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

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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, Idaho experienced two severe wildfires. The damages of these events led to losses of at least $1 billion.

Impacts of climate change

Extreme weather
• Idaho is projected to see a 110 percent increase in widespread summer drought by 2050. This threatens the production of trout and potatoes, for both of which Idaho is the biggest nationwide producer.

• In 2019, Idaho experienced 960 wildfires that burned 284,026 acres, ranking third for the highest number of acres burned nationwide. Currently, more than 550,000 people living in Idaho—or 36 percent of the state’s population—live in areas at an elevated risk of wildfire. Additionally, Idaho ranks second in the country for the highest percentage of properties at risk of wildfires, with 26 percent of properties at risk.

• Winter and spring precipitation is projected to increase over the next century in Idaho. Additionally, due to warmer conditions, wildfire frequency and severity in the state is expected to increase.

Temperature
• Idaho currently experiences five days of dangerous heat per year, but this number is projected to double to nearly 10 days per year by 2050. This endangers the lives of the more than 40,000 people living in Idaho who are especially vulnerable to
extreme heat.

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**Impacts of the Trump Administration’s anti-environmental policies**

**Climate**

- In March 2020, the Trump administration announced its [final rule](https://www.epa.gov/fuelefficiency/final-rule-to-repeal-2012-fuelefficiency-standards) 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 Idaho residents nearly $56.6 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 Idaho’s economy relies heavily on its tourism, agriculture, and outdoor recreation industries—all of which are highly dependent on climate and weather conditions and are threatened by the extreme weather events and higher temperatures driven by a changing climate.

  - **Tourism:** Idaho’s [$3.7 billion](https://www.idahotourism.org/) tourism industry employs nearly 45,800 people.
  
  - **Agriculture:** The agriculture industry in Idaho includes more than 25,000 farms and generates an annual economic impact of [$27 billion](https://www.iaea.org/factsheets/agriculture-in-idaho/).
  
  - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Idaho generates 78,000 [direct jobs](https://www.idaho.gov/boyscouts/16555.htm) and more than $7.8 billion in consumer spending.

**Air quality**

- Since 2017, the Trump administration has reversed or is in the process of reversing 27 air pollution and emission regulations. This is especially concerning because the American Lung Association (ALA) found in 2019 that no Idaho county received higher than a D grade for particle pollution. The ALA report found that Idaho is facing an air pollution crisis, mostly caused by the increased frequency of wildfires in the state that are directly caused by climate change.

**Water quality**

- Since 2019, the Trump administration has been in the process of weakening legislation regarding lead pipes. The proposed legislation gives companies twice as much time to remove lead pipes in systems testing for high lead levels. This is especially concerning in Idaho, which was recently named “the new Flint” regarding its dangerous levels of lead in water. A 2018 report found that 20 schools in Idaho’s capital city of Boise tested for high levels of lead. Furthermore, a historic building in Moscow, Idaho, tested positive for both lead and copper.