



President's Proposed Budget Cuts Would Cripple State Environmental Protection

EPA claims that a principal agency goal is to promote “cooperative federalism,” and “rebalance the power between Washington and the States,” presumably by giving states a greater role in environmental protection. In theory this makes sense. States are the first line of defense against air, water, waste and other pollution affecting their residents and do much of the work to address such pollution. Under most federal environmental laws, EPA and the states work as partners, with EPA generally establishing national standards to ensure clean air, water and land, and states having the primary role in implementing those standards through such measures as issuing permits, carrying out inspections, and enforcing laws and regulations.

But the [president's proposed FY 2020 EPA budget](#) tells a different story, with massive *cuts* of nearly \$1.4 billion in support for state environmental protection. EPA's idea of “rebalancing” is to ask states to do more to protect the environment while cutting the resources it provides to do so.

The President's Proposed EPA Budget Slashes Support for State Environmental Programs

EPA support is vital to state environmental programs, which depend on EPA funding for an average of 27% of their operating budgets. A centerpiece of EPA's budget proposal is a cut of nearly half a billion dollars in categorical grants to support state and tribal programs. The cuts would slash resources to develop and manage environmental programs; tailor implementation to local needs; respond to emergencies like hurricanes, floods and severe storms; clean up contaminated sites; and take other measures to protect public health and the environment. The cuts are as indiscriminate as they are massive:

- \$300 million (55%) for clean and safe water;
- \$88 million (34%) for air and radiation;
- \$51 million (34%) for hazardous waste;
- \$27 million (55%) for pesticides and toxics; and
- \$29 million (33%) for multi-media grants, primarily general assistance grants that Indian tribes can use to develop reservation environmental protection programs.

Thus, the budget is an enormous cut to state agencies at a time when they need additional resources to simply carry out their essential functions. These cuts would gravely weaken state environmental agencies and the partnerships between EPA and state agencies, cornerstones of the nation's system of environmental protection. Combining such reductions with increasing state responsibilities, as

EPA is also proposing, will weaken state programs, setting them up for failure and reducing environmental protection for everyone.

In sum, the Trump Administration's budget proposes to break EPA's longstanding commitment to providing vital core assistance to states. States would find it extremely difficult to fill the substantial void left by EPA's retreat from its funding partnership role, and many would need to cut back on – or eliminate – fundamental public health and environmental protections.

The President's Proposed EPA Budget Slashes Support for Clean and Safe Water

The largest share of the proposed cuts by far is to water protection – even though the budget makes providing for “clean and safe water” a central Agency goal, and the administrator has said that safe drinking water is EPA's highest priority. Thus the budget would cut funding for state water protection and restoration by \$400 million, and funding to states to support clean and safe water infrastructure by more than \$900 million.

Proposed Cuts for State Programs that Protect Water Quality

As noted above, the budget also proposes cutting support for **state water protection programs by \$300 million**, including:

- \$77 million in cuts to state water pollution grants (33%) to help states protect and restore water quality by issuing permits, monitoring water quality, developing water quality standards, conducting cleanup plans, identifying violators and taking enforcement actions.
- \$171 million in cuts by eliminating grants for nonpoint source management to address the largest remaining source of unregulated pollutants, such as contaminated runoff, from a wide variety of sources. Nonpoint source pollution has been identified as a source of impairment for more than 80% of the nation's impaired rivers, streams, lakes, and reservoirs.
- State categorical grants to protect water quality at beaches, previously funded at \$9.55 million, would be eliminated.

The budget also proposed 33% cuts in support for state programs to **protect drinking water**:

- Grants to supervise public drinking water supplies would be cut from \$102 million to \$68 million (33%).
- Grants to protect underground sources of drinking water by underground injection control would be cut 33% to \$7 million from \$10.5 million.

Proposed Cuts in Support for Water Infrastructure

The largest share of the proposed \$1.4 billion in cuts to water protection, **\$874 million**, is to a pair of highly successful state revolving loan funds under the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts that support critical water and wastewater treatment infrastructure projects. The proposed cuts are

\$300 million (26%) from the drinking water fund and \$574 million (34%) from the clean water fund, with each state cut by a proportionate share.

