

Trump administration is on track to cut 1 in 3 EPA staffers by the end of 2025, slashing agency's ability to keep pollution out of air and water

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In the wake of the scandal, Lavelle was fired and Gorsuch and more than a dozen other political appointees resigned.

In a later report on the issue, Congress accused Gorsuch, Lavelle and others of poor job performance, noting that after four years of Superfund work, “only six of the 546 ... of the most hazardous sites in the Nation have been cleaned up.” The Stringfellow site, a focus of the investigation, was “threatening the health and safety of 500,000 people,” the report noted.

With anger over the scandals from both Americans and Congress, Reagan reversed course and spent the remaining six years of his presidency building the EPA back up in both staffing and budget. Staffing, for example, increased from a low of 10,481 full-time-equivalent employees in 1982 to 15,130 in 1989. Reagan's EPA budget, which had fallen to US\$4.1 billion in 1984, increased to \$4.9 billion in 1989.

The existing Trump cuts, and those proposed – if enacted by Congress – would be deeper than Reagan's, reducing the number of people doing important research on environmental harms and the health effects of dangerous chemicals; suing companies who pollute the environment; and overseeing the cleanup of toxic sites.

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Chris Sellers previously received funding from the National Science Foundation on a project that partly involved research into the EPA's history.

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