

**(Pending Committee Approval)**

**Environment & Sanitation Committee Meeting Minutes  
Bronx Community Board 8**

**Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2025**

**Location: Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471**

**Start Time: 7:00 PM**

**Meeting Recording**

1. Welcome & Roll Call
  - a. Committee:
    - i. Present (4): L. Spalter, D. Rowen, E. Hausman, S. Froot
    - ii. Zoom (2): R. Fanuzzi, K. Argenti
    - iii. Absent (1): R. Spalter
  - b. Public: S. Haven, A. Hope, M. Koenig, J. Lovelace, J. Carroll, J. Colon, C. Tepelus
2. Approval of Committee Minutes – June 18, 2025
  - a. Unanimously approved by quorum.
3. Chairperson's Report
  - a. See attached news articles relating to environmental and sanitation issues that were passed around during the meeting:
    - i. <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2025/09/maha-moment-nyc-council-bill-would-ban-fluoride-drinking-water/408156/>
    - ii. <https://www.theverge.com/science/757084/data-purge-climate-change-environmental-justice-trump>
    - iii. <https://www.engadget.com/science/will-the-un-finally-broker-a-treaty-to-end-plastic-pollution-130022025.html>
4. Unfinished Business
  - a. Jerome Park Reservoir Updates
    - i. According to the June 2025 Quarterly Update, there may be water returning to the north basin of the Jerome Park Reservoir as soon as October. See attached newsletter for further information and updates.
  - b. NY & NJ Harbor & Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study

- i. Karen reported on an Army Corp of Engineers flooding study on the Harlem River to build a wall on the Manhattan side from around E. 149<sup>th</sup> Street to E. 167<sup>th</sup> Street, but that it has been put on hold pending community input.

- 1. To read the full report:

[https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Portals/37/NAN%20-%20005%20-%20NYNJHATS%20-%20Draft%20Report%20-%20Draft%20Report%20V3\\_1.pdf](https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Portals/37/NAN%20-%20005%20-%20NYNJHATS%20-%20Draft%20Report%20-%20Draft%20Report%20V3_1.pdf)

- 2. Laura and Camelia point out this was objected to years ago and both lament that they could not have come up with a better, possibly modular design instead.

- c. Better Bottles Bill

- i. Hopefully there can be a vote on this in January.

## 5. New Business

- a. FY 2028 Budget Requests Early Discussion

- i. As previously linked, we should request as many Floodnet sensors as appropriate to cover areas with frequent flooding in our district. To request a new sensor location, go here:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f1f4eb6214af4f47a8394fd0b7b96dd4>

- ii. Laura mentions catch basin replacements as a new budget item.

- b. Cross-Community Collaboration to Address Broadway Corridor Conditions

- i. The Kingsbridge BID should be invited to next Public Safety meeting, unfortunately no such BID exists for the commercial stretch in Marble Hill from W. 225<sup>th</sup> up to W. 230<sup>th</sup>.
  - ii. Jodi notes she's already sent photos of NYCHA's trash along Broadway that is overflowing frequently.
  - iii. Camelia remembers counsel members funding a litter patrol for businesses and also reminds us that businesses must all contract with approved providers for our new commercial trash zones.
  - iv. As is frequently pointed out, 311 is our best resource for reporting issues and hopefully getting them addressed. Everyone is encouraged to report

trash and other conditions and if they are not addressed, pass the ticket # onto the Community Board Office. Other resources for requesting new trash cans are as follows:

1. Here is the map you can check for currently placed trash bins:  
<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Environment/DSNY-Litter-Basket-Map-/d6m8-cwh9>
2. Then, if there is an appropriate location (on a commercial street corner along collection routes) the form to request a new bin is here: <https://portal.311.nyc.gov/sr-step/?id=14dc6ae8-03aa-f011-aa44-6045bd7b4ab9&stepid=6244a302-8d58-e811-a836-000d3a33b56b>
3. Additionally, if there is a section of sidewalk (or street 18" out from the sidewalk) that's especially messy and not being cleaned up by the adjacent business, there's a separate form for reporting "sidewalk slobbs" <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/what-we-do/cleaning/sidewalk-slobbs-contact.page>

c. Community Questions:

- i. Community members present bring up an issue with their landlord paving a tree box around a living tree. They have filed 311 complaints and talked to Parks Dept as well as DSNY, but no tickets have been issued, and the issue has not changed. They worry the tree roots will not get enough water, and it will suffocate and die.
  1. They would like to get an arborist to look at the tree (located at W. 239<sup>th</sup> and Hudson Manor Terrace) to assess health risks to the tree.
  2. Jodi mentions previous tree mutilations and advises they email [treewatch@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:treewatch@parks.nyc.gov) to contact their arborist.
  3. The Parks Dept has a map of all street trees that can be accessed here: <https://tree-map.nycgovparks.org/>
- ii. Jodi also brings up that DSNY is planning to focus more on the “Reduce” in “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” and asks if DSNY is going to come to a future committee meeting to discuss how effective CB8 is at recycling and organics separation.

iii. Steven brings up the next T&T meeting where they will be discussing the redesign of W. 254<sup>th</sup> Street in regard to CSO resiliency plans.

