

# Union of Concerned Scientists

## Science for a Healthy Planet and Safer World

[en español](#)

January 28, 2019

[RSS](#)

## New UCS Report Tallies Attacks on Science in Trump Era Harming Public Health

Trump Administration Has Done Serious Damage—But There's an Opportunity to Undo It

WASHINGTON (January 28, 2019)—New research shows that the administration has interfered with or sidelined science in 80 separate incidents over the past two years, demonstrating a pattern of hostility to evidence—and posing a serious threat to public health and the environment.

These abuses are detailed in the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) report “[The State of Science in the Trump Era: Damage Done, Lessons Learned, and a Path to Progress](#).” On President Donald Trump’s watch, scientific agencies have been hollowed out, and at the leadership level, fewer than half of 83 critical science positions have been filled. In numerous agencies, less data is being collected and decision-making processes have been changed to exclude scientific advice. The administration has delayed, suppressed or cancelled at least 14 important studies over the past two years. And the number of environmental impact statements filed has been cut in half, denying the public vital information and opportunities to comment on public projects.

“The administration is trying to accomplish its goals by pushing science out of the process,” said Jacob Carter, a UCS research scientist and the lead author of the report. “After two years, it’s clear that this administration values neither the work of federal scientists nor the health and safety of the public. Science is being silenced, in a truly unprecedented way—and we’re all paying the cost.”

The pattern is pervasive across multiple agencies, touching issues as wide-ranging as immigration, taxes and LGBTQ rights. President Trump’s appointees to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior stand out for their glaring conflicts of interest and their hostility to the science-based mission of their agencies. Climate science and studies on the public health impacts of pollution have been especially targeted—demonstrating the administration’s commitment to helping politically powerful industries at the expense of the public good.

“The administration’s rollbacks of public protections without scientific justification are really damaging,” said Gretchen Goldman, research director for the Center for Science and Democracy at UCS. “But there’s even more potential harm from the actions they’ve taken to limit how future

administrations can use science in policymaking. The Trump administration is restricting the kinds of science agencies can consider, rigging the rules for analyzing policies, gutting advisory boards and pushing federal scientists out of public service. That damage could be long-lasting.”

The good news is that there are proven paths to constrain these abuses. “[The State of Science in the Trump Era](#)” identifies some success stories that point the way forward. Scientists, science advocates and community groups have been able to use the courts, the public comment process, and Congress to put a check on the administration. Through sustained public pressure, the science community and its supporters have turned back some nominees and stalled several potentially damaging policies. Further, the new Congress has a chance to step up and perform its constitutional duty of holding the administration accountable.

“For the first time in two years, we could see some meaningful checks and balances in Washington,” said Carter. “This is how it’s supposed to work—Congress should press the administration to stop undermining science and do its job of protecting the public. And the science community can play a meaningful role if scientists step up and get engaged as constituents. There’s a lot of damage to undo, but we have a roadmap to get there.”

In the report, UCS researchers lay out an action plan for Congress. These recommendations include passing new laws to protect scientific integrity and reduce conflicts of interest; holding oversight hearings to investigate anti-science actions and the harms they cause; and protecting the role of science in laws like the Clean Air Act and Endangered Species Act that are under attack.

“President Trump’s political appointees have taken a wrecking ball to science, which we all depend on,” said UCS President Ken Kimmell. “But the science community is more engaged than ever to fight back. Supporters of science, public health and environmental justice will be watching to make sure science works for all of us—in the Trump era and beyond.”

The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future.

**Union of  
Concerned Scientists**  
**Science for a Healthy Planet and Safer World**

Science for a healthy planet and safer world



- A Normal Font Size
- A Larger Font Size
- A Largest Font Size

© Union of Concerned Scientists  
2 Brattle Square, Cambridge, MA 02138-2780  
We use cookies so that you will have the best possible experience on our website. By continuing to use our site, you accept our use of cookies for site features. Learn more in our [privacy policy](#).  
UCS is a 501c(3) organization

I ACCEPT