



The Impacts of Climate Change and the Trump Administration's Anti-Environmental Agenda in Colorado

April 22, 2020

Just in the past three years, the Trump administration has attempted to roll back at least 95 environmental rules and regulations to the detriment of the environment and Americans' public health. Moreover, the administration refuses to act to mitigate the effects of climate change—instead loosening requirements for polluters emitting the greenhouse gases that fuel the climate crisis. This dangerous agenda is affecting the lives of Americans across all 50 states.

To read the personal stories of Americans impacted by climate change and the effects of the Trump administration's anti-environmental policies in your state, visit [OurEnvironment.org](https://www.ourenvironment.org).



For citations, please see the web version of this fact sheet.

Between 2017 and 2019, Colorado experienced seven severe storms, one wildfire, and one drought. The damages of each event led to losses of at least \$1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

- From 2017 to 2019, hailstorms have cost Colorado taxpayers upward of \$5.5 billion.
- Snow in Colorado is melting 15 to 30 days earlier than it did 25 years ago: Scientists say that snowpack in the Southern Rocky Mountains will drop 50 percent this century, and the Sierra Nevada snowpack is expected to fall by 90 percent.
- Decreasing snowpack is troubling for Colorado, not only because skiing is the state's second-largest industry—generating an estimated \$4.8 billion annually—but also because snowpack accounts for 70 percent of Colorado's water supply.

Temperature

- Colorado's average temperature has increased by about 2 degrees Fahrenheit over the past 30 years, drying out forests and increasing the frequency and intensity of wildfires.
- 17 percent of households in Colorado are located in areas reported as facing high or extremely high risk from wildfires.
- More than 475,000 acres in Colorado were consumed by wildfires in 2018.
- Smoke from wildfires also carries pollutants such as particulate matter that can cause respiratory illness.

- Colorado currently experiences 10 days of dangerous heat per year. However, projections indicate that number will increase sixfold to 60 such days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 100,000 people living in Colorado who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.

Impacts of the Trump administration's anti-environmental policies

Climate

- In March 2020, the Trump administration announced its final rule to overturn Obama-era fuel efficiency standards for cars. These weakened fuel standards will lead to higher greenhouse gas and particulate matter emissions and will cost Coloradans more than \$252 million annually.
- The Trump administration is attempting to gut climate considerations from major infrastructure projects by eliminating the “cumulative impact” requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act. This is concerning because Colorado’s economy relies heavily on its tourism, agriculture, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.
 - **Agriculture:** Colorado’s agricultural industry contributes \$41 billion annually to the state’s economy and employs more than 100,000 workers.
 - **Tourism:** Tourism in Colorado supported 174,000 jobs in 2018 and contributed nearly \$20 billion to the state’s economy in 2016.
 - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Colorado generates 222,900 direct jobs and more than \$28 billion in consumer spending.

Air quality

- Mercury emissions in Colorado decreased from 2011-2017 by 59 percent, yet the Trump administration just undermined limits on the amount of mercury and other toxic emissions that are allowed from power plants.

Water quality

- In January 2019, the Trump administration repealed the Waters of the United States rule, removing pollution protections for roughly 90 percent of the streams that supply the Colorado River. This could upset the drinking water supply for Coloradans and others across the country: Nearly 40 million Americans rely on the Colorado River and its streams for municipal water and for the irrigation of 5.5 million acres of land.