**EPA Budget Cuts Talking Points:**

**Overview:**

Cuts to EPA’s budget would impede the ability of the EPA to fulfill its mission of protecting public health and the environment. Initiatives that aim to protect air, land, and water quality, as well as the ability of our nation to respond to threats to health posed by climate change would be greatly impacted.

* The Trump Administration’s proposed budget cuts the EPA’s budget by 31%. Congress should prioritize investments that build a healthier future for all Americans.
* EPA budget cuts would threaten enforcement and implementation of vital safeguards for our air and water that protect children from mercury, lead, arsenic, and other pollution.
* The essential life and cost savings standards under the Clean Air Act would be weakened. Since 1970 under the Clean Air Act, dangerous air pollutants such as smog and particulate matter have been reduced by more than 60 %
* Proposed budget cuts would eliminate funding for climate change research and international climate change programs.
* Funding would also be eliminated for the Clean Power Plan, a regulation designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, which generate almost a third of GHGs in the US.
* These cuts would lead to elimination of EPA jobs and hinder the ability of EPA to protect health.

**EPA Budget Cuts LTE:**

Subject: EPA budget cuts threaten health and climate

To OUTLET:

To the editor,

The Trump administration’s budget proposal would reduce EPA’s funding by 30%. Approval of budget cuts of that magnitude, would have EPA funded at its lowest level in 40 years, risking common-sense Clean Air and Water Acts safeguards that protect our air and drinking water from mercury, lead, arsenic, and other pollution. Limiting EPA funding would drastically restrict the agency’s ability to protect public health, threatening to have catastrophes like the Flint water crisis become tragically routine.

As a practicing nurse in Louisville, Kentucky, I’m concerned how the budget cuts will impact clean air safeguards in place. In the American Lung Association’s 2017 State of the Air report, Louisville ranked in the 25 most polluted cities by year-round particle pollution. The current budget proposes to cut EPA grants for state and local air quality monitoring by more than a third, potentially reducing or eliminating funds utilized for programs that identify whether residents are being exposed to dangerous air pollutants. Air quality deterioration increases the risk of exacerbations of asthma and chronic respiratory conditions, premature death, and heart attacks. Cuts to EPA funding affect Kentucky’s budget and directly threaten the air our children breathe.

With deep cuts to programs we’ve depended on for generations, Kentucky and federal agencies will be powerless to prevent and tackle environmental disasters and public safety crises. America deserves a budget that puts our families and communities first; protecting our most vulnerable from harm.

NAME,

OCCUPATION

CITY, STATE

**EPA Budget Cuts Op-ed:**

Since the start of our profession, nurses have made the connection between a healthy environment and improved health. Preventing illness is a foundational pillar of nursing practice and is most effective in terms of improving health outcomes and reducing health costs. As a nurse, I know that having clean air to breathe and clean water to drink are essential for human health and key to preventing disease. Gutting the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect health by reducing funding and rolling back clean air and water safeguards, puts the health millions of Americans at risk.

The mission of the EPA is to protect public health. In order to fulfill this mission, EPA needs support through legislation and funding. Budget cuts proposed by the Trump administration and recent cuts to the EPA finalized in the House budget, will have a significant, negative impact on people’s health and wellbeing in communities across the country where clean drinking water and clean air are at risk. Pushing the burden of enforcement and funding to the states means already tight budgets will be stressed to find funding or more likely lead to the cessation of essential program that ensure our most vulnerable communities are protected. Programs, such as lead prevention initiatives, will be rendered useless without resources for implementation and enforcement.

Health-protective environmental regulations and programs should not be viewed as burdensome, but rather as a way to hold industry accountable to ensure that operations don’t contribute to undue harm to the public. Since the formation of the EPA and due to regulatory efforts to clean up our air, land, and water, great progress has been made. The Clean Air Act and accompanying regulations have reduced air pollutants, such as smog and particulate matter by more than 60%. By 2020, under the Clean Air Act the U.S. will have realized an estimated $2 trillion in benefits at a cost of $65 billion. However, rollbacks threaten to halt this progress.

Programs that are threatened are those that have been immensely successful in reducing harm from environmental contaminants. With funds from the Brownfield and Superfund programs and Environmental Justice grants, EPA has worked closely with at risk communities to clean up contaminated sites and keep our children safe. Over the past five decades, EPA programs have helped reduce lead pollution by over 90 percent. This means fewer children with permanent neurological harm and less health complications later in life. Cutting funding that could impact essential programs, could mean more children and families, such as those in Flint, Michigan and East Chicago, Indiana who are getting sick from toxic lead pollution that has contaminated their drinking water.

In addition to a reduction in funding to essential public health programs, the Trump administration’s proposed budget cuts would eliminate funding for climate change research and the Clean Power Plan, a regulation designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Elimination of funding for programs and regulations to combat climate change put the United States behind at a time when climate leadership is essential to protect against the health threats posed by a changing climate.

As health professionals, we know that when the places we live, work, and play are clean environments we see better health outcomes. This is why a reversal of essential safeguards and limiting EPA’s ability to protect public health would only increase disease and health costs. At a time when our health system is in crisis, members of Congress need to consider the link between environmental health protections and improved health. Americans deserve fresh air to breathe, clean water to drink; the health of our most vulnerable depends on it.