

Trump EPA Repeal of Power Plant Pollution Standards: More Deaths, Illness, and Health Costs

Rolling back greenhouse gas emissions standards for power plants would cumulatively, by 2047:

- Produce more than **7.5 billion metric tons of climate pollution**
- Result in up to **84,000 premature deaths**
- Lead to over **28 million asthma attacks**
- Deliver net health harms of over **\$1 trillion** and climate-related harms of over **\$1.7 trillion**

BACKGROUND

On September 14, 2026, the Trump EPA announced it will get rid of life-saving national limits on the amount of climate pollution that fossil fuel power plants are allowed to put into our air.

Although EPA claims the rollback will lead to cost savings for industry, it refused to estimate the much

more massive health costs – including premature deaths, hospital visits and illnesses – that the American people will have to bear because of being exposed to higher levels of power plant pollution.

Analysis by Environmental Defense Fund shows that the increased pollution resulting from this rule would have deeply harmful impacts for our climate, public health, and the economy. result in billions of tons of climate and health-harming emissions.

POLLUTION IMPACTS

[EPA's action](#) removes all limits on carbon pollution from existing coal-fired power plants and eliminates requirements that the most heavily utilized new gas-fired power plants eventually reduce 90% of their carbon pollution. According to EPA's own analysis, this would result in billions of tons of climate and health-harming emissions.

As shown in Table 1, undoing these standards is projected to significantly increase climate pollution – **over 500 million metric**

	CO2 (MMT) (% increase)	NOx (US tons) (% inc.)	SO2 (US tons) (%inc.)	PM (US tons) (% inc.)	Mercury (US tons) (% inc.)
2030	20 (1%)	13,000 (2%)	10,000 (1%)	-1,000 (-1%)	0 (0%)
2035	406 (37%)	191,000 (46%)	375,000 (122%)	7,000 (8%)	0.6 (17%)
2040	533 (61%)	257,000 (81%)	394,000 (150%)	14,000 (17%)	0.6 (18%)
2045	486 (68%)	325,000 (218%)	508,000 (1,588%)	30,000 (61%)	1.9 (127%)
Cumulative (2030-2047)	7,524 (43%)	4,150,000 (70%)	6,894,000 (155%)	276,000 (20%)	17.4 (34%)

Table 1: Pollution Increases from Rollback of Power Plant Rule, 2030-2047

tons in 2040 alone and more than **7.5 billion metric tons** cumulatively by 2047. This is equivalent to the annual climate pollution from 1.6 billion cars. And in 2045, EPA projects that the climate pollution from power plants across the U.S. will be 68% higher than it would have been if the Trump EPA had left these commonsense pollution standards in place.

In addition to the climate pollution, removing the standards will significantly increase health harming nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) and mercury pollution. Every year thousands of Americans suffer from more asthma attacks, cardiovascular sease, and early deaths as a result of these harmful pollutants emitted from power plants. In 2045, NOx emissions from power plants will be more than 2 times higher, SO₂ will be 16 times higher, PM will be over 60% higher, and mercury emissions will be 127% higher than they would be if the standards were left in place.

HEALTH HARMS

Although EPA refused to estimate the health impacts associated with these massive increases in pollution in its analysis of the rule, EDF has estimated the health and climate harms based on EPA's emission increase projections in the Regulatory Impact Analysis.¹

We estimate that cumulatively by 2047, repealing the power plant standards would result in an additional:

- **51,000 – 84,000** premature deaths
- **105,000** hospital and ER visits
- **29 million** asthma attacks
- **13 million** lost workdays and school absences

	Premature Deaths (Low)	Premature Deaths (High)	Hospital and ER visits	Cases of asthma symptoms (mil)	Lost school/ work days (mil)
2030	81	115	187	0.06	0.03
2035	2,327	3,923	4,814	1.3	0.6
2040	3,033	4,952	6,218	1.7	0.8
2045	4,187	6,878	8,524	2.3	1.1
Cumulative (2030-2047)	51,018	84,357	104,802	28.9	13.3

Table 2: Health Harms from Rollback of Power Plant Standards

MONETIZED HEALTH AND CLIMATE HARMS

EDF also estimated the extensive monetized impacts of repealing the power standards for power plants.

	Climate Harms	Health Harms (Low)	Health Harms (High)
2030	\$5.6	\$1.4	\$2.0
2035	\$122	\$42.8	\$70.6
2040	\$172	\$59.7	\$95.3
2045	\$169	\$87.4	\$140.5
Net Present Value (2030-2047)	\$1,847	\$787	\$1,273

Table 3: Monetized Health and Climate Harms from Rollback of Power Plant Standards, (Billion \$2024)

¹ Emission increases presented in Table 3-3 and 3-4 of the Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Final Partial Repeal of the Carbon Pollution Standards for Fossil Fuel-Fired Electric Generating Units. Using IPM's modeling documentation ([Table 2-1](#)), EDF calculated the emissions for each year between 2030 and 2047. EDF used EPA's COBRA model to estimate the health impacts from PM and ozone. COBRA was run at a national scale in five-year increments for 2030 through 2045 for changes in emissions from the power sector. Climate harms were calculated using EPA's [2023 Report on the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases](#). The monetized health and climate harms were converted to \$2024.

