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

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

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather

• Connecticut’s sea level has risen 5 inches since 1964 and is projected to rise another 6 inches by 2032. Connecticut is preparing to spend more than $2 billion on solutions for sea-level rise.

• Currently, 55,000 people living in Connecticut are at risk of coastal flooding. By 2050, that number is projected to be 85,000.

• From June 2016 through May 2017, Connecticut experienced its longest drought since 2000, when the U.S. Drought Monitor began recording data. At one point during the drought, more than 70 percent of the state was considered in extreme or severe drought.

Temperature

• Connecticut rarely experiences days with dangerous heat levels, but projections indicate that the state will experience 10 such days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 65,000 people in Connecticut who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.
• Since 1970, Connecticut has warmed by 2.8 degrees Fahrenheit, compared with the national average increase of 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

• Norwich, Connecticut, is the 13th fastest-warming city in the United States.

• Projections indicate that the climate of Hartford, Connecticut, will resemble that of present-day Orlando, Florida, by 2100, with an increase in average temperature of 9.7 degrees Fahrenheit.

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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 Connecticut residents $241.1 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 Connecticut’s 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 a $3.5 billion industry in Connecticut and provides more than 20,000 jobs.

  - **Tourism:** In 2017, tourism in Connecticut generated more than $15 billion in economic impact and supported 123,500 total jobs.

  - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Connecticut generates 69,000 direct jobs and $9 billion in consumer spending.

Toxics

• In 2020, President Donald 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. Connecticut has 18 Superfund sites. Exposure to contamination from toxic sites can lead to adverse health effects including cancer and birth defects.

Air quality

• Mercury emissions in Connecticut decreased by nearly 74 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.