



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

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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, North Carolina experienced five tropical cyclones, five severe storms, two winter storms, and one freeze. The damages of each event led to losses of at least \$1 billion.

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## Impacts of climate change

### Extreme weather

- In September 2018, Hurricane Florence struck North Carolina, leading to 42 deaths and estimated damages of \$16.7 billion. Florence was the most costly storm in the state's history and one of the most expensive in the United States. The hurricane flooded 74,563 structures, and more than 5,000 people were reportedly rescued from the flooding.
- North Carolina's sea level has risen 11 inches since 1950, and forecasts project that it will have risen another 6 inches by 2032. North Carolina is preparing to spend more than \$2 billion on solutions for sea level rise.
- Currently, 122,000 North Carolinians are at risk of coastal flooding. By 2050, that number is projected to grow to 166,000.

### Temperature

- North Carolina currently experiences 10 days of dangerous heat per year, but projections indicate that number will increase sixfold to 60 such days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 300,000 North Carolinians who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.

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://OurEnvironment.org).



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

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## 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 North Carolinians more than [\\$1 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 North Carolina’s economy relies on its tourism, agriculture, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions and are threatened by the extreme weather events and higher temperatures driven by a changing climate.
  - **Agriculture:** In 2013, agriculture and agribusiness injected [\\$76 billion](#) into the state’s economy and supplied [17 percent](#) of all of the state’s jobs.
  - **Tourism:** In 2017, North Carolina’s tourism sector supported [225,00 jobs](#) in the state and generated [\\$23.9 billion in revenue](#).
  - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in North Carolina generates [260,000 direct jobs](#) and [\\$28 billion](#) in consumer spending.

### Air quality

- Mercury emissions in North Carolina decreased from 2011 to 2017 by [70 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 2019, the Trump administration released a [series of proposed changes](#) loosening regulations on [coal-powered plants and the disposal of coal ash](#), which can [threaten](#) drinking water quality. These deregulations are particularly dangerous for North Carolina: In 2014, [39,000 tons](#) of coal ash spilled into water supplies, polluting a reservoir with mercury, cadmium, arsenic, and other heavy metals.