For more information, please contact Sharyn Stein, sstein@edf.org

Environmental Defense Fund
257 Park Avenue South, 17th floor
New York, NY 10010

Find the ways that work
EDF.org
T 212 505 2100

As shown above in Table 3, EDF finds that by 2047, EPA's final rule removing the power plant standards would cause \$1.8 trillion in climate harms and between \$800 billion and \$1.2 trillion in U.S. health harms. These costs come from more powerful storms, droughts and other climate disasters as well as the health harms described above. The estimates use a 2% discount rate.

POLLUTION INCREASES WILL IMPACT SOME COMMUNITIES MORE THAN OTHERS

According to EPA's own [Regulatory Impact Analysis](#), the Final Rule will result in a significant increase in PM_{2.5} and ozone pollution in many regions of the U.S. Figures 1 and 2 below show the change in emissions in 2045 as a result of the repeal of the power plant standards. As shown in Figure 1, in 2045, the ozone pollution increase will occur across roughly 75% of the nation. Figure 2 shows that the increase in fine particulate pollution will span large parts of the Midwest, mid-Atlantic region and the South.

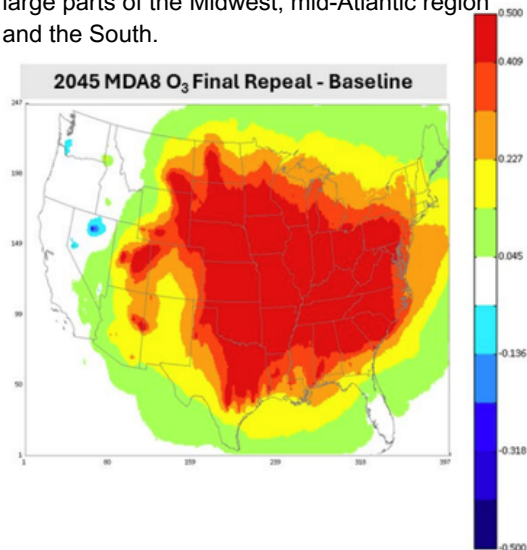


Figure 1: Change in Ozone Concentrations (ppb) from Rollback of Power Plant Standards (2045) (Source: EPA [RIA](#), Figure A-10, page A-30)

NOx pollution from power plants mixes with other pollutants in the air to create ozone. Exposure to ground-level ozone harms human health and can cause heart disease, permanent lung damage, aggravation of asthma, and premature death from respiratory causes.²

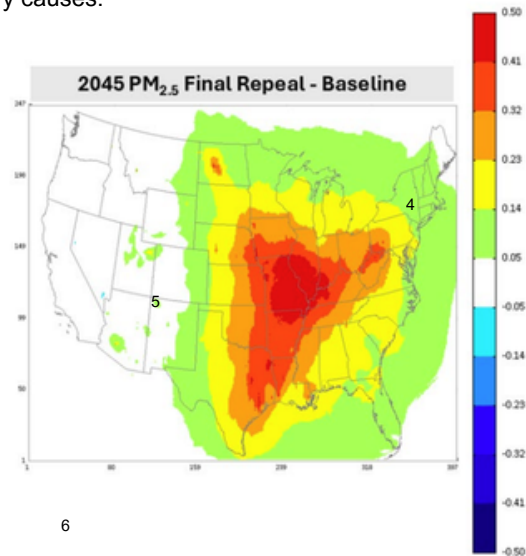


Figure 2: Change in PM_{2.5} Concentrations (µg/m³) from Rollback of Power Plant Standards (2045) (Source: EPA [RIA](#), Figure A-14, page A-34.)

The American Lung Association (ALA) has found that ground-level ozone pollution is harming more people living in the U.S. than any other single pollutant. There are more than 129 million people in the U.S.—nearly 40% of the population—living in 219 counties across 36 states and the District of Columbia breathing unhealthy levels of ozone pollution.³

Exposure to particulate matter can impact the lungs and the heart. Fine particulates are especially dangerous because they can easily be inhaled deep into the lungs and some even get into the bloodstream.⁴ According to ALA, more than 62 million Americans in 120 counties across 23 States live in an area with unhealthy spikes in particle pollution.⁵ More than 76 million people suffer from unhealthy year-round levels of particle pollution. Research has shown that the groups at the greatest risk from particle pollution include pregnant people and fetuses; infants, children, and older people; and people with pre-existing health harms like lung disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cardiovascular disease.⁶

² See EPA, *Health Effects of Ozone in the General Population*, <https://www.epa.gov/ozone-pollution-and-your-patients-health/health-effects-ozone-general-population>

³ ALA, *State of the Air* (2026), <https://www.lung.org/research/sota>

⁴ See EPA, *Health and Environmental Effects of Particulate Matter (PM)*, <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/health-and-environmental-effects-particulate-matter-pm>

⁵ ALA, *State of the Air* (2026), <https://www.lung.org/research/sota>.

⁶ *Id.*

For more information, please contact Sharyn Stein, sstein@edf.org