



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

May 08, 2020

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](https://OurEnvironment.org).



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

Between 2017 and 2019, Illinois experienced two floods and 10 severe storms. The damages of each event led to losses of at least \$1 billion.

---

## Impacts of climate change

### Extreme weather

- In 2019, flooding cost Illinois and the Midwest a total of \$6.2 billion in damage. The flooding was the state's worst in more than 25 years, affecting 1.4 million Illinois residents and causing more than \$69 million in direct losses.
- By 2050, Illinois is projected to see a 40 percent increase in its index of the severity of widespread drought.
- In Illinois, more than 380,000 people live in areas at an elevated risk of inland flooding.
- In 2018, Illinois experienced 64 tornadoes, the fourth-highest number in the United States.

### Temperature

- Illinois currently averages five days per year of heat exceeding dangerous levels, but projections indicate that number will increase tenfold to nearly 50 days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 310,000 people in Illinois who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.
- Peoria, Illinois, is the 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 Illinois residents [\\$557 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 Illinois’ economy relies heavily on its agriculture, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.
  - **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the top industry in Illinois in terms of economic impact, contributing nearly [\\$9 billion](#) to the state’s economy annually. The food and fiber sector employs [1.5 million](#) Illinois workers.
  - **Tourism:** In 2018, tourism in Illinois generated nearly [\\$10 billion](#) in economic impact and supported more than [342,300 jobs](#).
  - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Illinois generates [200,000](#) direct jobs and nearly [\\$25 billion](#) in consumer spending.

### Toxics

- In 2020, the Trump administration 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](#). Illinois has [55 superfund sites](#)—contaminated former industry sites managed by the EPA—the [ninth-highest number](#) in the nation. Exposure to contamination from toxic sites can lead to adverse [health effects](#) such as cancer and birth defects.

### Air quality

- Mercury emissions in Illinois decreased by nearly [80 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 Illinois, which has the [highest number of leaking coal ash sites in the country](#). A [report found that 22 out of 24](#) of Illinois’ coal-fired power plants have contaminated groundwater with unsafe levels of toxic pollutants.