

Lawsuit Challenges Trump Administration's Attack on Landmark Environmental Law

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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A nationwide coalition of organizations from the environmental-justice, outdoor and conservation communities [filed a lawsuit](#) today challenging the Trump administration's attack on the National Environmental Policy Act.

Earlier this month the administration finalized rules that will eviscerate core components of the Act. Under new regulations put forth by the White House Council on Environmental Quality, polluting projects of all kinds will be exempt from basic environmental reviews, and the public will be cut out of one of its best tools to prevent dangerous, shortsighted projects.

"It has been more than 30 years since the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act and environmental justice communities continue to live with the impacts of decisions that precipitated its need," said Kerene N. Tayloe, director of federal legislative affairs at WE ACT for Environmental Justice. "The changes made to this bedrock environmental law will further undermine basic protections, including the public's right to participate in decision-making and the obligation of the government to fully and thoroughly study the cumulative impacts of health hazards on overburdened communities. They also reflect a disregard of Black, brown and poor communities and the unwillingness of this administration to execute laws in a way that benefits all Americans. WE ACT for Environmental Justice is committed to pursuing every option available to preserve and strengthen NEPA for the betterment of everyone."

"NEPA matters," said Tricia Cortez, executive director of the Rio Grande International Study Center. "Here on the border, we know what a world without NEPA looks like because of what we've experienced with the border wall. The U.S. government has waived NEPA and dozens of other federal laws to rush construction for a politically motivated and destructive wall project. We would not wish this on any other community in this country. The feeling is like having a train barreling at you with nothing to stop it. To protect our environment and our health, we the people must save NEPA."

"We will not allow the Trump administration to compromise our rights to protect our communities and public health from the harms associated with unscrupulous and destructive industrial developments such as mining, oil and gas, and military operations," said Pamela Miller, executive director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics. "This is a grave environmental injustice and we aim to prevent this attack on one of our most fundamental environmental laws."

"The Trump administration picked the wrong fight," said Kristen Boyles, an Earthjustice attorney serving as co-counsel on the case. "They want to make it easier to silence people's voices and give polluters a free pass to bulldoze

through our neighborhoods. That's why we're taking them to court."

"We have consistently defeated this administration's relentless, vicious dismantling of safeguards for people and the environment, and we will do so again for this critically important law," said Susan Jane Brown, Western Environmental Law Center co-counsel. "A thriving economy is not at odds with worker protections and a healthy environment — it depends on both."

"We won't allow the Trump administration's scorched-earth attack on this bedrock environmental law to stand," said Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "NEPA was designed to protect the most vulnerable among us and give folks a voice in what happens in their communities. It was intended to ensure a healthy environment and safeguard wildlife for generations to come. It was never about making special interests richer, until now."

Read what all [20-plus clients](#) on the case have to say about the importance of defending NEPA.

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