

A Reality Check on the Trump/Pruitt EPA from Environmental Defense Fund

Even as EPA scientists and staff work hard to help, EPA Administrator Pruitt and President Trump want to severely cut or eliminate budgets for programs that enable EPA, states, tribes and communities better prepare, respond and protect in times of disaster and every day.

News Releases

News Releases from Headquarters

EPA Irma Update for Tuesday, September 12, 2017

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Contact Information:

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WASHINGTON (September 12, 2017) – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to coordinate closely with local, state, and federal partners in response to Hurricane Irma, which is now a tropical depression.

As of September 12, 2017, the following information is available:

REGIONAL OPERATIONS CENTERS

Region 2:

- About 87 personnel are currently involved in response efforts. Assessment teams have been deployed to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and are conducting on-the-ground operations.
- EPA Region 2 has two teams in Puerto Rico and four teams in the U.S Virgin Islands to conduct assessments.
- EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance is deploying a 12-person team comprised of Criminal Investigation Division special agents to provide law enforcement assistance in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- EPA has been working closely with the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico governments to help better determine their needs and provide support wherever possible.

The Trump/Pruitt budget would cut 27% of funds from enforcement & compliance assistance including 41% from criminal enforcement for hazardous substance & Superfund sites

Region 4:

- The Region has approximately 57 personnel involved in emergency response efforts at the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC), the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) in Atlanta, and the Florida State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee.
- Region 4 Administrator Trey Glenn is coordinating with Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina and North Carolina, and is working with emergency response staff to determine regional assessment and response deployment activities.

The Trump/Pruitt budget would lay off 3,000 EPA personnel on top of 2,000 already cut in recent years.

## Florida:

- EPA Assessment Team personnel are mobilizing to Florida today, Tuesday, September 12, 2017.
- Florida ESF-10 (Oil and Hazardous Materials Response) personnel continue to assist state, tribal, and federal partners in preparing for response and mitigation actions. Primary focus has been in the following areas:
- EPA is in coordination with FDEP, Florida Department of Transportation (DOT), FEMA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) concerning the development and implementation of a Debris Management Plan. Issues relative to EPA are the management of hazardous wastes, household hazardous wastes (HHW), asbestos, air curtain incinerators, tribal concerns, and environmental justice areas.
- Ensuring that impacted **drinking water** and wastewater facilities are returned to service as quickly as possible. EPA is supporting this activity with FDEP and USACE. EPA Region 4 and Region 5 Federal On-Scene Coordinators are deploying today to Florida for Irma response activities. Technical specialists from the water division are deploying to Florida to assist with wastewater and **drinking water system** recovery.
- EPA continues to coordinate with FDEP and USACE relative to **water and drinking water issues**. USACE has indicated they may request Region 4 assistance with sampling activities needed to bring water facilities back on line.
- The EPA Region 4 [Science and Ecosystems Support Division \(SESD\)](#) Mobile Laboratory remains prepared to conduct the following analyses for drinking water: total coliform, E. coli, fecal coliform, and enterococcus.
- SESD preparations to support response efforts includes:
  - A backup laboratory is ready to accept 10-15 samples per week for pesticide analysis.
  - Up to 14 personnel are immediately available to deploy to Florida to assist, as needed.
  - Mobile Lab for micro analysis (bacteria) is immediately available.

The Trump/Pruitt budget would cut 38% of EPA's support for Homeland Security efforts.

The Trump/Pruitt budget would cut 30% of public water system supervision grants.

## Alabama:

- The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is currently at full operation. EPA Region 4 continues to maintain communication with the state to provide support as needed.

## North Carolina:

- The North Carolina SEOC is currently operating at Level 4 activation. They are monitoring Irma's path and EPA is maintaining communication with the state to determine if EPA assistance is needed.

## South Carolina:

- The South Carolina SEOC is currently at full operation. They are monitoring Irma's path. EPA is maintaining communication with the state to determine if EPA assistance is needed.

## Mississippi:

- The Mississippi SEOC is currently operating at Level 4 activation. They are monitoring Irma's path and EPA is maintaining communication with the state to determine if EPA assistance is needed.

## Region 4 Federally Recognized Tribes:

- Region 4 continues to coordinate with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

## RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS (RMPS)

- EPA is communicating with the Risk Management Program (RMP) and Facility Response Plan (FRP) **bulk oil** facilities to ensure they are secure and identify any vulnerabilities.
- EPA's remedial program is currently performing desk-top triage of all remedial sites in Region 4 coastal states.
- EPA Region 4 has prepared a Site-Specific Data Management Plan for the incident.

