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

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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, Mississippi experienced two flooding events, six severe storms, one tropical cyclone, and one freeze. The damages of these events led to losses of at least $1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather
• More than 400,000 residents are currently facing drought in Mississippi. The state is projected to see summer droughts worsen by 140 percent by 2050, which would cause adverse effects on the agriculture industry. The effects of drought include increased frequency of wildfires, decreased productivity of hydroelectric power, and ground cracking.

• The threat of wildfires is expected to increase in the coming years and put 57 percent of the state’s population at an elevated risk of wildfire.

• Currently, 75,000 people are at risk of coastal flooding in Mississippi, but that number is expected to grow to 88,000 by 2050.
  • Sea level rise in Mississippi is expected to increase by 1 foot by 2050 and by at least 3 feet by 2100.

Temperature
• Mississippi currently experiences 30 days of dangerous heat per year, and projections indicate that number will almost quadruple to 111 such days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 120,000 people in Mississippi 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.

For citations, please see the web version of this fact sheet.
Tupelo, Mississippi, has seen a 10-day increase in the annual average number of days ideal for mosquito season since 1980, increasing the threat of mosquito-related viruses.

Projections indicate that the climate in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, will resemble that of Laredo, Texas, by 2100, or an increase in average temperature of 8.8 degrees Fahrenheit.

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 Mississippi residents nearly $441 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 Mississippi’s economy relies heavily on its tourism, agriculture, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.

  • **Tourism:** Mississippi’s tourism sector employs more than 87,335 people and, in 2017, generated an economic impact of $4.9 billion.

  • **Agriculture:** The agriculture industry in Mississippi is a $7.6 billion industry and represents 29 percent of the state’s workforce.

  • **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Mississippi generates 79,000 direct jobs and more than $8 billion in consumer spending.

Air quality

• Mercury emissions in Mississippi decreased by more than 90 percent from 2011 to 2017, yet the Trump administration just undermined limits on the amount of mercury and other toxic emissions 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 Mississippi, where 1.75 million tons of coal ash are generated annually.

  • Mississippi is home to the Pine Belt coal-fired plant, which is ranked among the top 10 sites in the country with the worst groundwater contamination.