

National Coalition Sues to Protect the National Environmental Policy Act

Comments from leaders working to protect bedrock law

“Mountain regions are warming at roughly twice the pace of the global average, and climbers and skiers see these changes every time we go into the mountains. Now, the Trump Administration has decided federal agencies can’t even consider how their decisions will affect the climate. We’re suing the Administration to force the government to consider climate impacts before approving development projects.”

-Taylor Luneau, policy manager, American Alpine Club.

“We won’t allow the Trump administration’s scorched-earth attack on this bedrock environmental law to stand. 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.”

-Brett Hartl, government affairs director, Center for Biological Diversity

"NEPA is as American as apple pie. For five decades, the law has quietly protected some of our most precious, environmentally-sensitive places. How? Common sense. It’s common sense to take a hard look at the environmental consequences of a major infrastructure project before it begins. It’s also common sense -- and also uniquely American -- to have public input and involvement in the process. We cannot and will not stand idly by and watch this law be gutted. It is too important and too sacred to lose. The Trump administration's latest rollback is wrong-headed and dangerous. So, we will continue the fight to save NEPA in the courts."

-Katie Murtha, vice president of federal government relations, Environment America

“For 50 years, NEPA has served as America’s bedrock environmental safeguard, ensuring that the federal government carefully considers the impacts of its actions and that communities have a voice in what gets built in their neighborhood. Today, EDF stands with a diverse coalition to challenge the Trump administration’s unlawful effort to dramatically curb the use of these protections by restricting community input and limiting the use of important assessments of the risks posed by industrial projects.”

-Rosalie Winn, Senior Attorney, Environmental Defense Fund

"NEPA ensures that California's forests remain verdant and our rivers stay clean by requiring that federal agencies understand the environmental impacts of their decisions. Trump's new rule is a crushing disappointment to good government and to a healthy environment."

Tom Wheeler, executive director, Environmental Protection Information Center

“The administration’s decision to gut the National Environmental Policy Act is not only one of their most egregious acts to undermine environmental protections and silence the public’s voice, it is unlawful. It blatantly ignores science and lets the government and industry off the hook for safeguarding public health and our environment. We will not stand by while the administration works to bypass a law put in place to help protect marginalized communities and national parks – the people and places on the front lines of the climate crisis. Climate change is causing catastrophic damage to our environment, and stripping one of our best tools to address it is inconceivable. We will continue to fight until the health and future of people and national parks are protected, just as they should be.”

-Theresa Pierno, President and CEO, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)

“The Administration is transforming federal decision-making into a dangerous trust fall by severely limiting scientific analysis and the public’s ability to have a voice in those decisions. We are confident that the courts will find that the Administration’s rule exceeds their legal authority under the National Environmental Policy Act and will overturn their irresponsible proposal.”

-Collin O’Mara, president and CEO, National Wildlife Federation

“NEPA is crucial to ensuring that projects in or around the ocean and our coastal communities are considered responsibly and transparently. It’s often the only opportunity for communities to voice their opinion on federal projects that will impact their ocean, water, land and air. The Trump administration’s NEPA regulations have the potential to cause irreparable harm to our coastal communities, and our nation.”

-Janis Searles Jones, CEO, Ocean Conservancy

“The Trump administration’s attack on NEPA poses an immediate threat to Utah’s redrock wilderness. No place in the lower 48 states is heating up faster than the Colorado Plateau, which includes Utah’s redrock country. It’s critical that federal agencies know and disclose the impacts that decisions like oil and gas leasing and authorizing the widespread removal of native vegetation will have on the climate crisis, and in turn to places like Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments.”

-Stephen Bloch, legal director, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA)

“As a vital, bedrock conservation law, NEPA enshrines democratic principles of transparency, public participation, science-based review and accountability into government decision-making. This law is essential for protecting our most treasured places from harm, like the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota, which is threatened by a proposed copper mine, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in

Alaska, which the administration has targeted for drilling. The new rules adopted by the administration will undermine the very purpose of the law and put our public lands and waters at risk.”

-Phil Hanceford, Conservation Director, Agency Policy and Planning, The Wilderness Society

"The National Environmental Policy Act gives every American a voice in how public lands are managed. If you've ever sent a letter to the Forest Service, Park Service, or Bureau of Land Management, weighing in on a project, you were able to do that because of NEPA. These policy changes dramatically re-interpret the law to sideline the public and prioritize corporate interests over environmental protection.”

- Hilary Eisen, Policy Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance