



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

April 22, 2020

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](https://www.ourenvironment.org).



For citations, please see the web version of this fact sheet.

Between 2017 and 2019, Texas experienced 14 severe storms, two tropical cyclones, two floods, and one drought. The damages of each event led to losses of at least \$1 billion.

---

## Impacts of climate change

### Extreme weather

- Texas is projected to see the worst increase in widespread summer drought among the lower 48 states. By 2050, the state is expected to see an increase in the severity of droughts of roughly 75 percent.
- By 2050, Texas is projected to have the worst overall wildfire threat in the United States. Currently, 18 million people in Texas—72 percent of the state's population—live in areas with an elevated risk of wildfire.
- Texas' sea level has risen 18 inches since 1950, and forecasts project that it will have risen another 6 inches by 2031. Texas is preparing to spend more than \$12 billion on sea level rise solutions.
- Currently, 127,000 people in Texas are at risk of coastal flooding. By 2050, that number is expected to rise to 244,000 people.

### Temperature

- Texas currently experiences 60 days of dangerous heat per year. However, that number is projected to nearly double to 115 such days per year by 2050—the second-highest in the nation. This endangers the lives of the nearly 840,000 people living in Texas who are especially vulnerable to extreme heat.

---

## 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 Texas residents nearly [\\$1.5 billion](#) 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 Texas’ 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:** Texas’ tourism sector employs nearly [1.2 million](#) people and had an economic impact of [\\$164 billion in 2018](#).
  - **Agriculture:** The agriculture industry in Texas employs [1 in 7](#) working Texans, and the annual economic impact of this sector amounts to roughly [\\$100 billion](#).
  - **Outdoor recreation:** The outdoor recreation industry in Texas generates [411,000 direct jobs](#) and more than [\\$52 billion](#) in consumer spending.

### Air quality

- Mercury emissions in Texas decreased by more than [77 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

- 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 Texas: A [2019 report](#) found that [100 percent](#) of the state’s coal plants are leaking contaminants into groundwater at levels unsafe for human consumption.