6. Adjournment at 8:54pm

Minutes submitted by Daniel Rowen, Chair, Environment & Sanitation Committee

# RECONSTRUCTION NEWSLETTER

Bureau of Public Affairs



## Bronx, NY

# Jerome Park Reservoir and Aqueduct Rehabilitation

3055 Goulden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10468

Project: JRAQ-REH

The Jerome Park Reservoir is a raw water reservoir supplying raw water to the Croton Filtration Plant. The primary purpose of the JRAQ-REH construction contract is to rehabilitate and upgrade components of the Jerome Park Reservoir and to maintain the reservoir in a state of good repair.



Application of Shotcrete on North Basin East Wall

### Project Scope

Construction of a Diversion Structure and filling the Old Croton Aqueduct (OCA) with Controlled Low Strength Material (CLSM), repair of leaks in the East Reservoir Wall, demolition of the existing fence along the East Reservoir Wall and construction of a new fence and guide rail, repair of the Lehman College Parking Lot retaining wall, repair of an existing rubble wall along the South Reservoir Access Road, repair and reinforcement of the North Basin Ramp, shotcrete repair of the North Basin inlet archway and wing walls, resetting of the East Reservoir Wall capstones, re-pointing of the East Reservoir Wall dimension stones, construction of a shotcrete armor wall along lower half of East Reservoir Wall (North and South Basins), and removal / replacement of the reservoir asphalt access roadways.

### Contract Work Schedule

May 2021 to December 2026

## June 2025 Quarterly Update

### Work Performed During the Period

- Installed fall protection fence posts and anchors along the East Road GH5 to GH 7.
- Completed coring of capstones for Lehman College Wall.
- Completed the installation of guide rail posts on the north side of GH5.
- Continued with Lehman College retaining wall repairs with excavation for new knee wall and placement of low strength concrete.
- Commenced shotcrete application for North Basin Armor Wall on 5/19/2025.

### Upcoming Work Activities (Next 3 Months)

- Complete Lehman College Retaining Wall repairs.
- Complete sediment removal from the North Basin.
- Complete capstone installation on the north side of Gatehouse 5 and East Roadway restoration work.
- Complete the installation of guide rail and chain link fall protection fence along the East Road from GH5 to GH 7.
- Complete installation of shotcrete for North Basin Armor Wall and Shaft 21.

### Work Hours

- Regular work hours: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday to Friday.
- Extended hours for shotcrete application - low noise activity - last hour will be for clean-up: 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Monday to Friday and 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM on Saturdays (only as necessary).

### Community Impacts

During construction hours, you can expect the following:

- Intermittent elevated levels of noise.
- Delivery trucks to use construction entrances on Sedgewick Avenue (north end of reservoir) and West 197th Street (south end of reservoir). Flag persons will be utilized for maintenance and protection of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- No water in North Basin during the construction period.
  - North Basin forecast to be out of service (empty) until October 2025.

### Community Construction Liaison (CCL)

The DEP has assigned Robert Vargo, PE, CCM of Arcadis as the Community Construction Liaison (CCL) for this project. Please contact Robert Vargo for any project related inquiries/concerns.

**Phone:** (917) 567-6660

**Email:** Robert.Vargo@arcadis.com

Eric Adams  
Mayor  
Rohit Aggarwala  
Commissioner

DEP Website

[www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep)

# MAHA moment? NYC Council bill would ban fluoride in drinking water

The bill's primary sponsor, Council Member Jim Gennaro, is close with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., but said the Health and Human Services secretary did not suggest this.



This stuff currently contains fluoride in New York City. OLGA ROLENKO/GETTY IMAGES

By ANNIE McDONOUGH | SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 05:21 PM ET

A new City Council bill seeks to ban fluoride from New York City drinking water, ending what the bill's two council supporters called "forced medication" of an entire population. It's also aligned with a movement to de-fluoridate water that has a federal champion in U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The bill would require the city to provide free fluoride supplements to anyone who requests them.

Democratic Council Member James Gennaro, the lead sponsor of the legislation, said that he hasn't always been skeptical of the benefits of fluoride in drinking water – something dentists maintain is beneficial to children's oral health and cavity prevention because it hardens tooth enamel. But despite studies that point to those

benefits, he's grown interested in the research that questions whether Americans are getting too much fluoride and potential health risks that could come with overexposure. If a fluoride ban did pass in New York City (unlikely), it would have some close company. Fluoride is not added to the drinking water in Nassau or Suffolk counties.

