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, Tennessee experienced five severe storms, two floods, one winter storm, one tropical cyclone, and one freeze. The damages of each event led to losses of at least $1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

- In March 2020, two tornadoes with winds up to 175 mph tore through Tennessee, killing 24 people and destroying hundreds of buildings. Research suggests that climate change creates conditions, such as a warmer atmosphere, that are more conducive to the formation and clustering of tornadoes.

- By 2050, the severity of summer droughts in Tennessee is expected to increase by 65 percent.

- Wildfires in Tennessee are fueled by climate change-driven droughts. Currently, 2.3 million people living in Tennessee, or 37 percent of the state’s population, live in areas at elevated risk of wildfire.

- Since the first half of the 20th century, annual precipitation in Tennessee has increased by approximately 5 percent. This is concerning for the 270,000 people in Tennessee living in areas with an elevated risk of inland flooding.
Temperature

- Tennessee currently experiences 10 days of dangerous heat per year, but projections indicate that number will increase more than fivefold to 55 such days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 200,000 people in Tennessee who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.
- Chattanooga, Tennessee, is the sixth fastest-warming city in the United States.

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 Tennessee residents $554.9 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 Tennessee’s economy relies heavily on its agriculture and outdoor recreation industries—both of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.
  - **Agriculture**: According to a 2019 report, the agriculture and forestry sectors in Tennessee generate nearly $82 billion for the state and account for more than 351,000 jobs.
  - **Outdoor recreation**: The outdoor recreation industry in Tennessee generates 188,000 direct jobs and nearly $22 billion in consumer spending.

Air quality

- Mercury emissions in Tennessee decreased by nearly 90 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 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 Tennessee: According to a 2011 report, there are 18 coal ash ponds in the state and 3.2 million pounds of coal ash generated annually. Additionally, in 2009, Tennessee’s Kingston Fossil Plant released 1.5 million pounds of coal ash in the nation’s largest coal ash spill.