

## Consequences of the federal budget proposal and rising temperatures in Denver

Here in Colorado, we are nearing the end of our ski and snowboard season; a season that generates roughly \$4.8 billion for the state annually. The ski industry is a driving force in Colorado's economy and a globally recognized symbol of the state. Although Denver itself does not contain any of these snow laden mountains, snow sport activities and the Rocky mountains are nonetheless an integral component to both Denver's identity and economy. With president Trump's proposed budget cuts, however, this relationship will be seriously threatened.

According to climate data from the National Centers for Environmental Information (NOAA), the average maximum temperatures for the month of March have been steadily increasing since 1948 in Denver. In other words, March has been warming for the past seven decades. This data reflects the global average rise of temperature reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and exposes Denver to consequential risks.

With this rise in temperature, Denver's crucial connections to the surrounding Rocky mountains will be jeopardized. The warming trend in March suggests that the spring season is growing longer and warmer. This shifting in seasons will result in an earlier loss of snowpack in the Rocky mountains that is projected to cut roughly 30 days from the ski season. Not only will this shift negatively affect ski resorts but it will also impact the overall number of tourists who visit the state. Even an annual decrease of 1 percent in the amount of tourists visiting Colorado to ski or snowboard, for example, would result in an expected loss of over \$375 million and over 4,500 jobs in the span of under 10 years. This hit to the state's economy and ski resorts will undoubtedly hinder Denver's economy as well as the morale of Denver's citizens, for such tourism drives many visitors to Colorado's capital and many Denver locals are ardent skiers themselves.

If approved, president's Trump's budget proposal for 2018 would cut 31 percent of funding for the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition to the government's weakened commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the EPA's cut in funding would directly impact the state of Colorado's management and mitigation of the effects of climate change. The Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment currently gets roughly one third of its budget from the EPA. In other words, about \$28 million are allocated from the EPA to supporting environmental programs in Colorado. Trump's current proposal would cut state grant programs by more than 40 percent and would therefore result in a serious impediment to Colorado's efforts in protecting their environment. In order to mitigate climate change's impacts on Colorado's prosperous ski and snowboard industry it is imperative that both this country and state continue to reduce greenhouse gas emission and conduct research on adaptation.

The flag of Denver displays two mountains side by side with a yellow sun in between them. The mountains are red with a white outline, representative of two snow-capped Rocky mountains. The Rockies are undeniably integral to the identity of Denver, from recreation to the economy. Given the consequential pairing of the current administration's proposed response to climate change and the heightened effects of the city's warming, it is important that we are nonetheless able to identify significant climate data trends, especially those that will impact us directly.

Once we ~~are able~~ identify such consequences of climate change, ~~it is imperative that~~ we have an opportunity to act. Colorado Congresswoman Diana DeGette (District X?) is currently serving on the Environment subcommittee of The House Committee on Energy and Commerce. While DeGette has a positive track record on environmental policy we must continue to put pressure on her to prioritize environmental health and prevent Trump's administration from ~~further~~ abusing the prosperity of Denver and the planet.

You can contact representative DeGette [here](#): (303)-844-4988

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([https://marclos.github.io/Climate\\_Change\\_Narratives/Piccone\\_Blog.html](https://marclos.github.io/Climate_Change_Narratives/Piccone_Blog.html))