

# Analysis: Federal budget cuts would contaminate Pennsylvania's air and water, leaving Pennsylvanians vulnerable to long-term health risks

The President's budget proposes eliminating core protections, putting Pennsylvanians' health at risk and letting polluters off the hook.



Everyone deserves clean air and water. These basic public health rights are why the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created: to prevent pollution that triggers asthma attacks and heart disease, and to safeguard our drinking water from contamination.

President Trump's budget proposes decimating the EPA, giving polluters a free pass to pump toxic chemicals into Pennsylvanians' air and water. The proposal slashes the EPA's overall budget by more than half, including gutting more than [87%](#) of funds to provide safe drinking water to Pennsylvania communities.

EPA's investments keep Pennsylvanians' water drinkable and their air breathable, and it holds the polluters who threaten those basic rights accountable.

## Water Contamination

Clean water isn't just a basic right—it's a requirement for survival.

- **87% cut to Pennsylvania's Drinking Water SRF (over \$31 mil)**
- **90% cut to Pennsylvania's Clean Water SRF**
- **Over 3.7 mil Pennsylvanians drinking problematic level of toxic PFAS**

Pennsylvania has an estimated [662,717 lead](#) service lines, the fourth most in the nation, and [EPA data](#) shows that more than 3.7 million Pennsylvanians are served by a water utility releasing a problematic level of toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), otherwise known as “forever chemicals,” into drinking water. President Trump's budget would hamper Pennsylvania's ability to address these issues, as the administration proposes to eliminate most of the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRF), as well as the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Improvements Act, all of which serve as a major source of funding for Pennsylvania.

### Examples of What's at Stake:

**Unsafe Drinking Water:** President Trump's proposed budget would cut 89% (over \$64 million) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act ([WIFIA](#)) funding, which [provided](#) the City of Philadelphia an initial \$19.8 million loan in 2023 for a project to replace aging water infrastructure, including lead service lines. Gutting WIFIA could jeopardize future investments needed to protect Pennsylvanians from unsafe drinking water.

**Overflowing Sewers:** President Trump's budget would cut more than 90% of Pennsylvania's Clean Water SRF (over \$57 million), which funded many [wastewater infrastructure projects](#) in 2024, such as the [\\$16 million effort](#) to upgrade the sewer collection system in Franklin, PA. The project is still in progress, with a goal to eliminate untreated sewage discharge that affects French Creek. Without federal funding for the Clean Water SRF, Pennsylvanians would be more vulnerable to untreated sewage discharge, unmanaged storm runoff, and could be impacted by increased utility bills.

## Air Pollution

Everyone deserves clean air, and breathing shouldn't make you sick.



**Eliminates funding for State and Local Air Quality Management Grant**



**Eliminates the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program**

President Trump's budget would gut programs that support clean air and eliminate vital protections that Pennsylvanians depend on. More than [1.3 million Pennsylvanians](#) (roughly 1 in 10 people), including more than 260,000 children, suffer from asthma, putting them at increased risk of attacks triggered by smog and soot from unchecked pollution.

### Examples of What's at Stake:

**Poor Air Quality:** President Trump's proposed elimination of all federal funding for State & Local Air Quality Management Grants would have lasting effects in Pennsylvania, which received nearly \$21 million in funding from these grants in 2023. Without federal support, state agencies would be forced to reduce staff, curtail monitoring networks, or potentially abandon certain projects altogether. This would lead to increased health risks for vulnerable populations and set back progress on meeting national air quality standards.

**Increased Vehicle Emissions:** President Trump's budget would eliminate the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program, which provided more than \$1.4 million to Pennsylvania in 2024. This would undercut the state's efforts to replace older polluting trucks and buses with newer, cleaner technologies that don't emit cancer-causing fumes, as Pennsylvania was able to do in 2021 when the Mid-Atlantic Regional Air Management Association replaced 40 aging drayage trucks.

## Letting Polluters Off the Hook

Polluters shouldn't get a free pass to pollute, and no one is above the law.



**45% cut to EPA's enforcement budget**



**More than 4,601 facilities in Pennsylvania with current violations and without key resources**

EPA enforcement ensures that polluters are held accountable and that environmental protections are real—not just words on paper. Trump is proposing to cut EPA's enforcement budget by 45%, a move that would make air less breathable and water less drinkable. As of September 2025, Pennsylvania has [more than 4,601 facilities](#) with current violations. Without enforcement resources, efforts to bring polluters into compliance—like those below—risk being abandoned, resulting in unchecked pollution in Pennsylvania.

### Examples of What's at Stake:

**Mismanagement of Oil Leaks:** In 2023, EPA [took action](#) against Watco Transloading LLC, alleging that the operator of the Dravosburg Marine Terminal failed to account for where oil-like substances were stored or handled. EPA's enforcement required the company to improve oversight and spill-prevention measures, reducing the risk of undetected oil spills that could endanger Pennsylvanians' health.

**Methane Pollution:** In 2024, EPA [sued](#) XTO Energy Inc. and Hilcorp Energy Company for violating the Clean Air Act by failing to install required emission controls, which led to the release of excess methane and air pollution in three different Pennsylvania counties. EPA's enforcement sought \$5.2 million in penalties and compliance measures to curb future pollution and protect community health.

## Bottom Line

EPA's air and water safeguards should give Pennsylvanians the freedom to breathe clean air and drink clean water without a second thought. But President Trump's budget request for EPA would severely weaken or outright eliminate the programs and enforcement actions protecting Pennsylvanians from polluters.

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