

# With NEPA Changes, Trump Administration Puts Public Health at Risk for Private Gain

Statement by Dr. Kathleen Rest, Executive Director, Union of Concerned Scientists

By [Dr. Kathleen Rest](#)

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*Today, the Trump administration has announced a major weakening of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This rollback would increase the risk of environmental damages from major development projects, and limit the power of the communities to weigh in on such projects, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).*

Below is a statement by Dr. Kathleen Rest, executive director of UCS.

“With this decision, the administration has chosen to accept permanent damage to our communities and ecosystems in exchange for short-term gains for politically connected industries. The administration is now using the COVID-19-driven economic crisis as an excuse for this rollback, undermining public health protections in the midst of one of the worst public health crises this country has ever faced.

“These changes weaken the ability of communities—especially communities of color—to weigh in on projects that could impact their own lives for a very long time. The administration would leave communities with less information and less power to challenge corporations, and enable development to proceed without consideration of the long-term impacts. And the rollback specifically reduces the federal government and communities’ ability to consider the impacts of climate change.

“At a time when we need to be prioritizing health, justice and the long-term well-being of our communities, the Trump administration is speeding in the opposite direction—prioritizing short-term industry gains rather than addressing racial inequity and environmental damage. This rollback is short-sighted, insulting, cynical and dangerous.”

UCS experts have written about the administration’s efforts to undermine NEPA. Dr. Rest [examined the proposed changes in detail](#). Adrienne Hollis, senior climate justice and health scientist for the Climate and Energy Program at UCS, [interviewed environmental justice leader Dr. Mildred McClain](#) about the impacts and dangers of rolling back NEPA. Senior fellow Derrick Jackson wrote on [the racially discriminatory effects of weakening NEPA](#). And Karen Perry Stillerman, senior analyst and senior strategist for the Food and Environment Program at UCS, wrote about [the history and importance of NEPA](#).

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*Dr. Kathleen Rest is the Executive Director of the Union of Concerned Scientists.*

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