

Proposed FY 2020 Budget Analysis
The Trump Budget Aims to Cripple Environmental Protection
March 14, 2019

The largely negative reaction to the Trump Administration’s fiscal year 2020 budget proposal, which calls for wholesale cuts to all federal discretionary domestic programs, should not obscure the key point that the damage to EPA would be more punishing than for any other federal agency. It slashes EPA’s budget by 31% from 2019. The impacts would be felt by families and communities across America. Budget reductions cut essential programs and staffing levels, making it increasingly difficult for federal and state environmental professionals to carry out their congressionally mandated responsibilities to protect public health and the natural environment – efforts that are essential for community well-being and long-term economic growth.

The proposal largely echoes the administration’s [FY 2018](#) and [FY 2019](#) budgets and, like them, is not likely to be accepted by Congress. But by repeatedly suggesting cuts of this magnitude, the Trump proposals normalize the expectation that EPA’s budget should be reduced dramatically.

Even so, the EPA “[Budget in Brief](#)” document, ostensibly showing how the budget supports the agency’s mission, is laughable because of the brazen disconnect between the stated “goals” and the devastating funding cuts for activities supporting those goals. Thus EPA supports two “Goal 1” priorities, to “improve air quality” and “provide for clean and safe water,” with funding cuts of 46% and 39%, respectively. Support for “Goal 2,” to promote cooperative federalism and increase states’ roles in protecting the environment includes an 83% cut for measures to “increase transparency and public participation,” and the overall budget cuts categorical grants to support state and tribal programs by nearly half a billion dollars. “Goal 3” proposes to “prioritize robust science” by cutting science funding 45%. One wonders how large the cuts would be if EPA did *not* prioritize those goals. In any case, the inadvertent humor should not obscure the fact that the Trump-Wheeler Administration is dead serious about attacking environmental protection.

In the past two years, Congress rejected proposed massive cuts to EPA, and provided level funding. However, in real terms this means a continued decline from levels that are already historically low at a time when environmental needs are a national priority. EPN urges this Congress to take a serious look, for the first time in many years, at the level of investment actually needed for EPA to do its job, and fund the agency accordingly.

Highlights:

- The Trump budget continues an aggressive pattern of slashing **EPA staff** to historically low levels, draining off the skilled professionals whose knowledge and institutional memory are essential to making environmental protection work. EPA’s workforce around the country would shrink from 14,824 (in FY 2017) to 12,451 in FY 2020, giving EPA its smallest workforce since FY 1985 when EPA had significantly fewer congressionally mandated environmental responsibilities.
- The budget provides virtually no funding for **EPA climate change** programs and research and eliminates most [voluntary climate programs](#). This continues a pattern of attacks on EPA climate

work, virtually identical to last year's, and starkly demonstrates the administration's reckless, stubborn and fatuous denial of the overwhelming scientific consensus that human activities are causing dangerous changes to the earth's climate and that those changes must be addressed. EPA will, however, continue the various prongs of its attack on measures to control GHGs, such as repealing the Clean Power Plan and [cutting back on vehicle mileage standards](#).

- It proposes devastating cuts of 46%, nearly half a billion dollars, to **EPA categorical grants to support state programs**. States, as partners, have essential responsibilities to implement environmental protection programs and depend on EPA for large parts of their operating budgets.

Its deep and ruinous cuts of nearly half (45%) to **funding for science** are particularly troubling because science is so critical to the agency's ability to do its job. Far from being theoretical, [sound science](#) is at the core of almost everything EPA does to protect the American public from harm. Many forms of science, from toxicology to engineering, are interwoven into standard setting, reviews of new chemicals, disaster relief and Superfund cleanups.

Detailed Analysis of the Trump Administration proposal

Every proposed federal budget is a plan to carry out an administration's policy and program priorities. From this perspective, the budget proposal is deeply troubling. The policies and priorities of the current administration signal that it **does not value** public-sector efforts to protect human health and the natural environment. This proposed budget would reverse long-standing support for federal and state public health and environmental protection efforts shared by every administration from 1970 through 2016, Richard Nixon through Barack Obama.