The Trump/Pruitt budget would cut 14% from oil spill prevention, preparedness and emergency response for high risk oil storage facilities and refineries.

## ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AND FUEL WAIVERS

- EPA and FDEP are coordinating to ensure all facilities impacted by Irma are familiar with the provisions included in their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits that allow for temporary noncompliance during emergency circumstances. This action helps ensure ports and other facilities get back into operation as quickly as possible while minimizing environmental impacts.
- EPA issued a No Action Assurance on Monday to assist all Florida power plant facilities to maintain the supply of electricity to customers and facilities in Florida. This action will help meet the needs of FDEP and will assist Florida utility generators to maintain the supply of electricity to customers and critical facilities in the state, while facilitating timely restoration of lost electrical service caused by Irma.
- EPA will issue additional No Action Assurances as requested by FDEP, will help Florida get fuel to gas stations quicker, and will ensure that fuel deliveries won't be delayed as a result of power outages at bulk fuel terminals.
- On Sunday, Florida requested and EPA issued a No Action Assurance for Tampa Electric Company's Big Bend Station, Polk Power Station, and Bayside Power Station for compliance with **air** permit condition to ensure adequate supply of electric power.
- On Friday, EPA issued a No Action Assurance to allow emergency and backup electric generating units in Monroe County, Florida, the county that encompasses the Florida Keys, to operate without meeting all pollution controls in order to facilitate the supply of needed electricity during and after Irma.
- EPA policy allows the Agency to issue No Action Assurances in cases where it is necessary to avoid extreme risks to public health and safety and where no other mechanism can adequately address the matters.
- Last week, EPA extended a low-volatility conventional gasoline waiver through September 26, 2017, in 38 states and the District of Columbia.
- EPA also issued a Red-Dye Diesel fuel waiver for vehicles used for emergency response and evacuations.

But after the storm emergency is over, the Trump/Pruitt budget would cut by 30% the grants that help states and local communities monitor air quality and warn citizens of dangers.

## REGION 2 SUPERFUND SITES, OIL SITES AND OTHER FACILITIES

- EPA Region 2 has completed preliminary assessments of all 19 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As of today, no significant damage has been reported at any of the sites. Assessments were done by a combination of field visits, reaching out to responsible parties and contractors and, in some cases, via U.S. Coast Guard fly-over. For some sites, the EPA is following up with on-the-ground field visits, which continue today.
- EPA Region 2's regulated facility team is actively gathering information from regulated facilities via facility personnel in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This includes field assessments of roughly 12 facilities so far. To date, there have been no reported spills, no chemical releases, and no other issues at regulated facilities. EPA continues its assessments today.
- Before Irma made landfall, EPA assessed 23 Superfund and oil sites in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to evaluate their vulnerabilities.

The Trump/Pruitt budget would cut 19% from Superfund emergency response funds.

## REGION 4 SUPERFUND SITES, OIL SITES AND OTHER FACILITIES

- Region 4 Remedial Project Managers and Science and Ecosystem Support Division Personnel are deploying today to Florida to assess Nation Priority List (NPL) Superfund sites.
- NPL Rapid Assessment Teams will deploy to Orlando today, and from there will spread out over five geographic regions in Florida as identified by the Regional Operations Center.
- EPA staff is also coordinating with local government partners to conduct initial assessments of Superfund sites.
- Local partners were able to make initial visual assessments of the three Superfund sites in Palm Beach County – Solitron Devices, BMI- Textron, and Trans Circuits – and all were found to be secure with no signs of damage or flooding.
- Although not a Superfund site, EPA state partner FDEP is actively monitoring the New Wales Mosaic operating phosphorus mining facility in Hillsborough County and all of the facilities that maintain gypsum stacks. FDEP worked proactively, communicating with these facilities ahead of the storm.
- Like the various other facilities identified for post-landfall assessment by the Hazardous Assessment Response Team and other response teams, the New Wales Mosaic site and others like it will be properly assessed to ensure there are no potential adverse impacts to human health and the environment.
- Prior to the storm, EPA Region 4's remedial program completed rapid assessment (desk-top triage) of all 90 remedial sites in within the state of Florida.
- EPA Region 4 Superfund division plans to perform field assessments at all NPL sites in the State of Florida. A list of Superfund sites in the state is available [here](#).

For information and updates from EPA, visit: [www.epa.gov/hurricane-irma](http://www.epa.gov/hurricane-irma)

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[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.

The president would eliminate 30% of EPA's hazardous substance and superfund budget.

The Trump/Pruitt budget calls for 36% cuts in EPA's science and technology funds.

Contact Environmental Defense Fund for more on the impact of the proposed Trump/Pruitt EPA budget cuts:  
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