Budget Talking Points 4/4/17

1.The Trump administration has proposed to cut EPA's budget by 31%. Right now, the average taxpayer pays about $26 per year to fund EPA. For comparison, the average tax payer pays about $2243 per year for our military (including veteran’s benefits). The average taxpayer pays about $1591 per year for Medicare, and $2672 for Social Security. Most recent information from 3/21/17 internal EPA memo from Budget office to National Program managers proposes a 25% cut to staff, eliminating 56 programs including the non- point source program, Energy Star, Radon, STAR, Pollution Prevention, Environmental Education, Environmental Justice, Water Sense, Waste Minimization and Recycling, climate protection programs, endocrine disrupters, all geographic programs, homeland security critical infrastructure protection, radiation,

2. EPA spends two thirds of its budget to keep air and water clean. EPA and states partner to protect our air and water.  About half of EPA's budget is given to state governments to help pay for state environmental programs, providing 30-50% of each state’s funding, depending on the state. (Colorado gets 30% of its annual environmental budget from EPA.) The latest information on the budget shows a 55% reduction in categorical grants from 2016 numbers.

The Trump budget would eliminate or drastically reduce funding for states in every area except one:  low-cost loans to states/local governments for water and wastewater infrastructure.

Example programs on the chopping block: grants to school districts to upgrade old diesel engines (eliminated); grants to local governments to address radon (eliminated); support to states for air quality monitoring (reduced and/or eliminated); water quality monitoring to ensure that beaches are safe (eliminated - happy summer); lead programs; underground storage tanks;

3. EPA handles most hazardous waste cleanups through programs like Brownfields and Superfund. EPA has programs to remove lead paint in homes and clean up lead in soils. EPA also controls pesticide use.

Superfund funding would be cut by 36%, and funding for Brownfields by up to 44%. This means that work on the hazardous waste site near you would stop, slow down or never get started. (Bye-bye, Gold King Mining District).

Pesticides control - one of the areas where EPA supports states - would be cut by over 30%

4.  EPA has many programs designed to help people get information about pollutants in their neighborhoods, understand environmental science, and make more informed product choices. EPA also has programs aimed at helping businesses make better products and prevent or reduce pollution - which lowers their operating costs. These voluntary/partnership programs are all eliminated.

Each year, EPA issues a report called the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) which provides date about releases of toxic chemicals into air, water and land by zip code. Funding for the TRI would be reduced by 25%.

EPA spends about $8.7 million annually on programs to educate children. Funding for environmental education would be eliminated.

Energy Star has helped to improve energy efficiency improvements in consumer products, homes and businesses since 1992. To date, Energy Star has saved consumers $430 billion in energy bills ($34 billion in 2015 alone) and prevented 2.7 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.  Energy Star - and its companion program, Water Sense - would be eliminated.

The Green Power Partnership is a voluntary program for businesses aimed at increasing use of renewable electricity in the U.S. EPA provides resources and technical support to businesses to identify the types of green power products that best meet their goals. The Green Power Partnership is eliminated.

5. Pollution does not affect everyone equally. People with the least economic and political power (working class, low income and minority folks) end up living in the most polluted areas and the areas likely to be hardest hit by climate change. All of EPA’s programs aimed at helping these vulnerable people would be drastically reduced or eliminated in this budget.

Funding for the environmental justice program is eliminated.

The Alaska native villages program is eliminated.

Grants for tribal areas are reduced by 30%.

6. EPA has programs to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases - the chemicals that contribute to climate change. EPA and NOAA (along with several other science agencies) also have critical research efforts aimed at better understanding how climate change will affect environment and human health.

Funding for EPA’s climate protection programs would be cut by 100% (Some programs - like the annual greenhouse gas emission inventory - are mandated by law, so they can’t be eliminated without Congressional action. After the budget cuts, companies will still be required to report on GHG emissions - there just won’t be anyone left at EPA to do anything about them.)

EPA’s budget for climate science would be cut by 100%. Through the US Global Change Research Program (started under the administration of George H.W. Bush), EPA coordinates climate research among thirteen US agencies.

7. President Trump claims to be all about jobs. Small businesses create seven of every ten new jobs in the US, and employ just over half of the country's private sector workforce.  This budget eliminates funding for EPA’s small business assistance programs -along with similar programs in almost every agency. Cuts to EPA’s budget also translate into lost jobs - 4000 EPA staff positions targeted for reduction, thousands of jobs in the private sector. Nationally, EPA has more than $6.4 billion in contracts in place with over 600 companies.  Cuts to EPA will result in lost revenue to companies and organizations, starting a cascade of cutbacks and lost jobs in the private sector.

Colorado currently has more than 600 EPA contracts for projects by businesses and institutions. Aerospace company Lockheed Martin, with a major presence in Colorado, has done $373 million worth of work for the EPA since fiscal year 2008. The engineering firm CH2M Hill did more than $11 million worth of work for the EPA just in fiscal year 2016, including $117,000 worth in Colorado. Colorado State University currently has almost $5 million in active EPA grants funding projects involving 700 faculty members. Bayaud Enterprises, a Denver nonprofit that provides employment and support for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment did more than $500,000 of contract work for the EPA last fiscal year, placing disabled people in mailroom jobs and printing jobs at the agency’s downtown Denver headquarters.