants from 2012 to 2016; the Trump administration’s proposed budget would cut these grants by 30 percent.

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
State Public Water System Supervision	\$4.7 Million

The Threat to New Mexico’s Air

New Mexicans have reason to be concerned about the air they breathe. According to the American Lung Association, nine New Mexico counties with sufficient data to measure suffered 76 Code Orange days, and only three received a grade of B or higher.⁵ Albuquerque had 113 days of elevated smog pollution in 2015, 22nd-highest in the country, and Farmington and Las Cruces each had more than 100. (Most American cities endure only one such day a year.)⁶

More code red days

Program at Risk: Clean Air Act grants

The Trump Administration budget would cut nearly one-third from programs that help states, local and tribal communities monitor air quality.

For decades, the Clean Air Act and EPA grants have helped states and communities make historic progress in reducing air pollution. Nationwide, U.S. EPA funds almost one-third of state and local programs to monitor air quality and alert residents when air quality is potentially harmful. Cleaner air means more productive workers, fewer Code Orange days where parents must keep kids indoors, and fewer attacks for the more than 120,000 adults and 34,000 children in New Mexico diagnosed with asthma.⁷

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Air Pollution Control Program Support	\$12.6 million

New Mexico received \$12.6 million in these grants from 2012-16.

The Threat to New Mexico’s Land

The Trump Administration would drastically reduce EPA funding for programs that protect New Mexicans from the health and safety risks of contaminated soil and that help clean up pollution so that properties can be returned to productive economic use. The positive effects of clean soil multiply through the environment, since contaminated soil can also pollute groundwater.

This is a critical issue in New Mexico, where up to 24 million gallons of jet fuel have leaked over several decades from pipes at the Kirtland Air Force base. Dubbed “the environmental disaster you’ve never heard of,” the leak has spilled up to 24 million gallons of fuel—double the amount of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez in 1989—into aquifers near Albuquerque, where several feet of fuel have been spotted sitting atop the water. Jet fuel and aviation gas contain a

brew of toxic chemicals including benzene, toluene and various aliphatic hydrocarbons—along with ethylene dibromide (EDB), a potent trigger of cancers and mutations (the EPA considers no amount of EDB in drinking water safe for human health). A plume of EDB-contaminated groundwater more than a mile long has been moving towards Albuquerque drinking water wells for years.⁸

The enemy underground: leaking underground storage tank grants

Program at Risk: Leaking underground storage tank grants and trust fund

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.⁹ 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.

New Mexico has a backlog of more than 830 leaking underground storage tanks (or LUSTs).¹⁰ EPA has supported essential programs in New Mexico to monitor these tanks, detect leaks of petroleum products, address the causes of leaks, repair damage to soil or groundwater, hold polluters responsible for cleanup costs, and contribute funds for cleanup if the responsible party can't be found or is no longer in business.

Leaking underground storage tanks cleanups received more than \$5.5 million in EPA grant funding in New Mexico EPA's Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) program from 2012 to 2016.

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Leaking Underground Storage Tanks	\$2.77 Million

The Trump Administration's proposed EPA budget would slash these grants, which come from two sources. The first are the Underground Storage Tank Prevention, Detection and Compliance Program grants, which totaled \$2.77 million for New Mexico over the last five years, would be eliminated entirely under the Trump budget. The second source of grants is from a trust fund paid for by a one-cent federal fuel tax established by Congress in 1984 to address an enormous backlog in leaking tanks. Those grants, which provided \$2.75 million to New Mexico from 2012-16 for monitoring and cleanup assistance, would be cut in half.

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Trust Fund to Address Backlog of Hazardous Tanks	\$2.75 Million

Fewer clean-ups and economic development at polluted properties

Program at Risk: Brownfield grants

Brownfield sites are properties where contamination prevents economic development and threatens public health and safety. 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.¹¹

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Brownfield Grants	\$2.9 million

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 30 percent.

These cuts could hamper cleanups at more than 260 Brownfield sites in New Mexico.¹² From 2012-16, New Mexico received \$2.9 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.

