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

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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, Ohio experienced two severe floods and seven severe storms. The damages of these events led to losses of at least $1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

• In 2019, Ohio experienced 59 tornadoes, ranking 10th in the United States for the highest number of tornadoes.
• By 2050, Ohio’s widespread summer drought severity is projected to increase by approximately 50 percent.
• Ohio has experienced a significant increase in the number of extreme precipitation events since the mid-1990s. Additionally, winter and spring precipitation is projected to increase. This is concerning for the nearly 400,000 Ohio residents living in areas at an elevated risk of inland flooding.

Temperature

• Ohio currently averages 5 days per year when heat exceeds dangerous levels, but projections indicate that number will increase sixfold to 30 days per year by 2050.
• Columbus, Ohio, is the 19th 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 Ohio residents $717.8 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 Ohio’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 2015, Ohio’s agricultural and food production industries directly accounted for $47 billion of gross state product and generated 900,000 jobs.
  
  • Tourism: In 2018, the tourism industry in Ohio generated an economic impact of $46 billion and supported 429,000 jobs in total, accounting for almost 10 percent of all jobs in the state.
  
  • Outdoor recreation: The outdoor recreation industry in Ohio generates 215,000 direct jobs and nearly $24.3 billion in consumer spending.

Air quality

• Mercury emissions in Ohio decreased by nearly 86 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.

Toxics

• In 2020, President Trump proposed cutting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s budget by more than one-quarter and the Superfund program by more than $100 million. Ohio has 54 Superfund sites. Exposure to contamination from toxic sites can lead to adverse health effects such as cancer and birth defects. Moreover, a 2019 report found that six Superfund sites in Ohio were at high risk of flooding, which could release hazardous waste into communities.