



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

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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.

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.

Between 2017 and 2019, North Dakota experienced one severe flood and one intense drought. The damages of these events led to losses of at least \$1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

- In 2019, North Dakota experienced 488 wildfires, which burned 4,454 acres.
- In North Dakota, more than 50,000 people live in areas with an elevated risk of inland flooding. This is concerning because precipitation is projected to increase in North Dakota during the colder part of the year.
- While heavy precipitation events are expected to increase, the intensity of periodic droughts in North Dakota is also projected to increase.

Temperature

- North Dakota currently averages 10 heat wave days per year, but projections indicate that number will increase fivefold to nearly 50 days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the approximately 20,000 people living in North Dakota who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.
- Fargo, North Dakota, is the 10th 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 North Dakota residents [\\$74.8 million](#) annually.
- In August 2019, the Trump administration [proposed eliminating federal requirements](#) for oil and gas companies to control leaks of methane from new wells, storage facilities, and pipelines. In 2016, researchers found that the Bakken region in Montana and North Dakota, a significant oil and gas producing area, emits [275,000 tons of methane per year](#). Methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is responsible for [one-quarter of greenhouse gas-driven global warming](#).
- 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 Dakota’s economy relies heavily on its agriculture, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions.
 - **Agriculture:** In 2017, North Dakota sold nearly [\\$8.2 billion worth of agricultural products](#), representing more than [8 percent](#) of the total state gross domestic product.
 - **Tourism:** The tourism industry in North Dakota generates an economic impact of [\\$3 billion](#) and supports [43,000 workers](#) annually, making tourism the state’s [third-largest industry](#).
 - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in North Dakota generates [30,000](#) direct jobs and [\\$3.1 billion](#) in consumer spending.

Air quality

- Mercury emissions in North Dakota decreased by nearly [55 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

- On the fourth day of Trump’s presidency, the administration issued an executive order [advancing the construction](#) of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines. In June 2017, the pipelines were fully functional and over the next year saw more than one [dozen small spills](#). In March 2019, more than [9,000 barrels](#) of crude oil had spilled in North Dakota alone, which caused immediate impacts on nearby wetlands.