For example, the historic Santa Fe Railyard was blighted by the 1980s with lead, other metals, and petroleum and petroleum products.¹³ Thanks to EPA Brownfields support—which leveraged \$200,000 into more than \$125 million from public and private sources—the Railyard has been restored into a thriving city space with museums, a farmers market and shops, and a hub for commuter trains that connect to Albuquerque and the I-25 corridor.¹⁴

Fewer cleanups of toxic chemicals, less accountability for polluters

Program at Risk: Superfund program, including emergency response and enforcement funds

EPA provides grants to states, tribes and local communities to deal with Superfund sites. New Mexico had 20 hazardous waste sites on the EPA Superfund National Priorities List in late 2017, and the state received more than \$10.8 million in Superfund grants from 2012 to 2016. EPA’s expertise is vital in assessing the chemical contents of waste sites and the risks they present, designing and putting measures in place to protect health and safety, and holding polluters accountable.

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Superfund Grants	\$10.8 million

New Mexico Superfund Sites



The Trump Administration’s budget would slash funding designed to deal with these hazardous sites. Hazardous substance cleanup spending through Superfund would be cut by 30 percent, include an 18 percent cut to emergency response funds, which help clean up the most urgent threats. And the Administration’s cuts would shift more cleanup costs from polluters to taxpayers, by instituting 37 percent cuts in enforcement funds that help efforts to track down polluters and make them pay to clean up sites for which they are responsible.

By cleaning up vast amounts of toxic waste, the EPA’s Superfund program has reduced severe threats to New Mexicans’ health and returned contaminated properties to job-creating productivity (or restored them as vital natural habitats). Without Superfund cleanups, toxic chemicals like lead, mercury, arsenic, and dioxin are left to render entire locations dangerous or uninhabitable, and to leak into water and soil.

For example, Albuquerque’s Fruit Avenue Plume site suffered almost half a century of hazardous contamination from dry cleaning and laundry waste, including chlorinated solvents that leaked into local groundwater. EPA Superfund support helped the city with soil vapor extraction, hot spot treatment, institutional controls, extraction and treatment of contaminated groundwater, and groundwater monitoring.¹⁵

New Mexico’s Superfund sites could also face growing threats from contaminant release in the face of more intense and frequent storms, according to a 2014 EPA report.¹⁶

The Threat to Tribal Communities

Leaving tribes more vulnerable to environmental threats

Program at Risk: Indian environmental general assistance program

New Mexico tribes received \$11.6 million from 2012 to 2016 through EPA’s Indian Environmental General Assistance 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 tribes have helped them manage solid and electronics waste, backhaul abandoned vehicles and lead acid batteries,

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Indian Environmental General Assistance Grants	\$11.6 Million

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 30 percent.

Other Challenges

Less flexibility to pursue emerging problems

Program at Risk: Performance partnership grants

The Trump Administration has proposed a massive 44 percent reduction in EPA Performance Partnership Grants, which allow New Mexico to apply EPA grant money toward its most pressing air, water and land issues.’ These grants allow states to use EPA awards with greater flexibility for addressing priority environmental problems or program needs, streamline paperwork and accounting procedures to reduce administrative costs, and try cross-program initiatives and approaches that were difficult to fund under traditional category grants. New Mexico received \$25.8 million in Performance Partnership Grants from 2012 to 2016.

EPA Funding to New Mexico FY12-FY16	
Performance Partnership Grants	\$25.8 million

