



Man walks along solar panels. (photo: Tribune News Service)

14 Environmental Programs Eliminated in Trump's Budget Proposal

By John R. Platt, The Revelator, 16 February 18

Trump's proposed budget wipes out funding for numerous programs devoted to climate change, public lands and sustainable energy.

President Trump released his [proposed federal budget for 2019](#) on Monday, and in the process pushed for the complete elimination of more than a dozen key environmental programs. These include, but are not limited to, areas of the government focusing on climate change, public lands and energy efficiency.

Of course, these fully eliminated programs are just the tip of the iceberg. Trump's proposal also drastically slashes the budgets of the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies critical to a sustainable future.

The impact of proposed budget cuts on the EPA and other agencies, if passed, will be dramatic, but many operations will probably manage to limp on. That may not be so with the 14 programs Trump has proposed eliminating altogether:

- The Department of Energy's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) program (\$305 million), which supports the development of sustainable energy. Trump's proposal to eliminate this program comes just a few weeks before [ARPA-E's 2018 Energy Innovation Summit](#) and on the very day that proposals were due for its [latest round of funding](#).
- The Global Climate Change Initiative, a joint operation of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (\$160 million). The budget proposal says this is "consistent with the President's plan to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change."
- The popular and effective Energy Star Program (\$66 million), which has helped to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least [8 million metric tons](#). The Trump

budget says this is not part of the EPA's core mission (even though the program is actually co-managed by the Department of Energy) and "can be implemented by the private sector."

- The Environmental Protection Agency's [categorical grants](#) (\$1.066 billion), which provides states with "funds to implement the various water, air, waste, pesticides and toxic substances programs."
- The Department of Agriculture's little-known but effective Rural Business and Cooperative Service (\$103 million). Among the service's programs are tools to help rural residents and businesses develop sustainable renewable-energy systems. As the service's administrator told me in 2016, their Rural Energy for America grant program had helped to finance and install so many renewable energy systems it was "the equivalent to [removing more than a million cars from the road annually](#)."
- The Economic Development Administration (\$266 million). The program provides federal grants for local economic growth. One of the administration's most recent grants was [\\$2.1 million to help provide sustainable water](#) for businesses in Michigan.
- The U.S. Forest Service's budget for land acquisition (\$56 million). The budget points out that the Forest Service already owns about 30 percent of federally owned public lands and blames the cuts on the need to maintain the land we already own.
- Many grant and education programs offered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including Sea Grant; the National Estuarine Research Reserve System; Coastal Zone Management Grants; the Office of Education; and the Pacific

Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (\$273 million).

- The [Weatherization Assistance Program](#), which helps low-income families increase the energy efficiency of their homes. The program supports 8,500 jobs. Trump's budget also wipes out the [State Energy Program](#), which provides funding and technical assistance for projects to reduce energy waste. (No budget proposal attached dollar value to either of these programs.)
- The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (\$3.39 billion). The budget request blames this on "fraud and abuse," not the high cost of heating fuel.
- The Abandoned Mine Land Grants program (\$105 million), which helps clean and redevelop former coal mines — a program [paid for by coal-mine operators](#).
- The Heritage Partnership Program (\$20 million), which commemorates, conserves and promotes "areas that include important natural, scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational resources."
- The [Chemical Safety Board](#) (\$11 million), which investigates accidents at chemical facilities and has pushed for greater regulation of the chemical industry.

On top of all of this, the budget also seeks to eliminate numerous programs for education, literacy and the arts — all of which have clear connections to improving the public's understanding of environmental issues.

Of course, so far this is just all just *proposed*. The budget still has a long way to go before anything's official, and many of these programs and agencies could survive to fight another day, but what we're seeing this week clearly encapsulates the administration's priorities.