The Impacts of Climate Change and the Trump Administration’s Anti-Environmental Agenda in New York

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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.

Between 2017 and 2019, New York experienced six severe storms and two winter storms. The damages of each event led to losses of at least $1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

• The severity of summer droughts in New York is expected to more than double by 2050.

• New York’s sea level has risen 9 inches since 1950, and forecasts project that by 2031, the sea level will have risen another 6 inches. New York is preparing to spend more than $4 billion on solutions for sea level rise.

• Currently, 431,000 people in New York are at risk of coastal flooding. By 2050, that number is expected to rise to 659,000 people.

• Currently, New York has 100 square miles in its 100-year flood plain. By 2050, this number is projected to increase to 150 square miles—nearly one-third of New York City’s total area.

Temperature

• New York currently experiences fewer than five days of dangerous heat per year, but projections indicate that number will double to 10 such days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 570,000 New Yorkers who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.

For citations, please see the web version of this fact sheet.
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 New York residents nearly $1.2 billion 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 New York’s economy relies heavily on its tourism, agriculture, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.

  • Tourism: New York’s tourism sector employed more than 780,000 people in 2016 and generated an economic impact of $115 billion in 2018.

  • Agriculture: The agriculture industry in New York employed 145,000 people in 2014, and its annual economic impact is more than $42 billion.

  • Outdoor recreation: The outdoor recreation industry in New York generates 313,000 direct jobs and nearly $42 billion in consumer spending.

Air quality

• Mercury emissions in New York decreased by more than 91 percent from 2011 to 2017, 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 New York state wetlands that supply much of the drinking water for 9 million New Yorkers.