



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

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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.

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

Between 2017 and 2019, Montana experienced two wildfires and one drought. The damages of each event led to losses of at least \$1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

- Montana faces one of the greatest threats from widespread summer droughts in the country.
- From 1970 to 2015, Montana has seen a larger percentage increase in the number of large fires on national forest lands than any other western state.
- In 2019, Montana experienced 1,474 fires—which burned 64,835 acres—and ranked eighth for the highest number of wildfires in the United States that year.
- By 2050, Montana is projected to see six more high wildfire potential days. This is concerning because 617,000 Montanans, or 62 percent of the state's residents, live in areas at an elevated risk of wildfire. Montana ranks third in the country for the largest percentage of state population living in areas of elevated wildfire risk.
- With 29 percent of properties at risk to extreme wildfire risk, Montana faces the greatest proportional threat to its properties in the United States.

Temperature

- Montana currently averages five days per year when heat exceeds dangerous levels, but projections indicate that number will increase to nearly 15 days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 25,000 people in Montana* 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 Montana residents [\\$23.1 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 Montana’s* economy relies heavily on its agriculture, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.
 - **Agriculture:** With [28,000 farms](#) across the state, agriculture in Montana generates an economic impact of more than [\\$5 billion](#) annually.
 - **Tourism:** In 2018, nonresident visitors generated nearly [\\$4 billion](#) in economic impact and supported more than [44,670 jobs](#).
 - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Montana generates [71,000](#) direct jobs and more than [\\$7 billion](#) in consumer spending, making it the [second-largest](#) sector of the state’s economy.

Toxics

- In 2020, President Trump proposed cutting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) budget by [more than one-quarter](#) and the Superfund program by [more than \\$100 million](#). Montana has [18 Superfund sites](#)—contaminated former industry sites managed by the EPA—including [one of the largest toxic sites in America](#). Exposure to contamination from toxic sites can lead to [health effects](#) such as cancer and birth defects.

Water quality

- In 2019, the Trump administration released a [series of proposed changes](#) loosening regulations of [coal-powered plants and the disposal of coal ash](#), which can [threaten](#) drinking water quality. These deregulations are dangerous for Montana: According to [2010 EPA calculations](#), [four facilities](#) in the state generate [1.8 million tons](#) of coal ash annually.

* **Correction, June 15, 2020:** *This fact sheet has been updated with the correct state name.*