

Trump's Attack on Our Air, Climate Change and the Clean Power Plan

The Clean Air Act of 1970 was designed to control air pollution on a national level by authorizing the development of comprehensive regulations to limit emissions. It has been extremely successful—between 1970 and 2015, “aggregate national emissions of six common pollutants alone dropped an average of 70 percent,” [the EPA reports](#).

The EPA sets limits on dangerous air pollutants from factories, refineries, power plants, oil and gas extraction, and vehicles. These limits protect public health, helping prevent asthma attacks, birth defects, respiratory and cardiovascular disease and cancer.

- **Greenhouse Gases, including CO2 Pollution Limits** – The EPA has a critical role in limiting greenhouse gases, including CO2, pollution from power plants, motor vehicles, and other sources that drives dangerous climate change.
- **Smog-forming, Soot Pollution and Toxic Air Limits** – The EPA sets health standards for air pollution to guarantee all Americans the right to breathe safe air. It also sets limits on pollution from power plants, motor vehicles and other sources.
- **CFCs and Ozone Depleting Chemicals** – The EPA is responsible for saving the ozone layer and preventing millions of cases of skin cancer by eliminating CFCs and other ozone-depleting chemicals.
- **Pollution Reporting** – The EPA puts out a report each year called the *Toxics Release Inventory*, supporting the public's Right to Know about air and water pollution and contaminated land in communities around the nation.

A [summary report](#) of the benefits and costs associated with the act estimates that public and private spending to reduce pollution will reach approximately \$65 billion annually by 2020. By contrast, the economic benefits are estimated to reach approximately \$2 trillion dollars in 2020 alone.

Yet under Trump's proposed budget—despite the public-health and economic advantages—funding for the Clean Air Act would be cut in half.

The proposed budget also discontinues funding for the [Clean Power Plan](#), which was a federal standard that sets the first-ever national limits on carbon pollution from power plants in the United States. The EPA is responsible for implementing it.

Power plants are among America's largest sources of carbon pollution, responsible for about one-third of climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions in the country. The Clean Power Plan stops power plants from releasing unlimited amounts of such pollution into our air. States have flexibility in how they lower pollution, and the plan stresses renewable energy and energy efficiency as key tools – which would boost the [clean energy economy](#).

The Trump Administration, fossil fuel groups and some conservative lawmakers have mounted [extensive campaigns](#) to try and block it: (1) President Trump has [signed an executive order](#) to begin the process of dismantling the Clean Power Plan (2) Some state officials are suing to stop the Clean Power Plan, at the same time their colleagues are creating plans to comply with it. It's even pitting [some governors against their own attorneys general](#); and (3) Members of Congress opposing the Clean Power Plan [tried to block it](#) through Congressional Review Act resolutions that were vetoed by President Obama. They might try to undo it through other tactics now.