A. Cuts to EPA Programs

Table 1 (see next page for table) depicts the budget's proposed FY 2020 funding levels for EPA programs. **The proposed budget would return EPA to an inflation-adjusted funding level not seen since the 1970s when EPA was first established.**

The Trump/Wheeler administration professes to be putting emphasis on "[traditional core programs](#)." Their funding plan shows how deeply hypocritical these claims are. Their budget cuts important non-traditional programs and traditional core programs alike.

Table 1.
FY 2020 Proposed Budget,
Changes from FY 2019

	<u>FY 2019</u> <u>Annualized, \$s</u> <u>in M</u>	<u>FY 2020</u> <u>Proposed, \$s</u> <u>in M</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Entire EPA Budget	8,824,488	6,068,490	(2,755,998)	(31)
Air & Radiation Program	425,268	254,397	(170,871)	(40)
Water Pollution Protection Program	258,205	209,811	(48,394)	(19)
Drinking Water Protection Program	102,026	93,902	(8,124)	(8)
Pesticide Licensing and Toxics Risk Review	207,911	157,370	(50,541)	(24)
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Underground Storage Tanks and Inland Oil Spill Programs	228,530	149,774	(78,756)	(34)
Hazardous Substance Superfund Program	1,154,947	1,045,351	(109,596)	(9)
Scientific Research - Office of Research and Development (ORD)	474,181	259,117	(215,064)	(45)

B. EPA Staffing Cuts Hollow Out the Agency

The budget proposal would leave EPA with its smallest workforce since 1984, more than three decades ago, despite significantly increased congressionally mandated responsibilities since that date.

Table 2 depicts the budget’s proposed FY 2020 staffing level for EPA.

Table 2.
FY 2020 Proposed FTE Level,
Changes from FY 2017 Actual

<u>FY 2017 FTE (start of Trump Administration)</u>	<u>FY 2020 Proposed, FTE ceiling</u>	<u>Staff reduction</u>	<u>% Change</u>
14,824	12,415	(2,409)	(16)

Impacts would be felt throughout the agency, not only at Washington, DC, headquarters but also in the [10 regional offices](#), EPA's major center for air pollution research and regulation (the Research Triangle Park, a North Carolina facility that houses 15 EPA offices), and EPA labs across the country (including Las Vegas, Nevada; Ada, Oklahoma; Cincinnati, Ohio; Gulf Breeze, Florida; and Athens, Georgia).

The 2,409 person cut to staffing during the Trump Administration is on top of significant reductions in the previous five years from a 20-year (1992-2012) level of between 17,000 and 18,000. The current proposal would further shrink the agency from 14,824 to 12,415, resulting in cumulative cuts of roughly 30%. In that context, the proposed new reduction would continue EPA's slow death by a thousand cuts through the ongoing erosion of its ability to do its congressionally-mandated work protecting the environment and human health. The staff reduction carried out by the administration since it took office on January 20, 2017, has been achieved largely through retirements, administrative actions like buyouts, and the imposition of a hiring freeze. These reductions have been implemented without a mandate from Congress to pursue FTE reductions, and the administration has made clear its intention to continue further reducing FTE levels, which is a serious concern.

C. Funding for States and Tribes Deeply Cut. The deep 46% cuts to state and tribal categorical grants come at the same time states are being given greater responsibilities, and are just part of a (34%) \$1.438 billion (that's billion with a "b") cut in total grants to tribes and states.

D. Other Major Changes

- **Geographic programs virtually eliminated:** the budget comes close to eliminating important geographic programs essential to [cleaning up and protecting important treasures of the American landscape](#) that contribute to our economic and recreational well-being. These include the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay (both cut by roughly 90 percent) and no funding at all for such resources as Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound, San Francisco Bay, the Florida Keys, and other south Florida and Louisiana ecosystems. This is the second time the administration has proposed to eliminate these programs; fortunately in the last go-around, Congress stepped in to protect these vital areas.
- **More than 50 EPA programs or subprograms eliminated in total:** Largely repeating its unsuccessful FY 2018 and 2019 efforts, the Trump Administration would completely eliminate or provide no funding for more than 50 programs that benefit the American public, such as the endocrine disruptors program that studies chemicals that can damage human reproductive capacity, growth and development. Most of the programs slated to be cut are identical to the ones unsuccessfully suggested for elimination in the previous budget.