New Mexico EPA Grants, FY2012-16

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Grants</u>
New Mexico Environment Dept.	\$61,795,840	Santa Fe Community College	\$315,000
North American Development Bank	\$5,995,200	City of Carlsbad	\$291,000
City of Albuquerque	\$5,245,573	City of Portales Water Department	\$291,000
Eight No. Indian Pueblo Council	\$4,379,278	Jicarilla Apache Tribe	\$249,770
NM Inst. of Mining & Technology	\$2,500,000	Gulf of Mexico Foundation	\$229,000
NM Department of Agriculture	\$2,062,064	Bosque School	\$218,253
Pueblo of Taos	\$1,651,504	Regents of the University of New Mexico	\$211,869
Pueblo of Laguna	\$1,596,776	Town of Silver City	\$200,000
Border Env. Cooperation Comm.	\$1,581,000	Cherokee Nation	\$158,000
NM Dept. of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources	\$1,529,184	Env. Education Association of NM	\$150,000
Pueblo of Tesuque	\$1,385,984	City of Espanola	\$149,300
Pueblo of Santa Clara	\$1,341,425	Inter-Tribal Env. Council - Cherokee Nation	\$124,016
Pueblo of Santa Ana	\$1,230,332	Pueblo of Zia	\$119,213
Pueblo of San Felipe	\$1,216,478	Amigos Bravos Inc.	\$115,326
Pueblo of Isleta	\$1,113,575	University of New Mexico	\$111,111
Pueblo of Sandia	\$1,027,218	Asombro Institute for Science Education	\$90,000
Pueblo of San Ildefonso	\$1,011,994	Acoma Business Enterprises	\$82,000
Pueblo of Pojoaque	\$1,008,211	ICAST	\$62,278
Pueblo of Ohkay Owinge	\$1,004,942	Earth Force Inc.	\$60,000
Pueblo of Jemes	\$970,073	New Mexico BASS Chapter Federation	\$60,000
Pueblo of Nambe	\$936,086	Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District	\$59,986
Mescalero Apache Tribe	\$867,677	Santa Fe Watershed Association	\$49,774
City of Albuquerque Dept. Env. Health	\$853,470	American Lung Association of the Southwest	\$45,649
Pueblo of Picuris	\$759,901	Dine College	\$45,000
Regents of New Mexico State University	\$649,576	Tewa Women United	\$30,000
Pueblo of Zuni	\$619,579	Zuni Youth Enrichment Project	\$29,906
White Earth Reservation	\$617,039	Friends of Valle de Oro NWR	\$29,680
Univ. of New Mexico Health Sciences Center	\$600,000	Navajo Nation	\$27,545
Pueblo of Acoma	\$594,800	Ben Archer Health Center	\$25,000
Pueblo of Cochiti	\$587,900	Chimayo Youth Conservation Corps	\$25,000
Santo Domingo Tribe	\$428,559	Navajo Technical College	\$15,000
Multiple Recipients	\$368,172	Southwest Research Information Center	\$15,000

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this report are current as of July 2017 and figures for government spending and grants are drawn from www.usaspending.gov, and from official federal government budget documents.

- ¹ <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-02/documents/ws-ourwater-new-mexico-state-fact-sheet.pdf>
- ² <https://riverxchange.com/teachers-2/quick-facts-new-mexico-geography-climate-rio-grande/>
- ³ http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/wait-for-los-alamos-chromium-plume-cleanup-not-uncommon/article_60562fda-ab20-5789-b3da-dd2cdca13109.html
- ⁴ http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/small-new-mexico-communities-struggle-to-deliver-water-free-of/article_b76d8f7f-7eb7-5456-a04e-91672499f13d.html
- ⁵ <http://www.lung.org/our-initiatives/healthy-air/sota/city-rankings/states/new-mexico/>
- ⁶ <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2017-04-13/environment/report-no-easy-breathing-in-new-mexico/a57243-1>
- ⁷ <http://www.lung.org/assets/documents/healthy-air/state-of-the-air/state-of-the-air-2017.pdf>, p. 122.
- ⁸ <http://alibi.com/feature/45896/The-Environmental-Disaster-Youve-Never-Heard-Of.html>
- ⁹ <https://www.epa.gov/ust/learn-about-underground-storage-tanks-usts>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-11/documents/ca-16-34.pdf>
- ¹¹ <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-brownfields-funding-announced-roseville-newark-norwalk-painesville-piqua-port>
- ¹² <https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/cleanups-my-community>
- ¹³ https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/city_green_o.pdf, p. 51
- ¹⁴ <https://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/62B0DFCBA82655DF85257BB100661555>
- ¹⁵ <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.cleanup&id=0604068>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.bna.com/superfund-sites-unprepared-n73014464025/>