



Hobbling the Environmental Protection Agency would threaten Florida's health, families, jobs and economy

Support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is essential to protecting Florida's air, water, and land. From safeguarding waterways from dangerous runoff to cleaning up toxic sites, EPA grants provided the state with more than \$597* million in funding from FY2012-2016.¹ Unfortunately, the Trump Administration, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt 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 Floridians who depend on the agency to protect their health and the state's tourism and business climate.

EPA's budget will 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 the environment. The EPA's budget could be bargained away in the blink of an eye, and Floridians could be the losers.

Environment and public health are at risk

More dangerous runoff in the water

Program at Risk: Nonpoint source pollution program grants. Proposed cut: Eliminated

Runoff, sometimes called "Nonpoint Source Pollution," is the leading cause of water quality problems in the United States. It comes when rainwater washes over areas containing contaminants such as industrial waste, agricultural pesticides or lawn-treatment chemicals, and gets into surface water, ground water, or soil.

From FY2012-2016, EPA provided Florida with \$29.8 million to help protect the state's water. For years, runoff from fertilizers and sewage fueled excess algae levels in Roberts Bay, which starves out nutrients that plants and animals need. It was an EPA initiative that brought algae and accompanying chlorophyll contamination in Roberts Bay back to more normal levels, along with five other nearby water bodies — restoring the bay. Challenges like this continue to grow, and Florida needs the EPA's full support now more than ever.

Leaking underground storage tank grants, the enemy underground

Proposed cut: 49%, including 100% cut to grants to state and tribal governments to address this

Across the country, thousands of underground storage tanks and accompanying pipes — many of them made from older corroding steel — hold and carry a variety of fuels and chemicals. When tanks leak harmful chemicals such as oil, gas, benzene and toluene into soil and ground-water, drinking water and soil are fouled, community health is jeopardized, and economic development is crippled. Preventing and addressing spills from these backlogs is a major environmental priority.

EPA support is essential to Florida programs to monitor underground storage tanks, detect leaks of petroleum products, address the causes, repair any damage to soil or groundwater and hold polluters accountable for paying their fair share of cleanup costs. Florida's underground storage tank program received more than \$14 million in EPA grant funding from 2012 to 2016.

More Code Red air pollution days

Program at Risk: State, Tribal, and Local Air Quality Management Grants. Proposed cut: 30%

For decades, the Clean Air Act and EPA grants have helped states and communities make historic strides in reducing air pollution, with EPA grants covering almost 30 percent of state and local air monitoring costs. Cleaner air means fewer Code Red and other alert days when parents must keep kids indoors; fewer attacks for more than 1 million Floridians with asthma; and fewer health threats to workers. The lives of 2,240 Floridians are saved every year by EPA programs cutting air pollution and toxic mercury.

Since 2012, the EPA has provided more than \$13 million in grants to local governments to support their air pollution control efforts, including monitoring of harmful particulates, ozone, lead and other pollutants. Programs to monitor and cut air pollution are especially important to minority populations, who are disproportionately located in urban areas like Miami. Yet Trump and Pruitt want to abolish the environmental justice work that helps protect people in those areas. A strong EPA means less air pollution in Miami, which means better heart health and even lower rates of heart attacks and strokes.

Fewer cleanups and less economic development at polluted properties

Program at Risk: Brownfield grants. Proposed cut: 28%

Brownfield sites are properties where contamination prevents economic development and threatens public health and safety. But they have the potential – once cleaned up – to generate new jobs. Research has shown that residential property values near restored brownfield sites around the country have 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 (two to seven times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to cleaning up those brownfield sites). EPA brownfield grants have even greater positive impacts on communities with higher poverty rates, large minority populations, and lower-than-average incomes.

Florida has more than 1,200 sites where pollutants threaten public health and prevent economic development. For two decades, EPA brownfield grants have helped Florida counties and communities clean up polluted properties to protect people's health and to spark job-creating economic redevelopment. These grants, which totaled \$16.5 million from 2012-2016, have helped catalyze private sector loans and other funding to clean up contamination from leaking petroleum tanks, metals, and other hazardous substances.

Dirtier water, toxics in the Everglades, and vanishing coral

Program at Risk: South Florida Geographic Initiative. Proposed cut: eliminated

The Trump Administration budget would eliminate the EPA's South Florida Geographic Initiative, which for 25 years has made Florida's water cleaner by replacing 25,000 ineffective septic tanks and 4,000 cesspits. One of the Initiative's key jobs is to monitor the flow of toxic substances like mercury into the Everglades, as well as Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, the Caloosahatchee Estuary, the Indian River Lagoon, and water along the Florida Reef Tract from Martin County through the Florida Keys. John Garder, the National Parks Conservation Association's director of budget and appropriations, called the proposed cuts to the Initiative's clean-water efforts "nothing short of alarming."

The South Florida Geographic Initiative was key to a 2012 court settlement that provided \$880 million to protect the Everglades from encroaching pollution. The Initiative has also supported the Coral Reef Evaluation and Monitoring Project (CREMP), which has tracked an alarming growth in the threats to Florida's coral reefs, including disease and bleaching that have wiped out large amounts of coral and caused two varieties to be recognized as endangered species. Working to fight this and to protect Florida's ecology and natural beauty, the Initiative provided more than \$540,000 for Florida under CREMP from 2014-16.

ⁱ * FY12-16 funding totals obtained from <https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/Default.aspx>