# Trump's 2018 Budget Would 'Devastate' Environment

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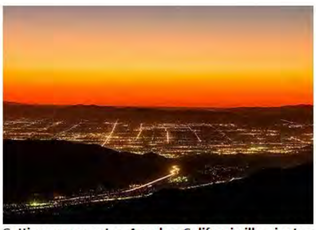
**WASHINGTON, DC**, May 24, 2017 (ENS) – President Donald Trump's proposed fiscal year 2018 budget request to Congress, released in detail Tuesday, has Americans who care about the environment and public health up in arms. The proposal would impose massive cuts on health, environmental and safety net programs and gut federal research in the energy, climate science and medical fields.

"President Trump's proposed budget cuts, if enacted, devastate state and local governmental air pollution control agencies. In short, these cuts will result in more people dying prematurely and getting sick unnecessarily," warns Bill Becker, executive director of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, which represents member agencies in 45 states.

Trump's budget request demands deep cuts in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

* – a 31 percent cut in EPA's overall budget from Fiscal Year 2017 to FY 2018
* – a 39 percent cut in EPA's Science and Technology budget
* – a 35 percent cut in EPA's overall operating budget

Trump's budget eliminates EPA funding for a dozen geographic programs including the Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain and Lake Ponchartrain, the Gulf of Mexico, South Florida, San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound.



**Setting sun over Los Angeles, California illuminates the polluted air, October 21, 2016 (Photo by Paucal)**

The president also proposes a 45 percent cut in federal grants to state and local governmental agencies. Included among these cuts is a 30 percent reduction for state and local air quality control agencies to implement the Clean Air Act.

Becker warns, "These cuts will mean delays in meeting health-based air quality standards, less inspections against noncomplying facilities, decreased monitoring in metropolitan areas, and fewer agency staff to address air quality problems. While the Trump administration has been touting its commitment to 'cooperative federalism,' these proposed cuts belie that assertion."

See the details at:
**http://www.4cleanair.org/sites/default/files/Documents/EPA_FY18_Budget.pdf**

The Union of Concerned Scientists, UCS, calls Trump's proposed 2018 budget "a deeply unjust budget that would disproportionately harm poor and working class Americans."

UCS President Ken Kimmell, a former Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner, said, "President Trump's proposed budget takes a wrecking ball to agencies that protect our health, safety and environment."

"His budget would gut the EPA," said Kimmell, "taking our environmental cops off the beat and allowing those who would seek to pollute to get away with it. I also know from my experience heading a state environmental agency that states have neither the funds nor the staff to pick up the slack when federal enforcement is decimated."

"His budget would also stall out U.S. technological innovation and scientific research, and the country's capabilities to respond to extreme weather and national security threats. This is all while driving up the deficit to pay for massive military budget increases we don't need," Kimmell warned.

On the other hand, the UCS reacted positively to one proposal in the budget request – Trump's proposal to shut down the mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel project to dispose of excess plutonium from the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

Several independent reports commissioned by the Energy Department concluded that the cost to complete the MOX program at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina would be much more than initial estimates, and that alternative approaches to disposing of the excess plutonium would be more affordable and less risky.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has long called for canceling the program because it would make it easier for terrorists to gain access to fissile material that could be used to make a nuclear weapon.

"The MOX fuel fabrication plant at the Savannah River Site is a money pit," said UCS Senior Scientist Edwin Lyman. "Cancelling the facility and disposing of our excess plutonium by diluting it and shipping it to a permanent repository [at the Waste Isolation Pilot Project in New Mexico] will save taxpayers tens of billions of dollars, and it will be safer and more secure to boot."

From Montana, Chris Saeger, executive director of the nonprofit Western Values Project, objects to the part of Trump's budget proposal that would slash the Interior Department's budget by nearly 11 percent, or $1.5 billion.

"With this budget proposal, the Trump administration is continuing their all-out assault on our nation's public lands," said Saeger. "In March, Secretary [Ryan] Zinke said he would fight these cuts, now he is praising the effort, claiming it will eliminate 'wasteful spending.' What changed? Once again Secretary Zinke is proving he is all hat and no cattle when it comes to protecting public lands."

These deep cuts would come at a time when agencies are already underfunded and struggling to keep up with land maintenance at current budget levels, Saeger pointed out.

The National Park Service is facing a $12.5 billion deferred maintenance backlog. Also under threat are the U.S. Forest Service's Payments in Lieu of Taxes, which compensate counties that utilize income from federal lands for essential services.

While funding is decreasing, demand on our federal public lands and visitation to national parks is at an all-time high. Oil production on federal lands increased between 2006 and 2015. At the same time, our national parks hosted 330 million visitors in 2016, the third record-setting year in a row.

"These draconian cuts would leave our public lands managers with their hands tied, and would pilfer funding from state and local governments, particularly in the rural west," Saeger said. "Make no mistake, this budget doesn't eliminate 'wasteful spending' or reduce 'bloated bureaucracy.' It guts essential services and places an ever-growing burden on western communities."

Jeff Watters of the Ocean Conservancy is equally outraged by Trump's budget proposal. "The president's budget has officially placed coastal communities and ocean health on the chopping block, with a nearly $1 billion cut to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) budget," he warned.

Watters says, "These budget cuts have real world impacts on people's lives."

He points to local fishermen who depend on NOAA's Sea Grant program for coastal industries in the same way farmers receive support from the United States Department of Agriculture. Elimination of this program would disrupt entire businesses along our coasts and lakes.

Veterinarians rely on NOAA to conduct vital research to protect whales from ship strikes and ocean toxins, and coastal states, tribes and families count on NOAA's Regional Coastal Resilience Grants to assess coastal risks and provide storm warnings.

And it is people's health that this budget proposal is placing at risk, says Oregon Nurses Association's Executive Director Susan King, RN, MS, CEN, FAAN.

"President Trump's callous budget cuts would eliminate the health care services millions of children, seniors and families rely on and rip apart the safety net generations of Americans have worked to build," said King. "Combined with the President's health care repeal bill, this proposal continues stripping essential services from those who need assistance most and leaves us increasingly vulnerable to public health crises."

Said King, "A budget that cuts cancer research, chronic disease prevention, health insurance and health promotion leaves all Americans less healthy and less safe."

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