

Families, businesses, and communities in harm's way

With Hurricane Florence bearing down on the East Coast, Trump is attacking climate & weather-related safety programs

Extreme weather events have been on full display in 2018 with destructive wildfires in the American West and an intense hurricane now bearing down on the east coast. Hurricane Florence brings into sharp focus the need for more—not less—federal support.

Last year, the US experienced some of its worst storms in recent memory, resulting in deaths, devastation, and billions in economic costs. Yet the Trump Administration has attempted to decimate programs vital to public health and safety efforts through budget cuts, lax enforcement, regulatory rollbacks, and staff buyouts. It also plans to allow increased climate pollution, which is making these storms more intense and damaging.



This approach threatens families, homes and entire communities, and disproportionately affects communities in poverty and communities of color. Money spent on the front end to better predict storms and to build safer, stronger communities means fewer lives lost, less devastation and less money needed after the disaster. **Every \$1 invested up front to build safer, more resilient communities saves \$6 in recovery costs**, according to the National Institute of Building Sciences.

Trump budget cuts would slash the nation's ability to withstand disastrous storms

The terrible hardships, loss of life, and physical and economic losses caused by the Western fires and Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria were a profound wake-up call: **The nation needs more capacity and resources to prepare and protect communities from weather-related catastrophes.**

And yet the Trump Administration is **proposing an over \$650 million-dollar cut in Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) programs that help protect communities from flooding and wildfires as well as other cuts across the federal government to programs vital to dealing with disaster.**

Those FEMA cuts include:

- **61%** cut to FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, which funds wildfire prevention, efforts to reduce the risk of flood damage, and other effects of natural disasters.
- **28%** cut to FEMA state and local grants, which impact the ability of states, local municipalities, and tribes to prepare for, protect against, and respond to natural disasters and emergencies.

Climate-related hurricane risks include:

- Deadly storm surges that are pushing farther inland
- 300 - 900 percent growth in the frequency of flooding, threatening nearly 40% of the US population for coastal communities
- Nearly two million homes (worth \$882 billion) - will be impacted by sea levels that the National Climate Assessment predicts will rise 1-4 feet by 2100

Non-FEMA cuts that would hurt disaster preparedness and response include:

- **25%** cut to NOAA's National Environmental Satellite Data, and Information Service the leading source of data for the National Weather Service, and other sources of **weather forecasting**
- **38%** cut to NOAA Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) Climate Research Program, which **studies short and long-term climate-related trends**
- **100%** cut to NOAA's Coastal Zone Management Grants & Sea Grant Program, which **helps communities reduce flood risks** and improves habitats by providing funds to state and local agencies who match grants
- **63%** cut to EPA's Sustainable and Healthy Communities National Research Program, which helps communities reduce pollution and provides **technical support for cleaning up communities, ground water and oil spills and restoring habitats**

Weakened chemical safety rules mean lessons from Harvey may not be heeded

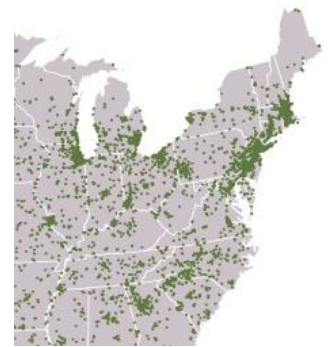
In the days after Hurricane Harvey, explosions at the flooded Arkema chemical plant near Houston filled the air with smoke, triggering an evacuation of nearby residents and sending emergency workers to hospitals. **And Arkema's emergency response plan at the time was demonstrably inadequate.** Created in June 2014, it was pursuant to the less stringent requirements that were then in place. The plan provided employees with little direction for how to handle major flooding events.

EPA created stronger chemical safety rules following a 2013 explosion in Texas – but Trump is trying to undo these essential safeguards. And with more than 1,400 facilities that handle or house chemicals that are dangerous to human health, such as chlorine, ammonia, and sulfur dioxide across North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia, this Trump administration effort could **result in the release of toxic pollution.**

The rules Trump is trying to dismantle were put in place after a chemical explosion killed 15 people at a Texas fertilizer plant (including a dozen first responders) in 2013.

Eliminating them would exempt plant owners from releasing information on chemical hazards to local communities and first responders, end requirements that chemical plant owners keep up to date safety information, get rid of **safety training for employees and more**

A federal judge recently ruled that **Trump's** dangerous effort to delay the rules was illegal. The judge even said the Trump Administration "makes a mockery" of federal laws governing federal chemical plant safety. However, the Trump Administration is **moving forward with their much weakened rule**, which they may finalize in the coming months.



Map of chemical manufacturing facilities
Source: EPA

Toxic sites at risk of flooding into water supplies and endangering people

Hurricanes Harvey and Maria saw flooded Superfund sites contaminating local water supplies. Yet news reports show dozens of inland superfund sites – where flooding could potentially be severe – are not being inspected ahead of the storm.

It is estimated that there are more than 3.6 million African Americans, 1.3 million Latinos, and 2.3 million people living in poverty, in the storm's potential path.

These residents are also threatened by the dozens of coal ash ponds in the impacted states, which are filled with lead, arsenic, and other toxic materials. The dangerous possibility of these ponds flooding and contaminating local water supplies comes just after Trump's EPA finalized rules loosening restrictions on how coal ash is stored.