

The Trump Budget Aims to Cripple Environmental Protection February 20, 2018

The damage inflicted on EPA by the Trump proposed budget for the fiscal year 2019 would be more punishing than for any other federal agency -- slashing EPA's budget by 26% from 2017.¹ 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.

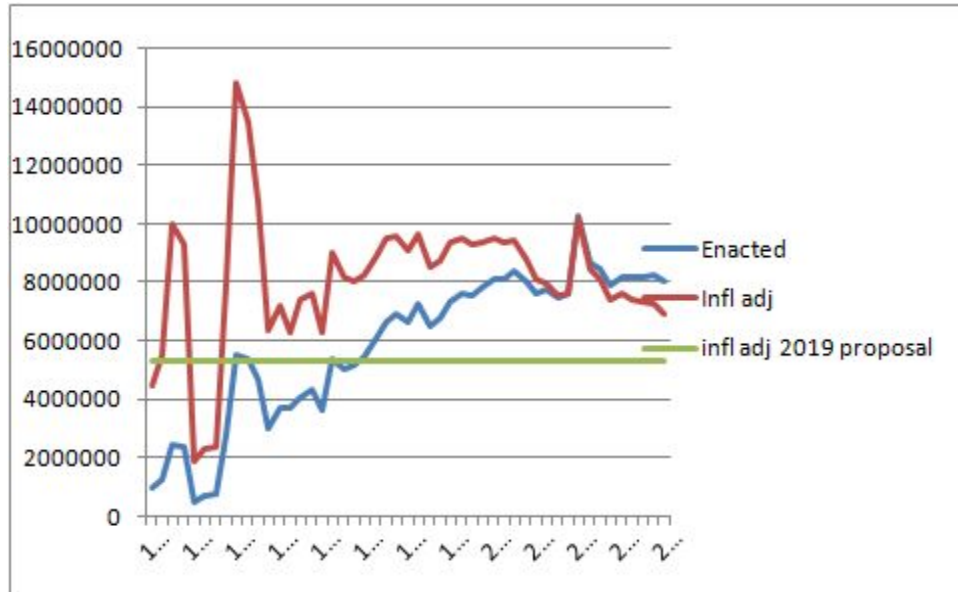
The [proposal echoes the administration's FY 18 budget](#) (except for increases to the Superfund program) and is likely, as it was last year, to be superseded by Congress. But by repeatedly suggesting cuts of this magnitude, it normalizes the expectation that EPA's budget should be reduced dramatically.

Key points:

- The Trump budget proposes a **33% cut** in funds to pay for EPA's programs, including grants to states, with level funding for only two large water infrastructure programs.
- It 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 17) to 12,250 in FY 2019, giving EPA its smallest workforce since FY 1984 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 and Administrator Pruitt's 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.
- It proposes devastating cuts to **EPA funding for states**, which, as partners, have essential responsibilities for environmental protection and depend on EPA for large parts of their operating budgets.
- It makes deep and ruinous cuts of nearly half (48%) to **funding for science**. [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. Cuts to science funding are the most severe cuts proposed in the budget, and make a mockery of the goal adopted in EPA's budget submission to "prioritize robust science."

¹ The administration was apparently planning on an even deeper 34% cut, but added funds at the last minute following the budget agreement that increased the allocation for non-defense spending. To compute percentage reductions this budget proposes, EPN uses FY 2017 rather than 2018 as a baseline because it is the last year where there are authoritative "actual" -- rather than estimated -- budget numbers and it allows for comparisons with the last administration. This produces different, but more precise numbers that better reflect administration priorities.

Below: EPA's budget history



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 public health, and environmental protection policies and priorities of the current administration it reflects signal that the administration **does not value** public-sector efforts to protect human health and the natural environment and instead 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

The chart above depicts EPA's budget history

Table 1 below depicts the budget's proposed FY 2019 funding level for EPA. **The proposed budget would return EPA to an inflation-adjusted funding level not seen since the 1970s when EPA was first established.**

The Trump/Pruitt 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 2019 Proposed Budget,
Changes from FY 2017 Actual

	FY 2017 Actual, \$s in M	FY 2019 Proposed, \$s in M	\$ Change	% Change
Entire EPA Budget	8,257,022	6,145,887	(2,111,351.7)	(26)
Air & Radiation Program	418,412	234,465	(183,947)	(44)
Water Pollution Protection Program	257,491.6	192,888	(64,603.6)	(25)
Drinking Water Protection Program	100,798.2	84,138	(16,602.2)	(17)
Pesticide Licensing and Toxics Risk Review	200,317.7	143,132	(57,185.7)	(29)
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Underground Storage Tanks and Inland Oil Spill Programs	224,397	142,571	(81,826)	(37)
Hazardous Substance Superfund Program	1,144,699.4	1,088,830	(55,689)	(5)
Scientific Research - Office of Research and Development (ORD)	483,6400	251,2570	(232,372)	(48)

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 2019 staffing level for EPA.

Table 2.
FY 2019 Proposed FTE Level,
Changes from FY 2017 Actual

FY 2017 Actual, FTE	FY 2019 Proposed, FTE	FTE Change	% Change
14,824	12,250	(2,574)	-17

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 (RTP) 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, Louisiana; and Athens, Georgia.

The unprecedented 2,574 person cut to staffing 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 14,284 to 12,250, resulting in cumulative cuts of roughly 30%. In that context, the proposed new reduction would eviscerate EPA's 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 carried out 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

States and [Tribes](#) do much of the actual implementation of our environmental laws. The administration argues these entities should play a larger role and receive less oversight from EPA. In theory, this is possible but in fact, states and tribes don't have the financial capacity to increase their environmental funding, and they are highly dependent on technical and other support from the federal government. Federal funding provides, on average, more than 25 percent of the operating budgets for state and tribal environmental programs. The Trump budget would cut grants that support the core air, water and other programs run by the states and Tribes, and eliminate many grant programs, including, despite a purported "war on lead," funding for lead grants. These cuts will devastate state and tribal programs, including permitting, implementation, and enforcement.

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, 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.
- **50 EPA programs eliminated in total:** Largely repeating its unsuccessful FY 2018 efforts, the Trump administration would completely eliminate fifty 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 them identical to the ones unsuccessfully suggested for elimination in the previous budget.

A complete list of programs proposed for elimination is contained in **Attachment A**

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

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 14 voluntary partnership programs listed below as well as the Global Change Research sub-program:

Energy Star; propose to operate through fee collections (rates consumer products for their energy efficiency)

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)

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 (*per 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*

Other Programs and Special Initiatives

- Lead Grants to States
- Lead Risk Reduction Program
- Pollution Prevention – internal program and state grants
- Radon state grants
- Underground Storage Tanks state grants
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank Prevention
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Endocrine Disruptors (studies substances that adversely affect the hormone system)
- Environmental Education
- 2 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 that they are virtually eliminated:

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

See also the [FY 2019 Justification of Appropriation Estimates](#) (on EPA’s website) for the Agency’s account of “Eliminated/Discontinued Programs” (pp 726-732).

For Further information:

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