The two programs are widely and justly lauded for producing enormous improvements in our nation's water infrastructure – in one recent year, the drinking water fund alone touched the lives of nearly 78 million people. Even today, they remain critical to ensuring clean and safe water. The evidence of the need for more investment in our nation's water infrastructure is overwhelming, and shows that this is a time to increase, not cut these funds:

- More than 27 million Americans are served by 3,500 community water systems that do not fully meet health-based drinking water standards, and some of those standards are dated and may not be adequately protective.
- Tens of thousands of homes lack access to basic sanitation and drinking water, sometimes lacking flushing toilets and running water, exposing people to raw sewage and drinking water contaminants.
- Many community water systems draw their water from rivers and lakes, but nearly half a million square miles of those waters are listed as “impaired,” which means they fail to meet one or more standards for water quality, *and the list is growing each year.*
- An overwhelming majority, 215 million of our nation's people, live within two miles of a polluted lake, river, stream, or ocean area.
- Each year our country suffers about 240,000 water main breaks, and billions of gallons of raw sewage are discharged into local surface waters from sewer overflows, damaging water quality. These problems could be reduced or prevented by upgrading and repairing our aging water infrastructure, replacing leaking transmission pipes and deteriorated storage and treatment equipment.
- A recent needs survey showed that more than \$420 billion will be needed to maintain and improve the nation's drinking water infrastructure over the next 20 years by constructing, restoring, or rehabilitating hundreds of thousands of miles of pipes and thousands of treatment plants, storage tanks and other key assets.

The proposed budget cuts another **\$27 million** in infrastructure support for addressing water protection problems such as basic drinking water and sanitation infrastructure, like flushing toilets and running water for poor, isolated, predominantly Alaska Native rural villages and for desperately poor U.S. communities along the U.S.-Mexico border that disproportionately lack such services and face exposure to raw sewage.

The President's EPA Budget Proposes \$125 million Cuts to Programs to Protect and Restore our Nation's Great Water Bodies

Another target of the budget cuts is EPA geographic programs, which provide federal leadership and funding to protect and restore nationally significant waters. The budget proposes to eviscerate nearly all of these programs, with a total cut of \$125 million, leaving no funding at all for many important water bodies such as Puget Sound, Long Island Sound, and Lake Champlain and a \$67 million (90%) cut for the Chesapeake Bay.

The President's Proposed EPA Budget Cuts Support for Other State Environmental Programs

Grants for Air and Radiation protection would be cut \$88 million (35%), including:

- Grants for state and local air quality management would be cut by 33%, from \$228 million to \$152 million.
- Grants for tribal air quality management would be cut 30%, from \$13 million to \$9 million.
- Radon protection grants, previously funded at \$8 million, would be eliminated.

The budget also proposes to eliminate targeted airshed grants to improve air quality in the five areas in most serious violation of air quality standards. (\$40 million) damaging public health.

Hazardous waste financial assistance to states would drop \$32 million (33%), from \$98 million to \$66 million, even though the U.S. has 60,000 federally regulated hazardous waste facilities and 80% of the population lives within three miles and 50% lives within one mile of one or more such facilities.

Brownfield grants to clean up brownfields, former commercial or industrial sites where real or perceived contamination affects future use, would be cut by \$16 million, from \$48 million to \$33 million (33%).

Pesticides & Toxics grants would be cut by \$28 million (55%), with cuts including:

- Grants to address lead poisoning in buildings and protect lead paint abatement work would be eliminated (\$14.0 million).
- Grants to states for pesticide program implementation and enforcement that support actions to reduce pesticide risks to workers would be cut 38%, from \$31 million to \$19 million.

Grants to help tribes develop environmental programs would be cut by \$29 million (32%).

In sum, the budget's "rebalancing" would *expand* states' environmental responsibilities and *reduce* support for state programs, weakening those programs, setting them up for failure and reducing health and environmental protection.