

How Federal Clean Energy Policy Reversals Could Impact the Health of Americans

Over the next decade, U.S. federal clean energy policies, including the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and EPA regulations on power plants and tailpipe emissions, were expected to deliver major economic, health, and climate benefits by driving clean energy investment, manufacturing, and production. However, since January 2025, the U.S. federal government has taken a wide range of steps to roll back these policies. In support of these actions, Congress is in the midst of developing and passing a budget reconciliation bill that includes a near-total repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act. Concurrently, on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced plans to weaken a Biden-era regulation that required power plants to slash pollutants, including toxic substances such as mercury, lead, nickel, and arsenic.¹

The Center for Global Sustainability (CGS) at the University of Maryland recently released a new analysis demonstrating how repealing key federal environmental and clean energy policies would negatively impact the U.S. economy and harm public health. The report finds that, over the next decade, federal rollbacks would result in:

- ▶ **A cumulative \$1.1 trillion loss in the U.S. GDP by 2035**
- ▶ **A cumulative \$160 billion drop in disposable income by 2035**
- ▶ **An additional cumulative 22,800 deaths of Americans by 2035**
- ▶ **A nearly 10% higher annual PM2.5 concentration in 2035**
- ▶ **A \$206 average annual increase in household energy costs in 2035**

The analysis models two distinct scenarios to represent the impacts of potential federal policy rollbacks. The *Current Policies* scenario includes key, on-the-books policies at the federal and non-federal levels (as of December 2024), including provisions in the IRA, BIL, and EPA regulations, as well as state-level policies. The *Federal Rollbacks* scenario assumes a complete repeal of federal climate legislation and regulations after 2025, including the IRA, BIL, and EPA regulations, but maintains the state-level policies included in the *Current Policies* scenario.

The EPA's plan to roll back power plant standards is part of a broader effort to dismantle federal clean energy policies that cut greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution simultaneously, particularly from coal-fired power plants. Power plants are significant emitters of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), which contribute to the formation of particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less (PM2.5), one of the most harmful air pollutants. Exposure to ambient PM2.5 is strongly associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, stroke, and premature death.² Current estimates suggest that ambient PM2.5 exposure leads to 100,000–200,000 early deaths annually in the United States.^{3,4}

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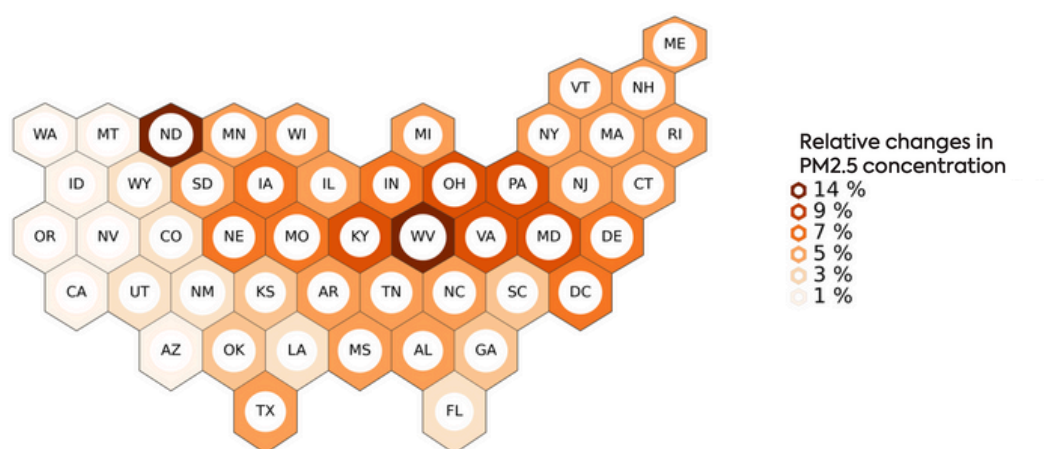
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Download the report to learn more at go.umd.edu/ImpactsofFedClimateRollbacks

The analysis shows that repealing these policies is expected to significantly worsen air quality and endanger American lives across every state. The research finds substantial increases in SO₂ and NO_x emissions in the power sector (250% and 140%, respectively) under Federal Rollbacks compared to Current Policies, as the rollbacks enable continued coal power generation. The analysis also shows that states with a higher dependence on coal and weaker clean energy standards, such as **West Virginia, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Ohio**, are projected to face the greatest increases in mortality due to heightened pollution levels. In contrast, states that have adopted strong clean energy policies, like Renewable Portfolio Standards and coal phaseout plans, would experience smaller increases in pollution-related deaths, highlighting the protective power of state-level climate leadership.

Download the report to [learn more](#).

(a) Relative changes in PM2.5 concentration under *Federal Rollbacks*



(b) Relative changes in PM2.5 - attributable deaths under *Federal Rollbacks*

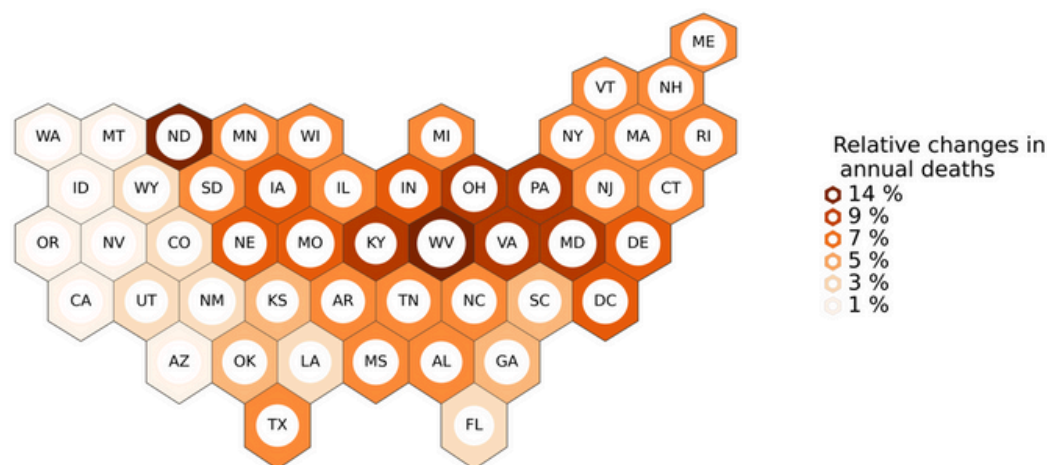


Figure 1. Increases in air pollution and deaths in 2035 under *Federal Rollbacks* relative to *Current Policies*. Panels a) and b) show percentage changes in the state-level annual average PM2.5 concentrations and PM2.5-attributable deaths in 2035, respectively.

¹ Chemnick, J., & Colman, Z. (2024). *EPA to propose rolling back climate rule for power plants Wednesday*. Politico. <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/10/epa-to-repeal-climate-rule-power-plants-wednesday-00398136>

² Cohen, A. J. *et al.* Estimates and 25-year trends of the global burden of disease attributable to ambient air pollution: an analysis of data from the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2015. *The Lancet* **389**, 1907–1918 (2017).

³ Tessum, C. W. *et al.* Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial-ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.* **116**, 6001–6006 (2019).

⁴ Thakrar, S. K. *et al.* Reducing Mortality from Air Pollution in the United States by Targeting Specific Emission Sources. *Environ. Sci. Technol. Lett.* **7**, 639–645 (2020).