Attachment A is a complete list of programs proposed for elimination or denied funding.

ATTACHMENT A
EPA PROGRAMS PROPOSED FOR ELIMINATION UNDER THE TRUMP
FY 2019 BUDGET

Programs and activities eliminated in the FY 2020 Budget total over \$650 million compared to the FY 2019 Annualized Continuing Resolution levels. With the Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes Restoration cuts, which essentially eliminate the program budgets without “technically” eliminating them, the total comes to nearly \$1 billion.

Climate Programs

Climate Programs are not consistently identified by name or current funding level in the budget. *Climate change activities in virtually every air and in other media program elements would be eliminated.* Eliminations include the Global Change Research sub-program and 14 voluntary partnership programs as part of the Atmospheric Protection Program, see list below:

- Green Power Partnership (to increase the use of renewable electricity in the US)
- Combined Heat and Power Partnership (promotes use of wasted heat, saving both energy and water and reducing pollution)
- Natural Gas STAR (voluntary oil & gas industry program to reduce methane leaks)
- AgSTAR (helps farmers recover biogas from livestock wastes)
- Landfill Methane Outreach Program
- Coalbed Methane Outreach Program
- Voluntary Aluminum Industrial Partnership (to reduce release of potent greenhouse gases)
- SF6 Reduction Partnership (voluntary EPA/electrical industry effort reducing leakage)
- Responsible Appliance Disposal Program
- GreenChill Partnership (food retailers reduce refrigerant leaks that destroy the ozone layer)
- State and Local Climate Energy Program
- Center for Corporate Climate Leadership
- SmartWay (shipping goods with less fuel and less pollution)
- Energy Star (rates consumer products for their energy efficiency); propose to operate through user fee collections

Geographic and Water Programs

- Gulf of Mexico
- Lake Champlain
- Long Island Sound
- Puget Sound
- San Francisco Bay
- South Florida
- Lake Pontchartrain and Southern New England Estuary and “other activities”
- State Grants for Non-Point Source Pollution (CWA § 319)
- National Estuary Program and Coastal Waterways (EPA-staffed program and grants)
- Beaches Protection (EPA-staffed program and grants)
- Fish Protection (EPA-staffed program and grants)
- Marine Pollution (EPA-staffed program and grants)

- Mexico Border (internal program and infrastructure assistance)
- Water Quality Research and Support Grants (traditional congressional add-on almost never requested by agency)
- Safe Water for Small and Disadvantaged Communities

Other Programs and Special Initiatives

- Lead Grants to States
- Lead Risk Reduction Program
- Reduce Lead in Drinking Water
- Pollution Prevention (internal program and state grants)
- Radon state grants
- Underground Storage Tanks state grants
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Prevention
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Endocrine Disruptors (studies substances that adversely affect the hormone system)
- Environmental Education
- Indoor Air Radon programs (for the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer in the US)
- Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) Waste Minimization and Recycling
- Indoor Air: Reduce Risks
- Regional Science and Technology
- Pesticides – Science Policy and Biotechnology Advisory Panel
- Small Minority Business Assistance
- Stratospheric Ozone: Multilateral Fund
- Targeted Airshed Grants
- Trade and Governance
- STAR Research Grants (“sub-program” across four ORD core programs)
- WaterSense (a “sub-program” of Surface Water Protection that is a voluntary partnership program to label water-efficient products)
- Gold King Mine Water Monitoring, non-recurring program providing grants for monitoring rivers contaminated by the Gold King Mine Spill.

Note that the following programs, proposed for elimination last year, are now proposed for such drastic cuts or changes that they are virtually eliminated:

- Chesapeake Bay
- Great Lakes Restoration
- Infrastructure Assistance: Alaska Native Villages grant
- Superfund - Environmental Justice

See also the [FY 2020 EPA Budget in Brief](#) (on EPA’s website) for the agency’s account of “Eliminated Programs” (pp 89-94).