



FACT SHEET

# HOW THE EPA PROTECTS OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS** – Over 40 percent of the EPA’s budget (\$3.5 billion of 8.1 billion) goes to State and Tribal Grants (STAG), which include, among other things, funding for environmental regulatory staffing on the state level. The EPA funds states to run their own drinking water programs (\$100 million per year); clean water programs (about \$230 million per year); clean air programs (about \$230 million per year) and other state environmental programs. Local communities receive money through the State Revolving Fund.

**SUPERFUND CLEANUP** – The EPA oversees the cleanup of toxic superfund sites and holds polluters financially responsible.

**OIL SPILL CLEANUP** – The EPA conducts and supervises [cleanup](#) efforts (on land and in non-coast guard controlled waters) for oil or hazardous chemical spills. Examples include: [Exxon Valdez](#), [Kalamazoo](#), and [Floreffa](#) spills.

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY** – The EPA maintains the ENERGY STAR® program, which helps consumers identify the most energy efficient appliances and equipment that can save them money and energy.

**CLEAN WATER/SAFE DRINKING WATER** – The EPA sets health-based standards, limiting contaminants in drinking water. It provides billions of dollars to communities to deliver safe drinking water and improve water quality.

- The EPA can also step in and measure safety of drinking water sources threatened by oil and gas operations when states refuse to act.
- After disasters, the EPA provides resources to get drinking water and sewage treatments back online quickly.

**State/Local Drinking Water & Wastewater Infrastructure** – The EPA spends about \$860 million a year funding states/localities to improve drinking water infrastructure and about \$1.4 billion per year funding states/localities to upgrade sewage treatment and other municipal wastewater infrastructure.

**Sewage Rules** – The EPA sets rules to prevent raw sewage from polluting our drinking water sources.

**Protecting fish and fishing jobs** – The EPA sets surface water standards that protect fish and shellfish, and related fishing jobs, from toxic pollution.

**Beachgoer Protection** – The EPA protects beachgoers from pollution by establishing minimum national water quality standards and guidelines for swimming.

**CLEAN AIR AND CLIMATE PROTECTION** – The EPA sets limits on dangerous air pollutants from factories, refineries, power plants, oil and gas extraction, and vehicles. These limits protect public health, helping prevent asthma attacks, birth defects, respiratory and cardiovascular disease and cancer.

**Greenhouse Gases, including CO<sub>2</sub> Pollution Limits** – The EPA has a critical role in limiting greenhouse gases, including CO<sub>2</sub>, pollution from power plants, motor vehicles, and other sources that drives dangerous climate change.

**Smog-forming, Soot Pollution and Toxic Air Limits** – The EPA sets health standards for air pollution to guarantee all Americans the right to breathe safe air. It also sets limits on pollution from power plants, motor vehicles and other sources.

**CFCs and Ozone Depleting Chemicals** – The EPA is responsible for saving the ozone layer and preventing millions of cases of skin cancer by eliminating CFCs and other ozone-depleting chemicals.

**Pollution Reporting** – The EPA puts out a report each year called the Toxics Release Inventory, supporting the public’s Right to Know about air and water pollution and contaminated land in communities around the nation.

**CHEMICAL SAFETY** – The EPA reviews applications for new chemicals to make sure they are safe before they are allowed on the market.

**BUG REPELLENTS** – The EPA makes sure that roach sprays, mosquito repellants, flea collars and other products kill bugs without poisoning people.

**PESTICIDES** – The EPA reviews the safety of pesticides and herbicides sprayed on food crops, golf courses, public rights-of-way, etc. It can limit or prohibit uses when it determines a chemical isn’t safe for human health or the environment.

**OIL AND GAS WASTE DISPOSAL** – The EPA helps guide states in the handling and disposal of oil and gas waste, including toxic waste.

**HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE REGULATIONS** – The EPA administers safeguards for how hazardous and non-hazardous waste is generated, transported, treated, stored and disposed.

**RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS** – The EPA prepares for and responds to [emergencies involving radioactive materials](#), deploying response team to work with agencies at all levels, monitoring radioactivity, and providing guidelines on how to protect people from unhealthy levels of radiation.

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES** – The EPA supports efforts to revitalize local economies and make communities healthier and more livable in collaboration with government agencies, NGOs and the private sector. For example, it provides small grants, technical assistance, reports and other analyses to support best practices in disaster-resilient community design.