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TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET WOULD IMPAIR SAFE DRINKING WATER

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EPA Administrator Wheeler has identified drinking water protection as a top priority. However, the Trump Administration is proposing massive cuts to EPA's drinking water program. While EPA's drinking water program would be cut "only" 8% under the President's budget,¹ other elements of the Budget tell a different story, with large cuts in activities that help protect drinking water. Not included in these 8% cuts are 33% cuts in state assistance to support clean drinking water and 40% cuts in research for safe and sustainable communities, which would adversely affect drinking water programs.

Massive Cuts in Drinking Water in FY 2020 Proposed EPA Budget

The budget cuts \$8.124 million (8%) from the drinking water program, from \$102.026 million to \$93.902 million.

Funding cuts for state drinking water protection of \$401 million from the State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) account. These cuts include:

- \$38 million (33%) cuts in **categorical grants to support state drinking water programs**. Funds for Public Water System supervision are cut by \$34.071 million from \$101.963 million to \$67.892 million. For Underground Injection Control, the cut is \$3.511 million, from \$10.506 million.
- \$300 million (26%) cuts to the **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund** from \$1,163 million to \$863 million. These cuts would slow progress in addressing the 3,508 community water systems that are out of compliance with health-based standards, in addressing aging or inadequate sanitation and drinking water

¹ The Environmental Protection Network has compiled an excellent report, Understanding the Full Impacts of the Proposed FY202 EPA Budget, April 8, 2019, available at <https://www.environmentalprotectionnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/FY2020-Budget-12-pg-Analysis-4-4.pdf>

infrastructure that can cause significant public health concerns, and toward meeting a 20-year capital investment need of \$472.6 billion for our nation's public water systems.

- There are also \$67 million (84%) in cuts, from \$80 million to \$13 million to other STAG programs that support drinking water protection. These include
 - *Elimination* of a \$10 million program to address lead in drinking water, a \$20 million program for Safe Water for Small and Disadvantaged Communities, and a 50% cut in funding for Lead Testing in Schools from \$20 million to \$10 million.
 - *Elimination* of a \$10 million program that supports water infrastructure in the US-Mexico border region, and 85% cuts from \$20 million to \$3 million for a similar program for Alaska Native Villages. Both programs support basic drinking water and sanitation infrastructure such as flushing toilets and running water for poor, isolated, predominantly Alaska Native rural villages and for desperately poor U.S. communities along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border that disproportionately lack such services.

When added up, this makes the total of cuts to state assistance to support safe drinking water to \$404.852 million (33%) from \$1,243 million to \$876 million.²

Finally, the budget also proposes to cut 40% (\$36.294 million) from Research into Safe and Sustainable Communities, reducing it from \$106.257 million to \$69.963 million. This program addresses chemical and biological water contaminants to develop scientific and technological solutions, including drinking water technologies for protecting human health and aquatic ecosystems. While this is not exclusively focused on drinking water, the cuts likely would have some adverse effect on drinking water safety.

² The budget does include proposals for funding that could support drinking water protection, including for programs EPA claims are authorized under the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. It seems likely that the \$50 million for Healthy Schools could be used to address drinking water, and so could the \$2 million for Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability, and the \$5m for drinking fountain lead testing and possibly some of the \$7.5 m for Technical Assistance for Treatment Works. The EPA budget documents contain almost no specific information about how these programs or the money for them, or the \$61.5 million for sewer overflow control grants will be used.