



# EPA BUDGET CUTS IMPACT VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

## *DIRTY FACTS*: State of Tennessee

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s mission is to protect human health and the environment. Historically, people of color have been and continue to be unequally overburdened by environmental hazards and pollution. The [proposed budget](#) for the EPA will make it more difficult for communities of color and low income communities to achieve environmental equity. Tennessee, EPA Region 4, has a [population](#) of 6,651,194 with 21% non-white residents and 16% living in poverty.

### What does Tennessee have at stake?

#### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- In 1992, the U.S. EPA's Office of Environmental Equity was established and later changed to the [Office of Environmental Justice](#) to address the inequities in environmental health and decision making opportunities.
- The proposed budget by the Trump Administration would **eliminate the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)** from the U.S. EPA, meaning there will be no [conscious coordination](#) of environmental justice protection in all policies and activities. These efforts would likely be transferred to the [Office of Policy](#). Under the House budget, **the program would receive a 15% reduction** at \$5.728 million.
- The Office of Environmental Justice has developed EJSCREEN, a [mapping tool](#) that provides demographic and environmental measures, training and workshops on integrating environmental justice into the work of internal and external stakeholders, and created the framework that includes environmental justice concerns into science and policy research at the EPA.
- EJ 2020, which is EPA's strategy for addressing environmental justice concerns until 2020, would likely be removed under the proposed budget by the Trump administration.

#### HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

- There are 220 hazardous waste [sites](#) in Tennessee, which includes both Superfund and brownfield sites.
- While people of color make up only 37% of the U.S. population, 44% of people of color live within one mile and 46% live within three [miles](#) of Superfund sites. Residents surrounding Superfund sites are more likely to be low income people of color, which means they often have fewer resources to address the issues impacting their community.
- Communities of color and low income communities are more likely to receive EPA Brownfield grants due to historical [factors](#) such as "housing discrimination, residential segregation, and community disinvestment." Census Block Groups receiving EPA Brownfield funding identified as 20% in poverty and 38% people of color, compared to 12% in poverty and 31% people of color from Census Block [Groups](#) nationwide.
- The proposed budget by Trump's administration would **decrease Superfund program funding by 43%**. Under the House budget, it would receive a 2% [increase](#).
- The proposed budget by Trump's administration would **reduce Brownfield program funding by 37%**, Brownfield Projects State Assistance Grants by 14%, and a Brownfield Categorical Grant funding decrease of 30%. Under the House budget, the Brownfield grant receives \$10 million [more](#) in funding than 2017 levels.



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### AIR QUALITY

- Low-income children of color and elderly people breathe in higher amounts of [air pollution](#), causing respiratory issues, irritation, heart issues, and even death.
- Tennessee has an environmental injustice [score](#) of 3.1, which is determined by taking the population-weighted average of [nitrogen dioxide](#), a gas harmful to human health, between low income people of color and high income whites. Other states, such as North and South Dakota, have a score of -0.4 and -0.2, respectively. Larger positive differences indicate higher injustice.
- Tennessee received an environmental inequality [score](#) of 0.08, out of the 1 to 0 range, which was determined by measuring how evenly nitrogen dioxide is concentrated across the United States. The higher the value, the higher the inequality.
- The proposed budget under the Trump administration would [decrease](#) funding for Science and Technology Clean Air Programs by 26%, Indoor Air and Radiation Programs by 44%, Air and Energy Research by 67%, Clean Air Environmental Programs by 47%, Indoor Air and Radiation Environmental Programs by 92%, and State and Local Air Quality Management Categorical grants by 30%. The House budget would [cut](#) Clean Air programs by 17% at \$227.1 million.
- Targeted Airshed State grants, which help to reduce air pollution in the top five most polluted nonattainment areas relative to annual ozone or particulate matter, will be [eliminated](#) under the proposed budget of the Trump administration. Under the House budget, Targeted Airshed Grants receive \$10 million [more](#) in funding.

### WATER QUALITY

- Low income communities and communities of color are less likely to have [access](#) to clean water.
- The proposed budget under the Trump administration would [increase](#) the Drinking Water Science and Technology Program by 4%. The proposed budget under the Trump administration would increase the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for Tennessee by .002%.
- The proposed budget under the Trump administration would [decrease](#) funding of Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Research by 36%, the Wetlands program by 14%, Drinking Water Program under Environmental Programs and Management by 19%, Surface Water Protection by 83%, Public Water System Supervision by 30%, and Wetlands Program Development Categorical Grant by 30%.
- The proposed budget under the House would keep drinking water and wastewater infrastructure at the same [levels](#) of 2017.
- The proposed budget under the Trump administration would [eliminate](#) Water Quality Research and Support Grants, the National Estuary Program, Beach/Fish Programs, Marine Pollution Programs, Nonpoint Source Categorical Grant, and Beaches Protection Categorical Grant.



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### LEAD

- Lead is a [toxic metal](#) that can cause cardiovascular problems in adults and behavioral and learning problems in children. Lead can be found in fossil fuels and products in the home.
- In 2015, 1,220 Tennessee children age 6 or younger were found to be living with blood lead levels over 5 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ), higher than what [CDC](#) recommends. (Note: Many states [under-report](#) and under-test)
- Children of color are more likely to be [exposed](#) to high levels of lead, particularly those living in inadequate housing built before 1946.
- The proposed budget by the Trump Administration would [eliminate](#) the **Categorical Grant for Lead, Toxic Substances: Lead Risk Reduction Program, and Lead Infrastructure State Grants**, making it harder to address health disparities.
- The proposed budget by Trump's administration would [increase](#) funding for the Toxic Substances: Chemical Risk Review and Reduction by 11%.

### TRIBAL GRANTS

- Tribes receive complimentary funding from EPA to aid in implementation of priorities in environmental and public health.
- Tribal grants are combined with state grants in Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposals, which make it difficult to distinguish how much funding is at risk for tribal communities. Targeted airshed and tribal grants will be [eliminated](#) under the proposed budget of the Trump administration. Under the House budget, Targeted Airshed Grants receive \$10 million [more](#) in funding.
- Lead infrastructure assistance grants and Brownfield projects will be [removed](#) under the proposed budget of the Trump administration.
- Tribal resources for the clean water revolving fund and drinking water revolving fund stay at their 2017 [levels](#).