One analysis published by the National Institutes of Health in January looking at many different studies found that higher levels of fluoride exposure in children was associated with lower I.Q. scores. That effect started at an exposure level of 1.5 milligrams per liter, which is double what New York City adds to drinking water. The analysis included studies that the authors reported had a “high risk of bias,” as health outlet Stat News noted, and the authors told the outlet that the analysis didn’t cover the benefits of fluoridated water and wasn’t meant to address its “broader public health implications.”

Excessive fluoride exposure can also cause dental fluorosis, a mottled appearance, on developing teeth. One oft-cited study from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the prevalence of dental fluorosis was rising among adolescents in the early 2000s. In 2011, HHS lowered the recommended level of fluoride in water from a range of .7 to 1.2 milligrams per liter to .7 as the optimal level. That’s the level currently used in New York City drinking water.

Gennaro is personal friends with RFK Jr. – the two worked on environmental justice issues together – but said that the idea to introduce the bill didn’t come directly from the health secretary now best known for “Make America Healthy Again.” The MAHA movement is highly skeptical of established medicine and has put the federal government’s existing vaccine recommendations in its crosshairs. “Bobby and I talk all the time,” Gennaro said. “He knows that I’m doing this, and I’m looking at the science. I’m looking at the science that’s coming out of his shop, and I’m doing my own thing, so he’s aware of it.”

Gennaro said that part of his aim in introducing the bill is to get more input on the idea from experts. But what he’s seen so far, he said, points in the direction of de-fluoridation. “It’s definitely trending in the direction that I think action to ban is

indicated.” Gennaro said he’s working with a professor at Queens College to research the issue further but declined to name the person.

New York City’s tap water has been fluoridated since 1965, and it’s seen as a particularly crucial measure for people who don’t get much dental care. The debate over the benefits and potential risks of fluoridated drinking water predated MAHA, but it has picked up steam under Kennedy’s leadership of the nation’s health department. So far, Kennedy has directed the CDC to convene an independent panel to study the issue, but individual states have taken more drastic action, including Utah and Florida which have banned fluoridating drinking water. Like other critics and skeptics, Kennedy has suggested that we get enough fluoride from toothpaste and mouthwash.

The bill was only introduced last week, but the only other co-sponsor signed on so far is Republican Frank Morano. “I think people should be able to hydrate without being forced to ingest a medication that they may not want or need,” Morano told City & State.

New York City health department spokesperson Chantal Gomez said that they are reviewing the bill but called fluoridation of drinking water “one of the great public health achievements of the last century.”

The bill faces an uphill battle in the council, though Gennaro said he hasn’t started to make his case to his colleagues yet. City Council spokesperson Rendy Desamours said that the bill will go through the legislative process, which allows for public engagement, and noted that the council “follows the advice of accredited public health professionals.”

Shortly after President Donald Trump was elected in November, New York City Mayor Eric Adams was asked about his position on fluoride in the drinking water. While the mayor initially seemed uncertain, his spokesperson followed up with a statement to The New York Times stating that the mayor “supports keeping fluoride in New York City’s water supply as recommended by his public health officials and experts.”

Gennaro said he'd also welcome input from those who highlight the oral health benefits of fluoride – groups that include the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Dental Association – and argue against removing it from drinking water. "I'm going to the dentist now, so I will ask," Gennaro said, a few minutes before ending the interview so as to not be late for his appointment.

*Holly Pretsky contributed reporting.*

# Will the UN finally broker a treaty to end plastic pollution?

It's high time for a solution to the world's plastic crisis.



**Cheyenne MacDonald** Weekend Editor

Mon, August 4, 2025 at 9:00 AM EDT

10 min read



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(REUTERS / Reuters)

To tackle what's been called the plastic "epidemic," the UN spun up a committee in 2022 tasked with brokering a legally binding global agreement. This ambitious treaty between UN member states was to address the full life cycle of plastics, from production to disposal: In short, define what counts as plastic pollution and curb the sorts of unchecked production that inevitably leads to it. But across five sessions since, countries have failed to reach a consensus on the text.

What was meant to be the final session ended last year in Busan, South Korea without agreement, and representatives from 175 countries are now set to meet again for part two, this time in Geneva, Switzerland. INC-5.2 will take place from August 5 to 14, during which negotiators will attempt to see eye-to-eye on the points of the draft treaty

that have thus far proven most contentious. According to the [Center for International Environmental Law](#) (CIEL), there are over 370 such points.

## Scope

Production, the use of chemicals of concern (those considered to be a risk due to toxicity and/or other qualities), product design and the financing of treaty implementation are some of the main points of disagreement. These issues have left countries in a deadlock, according to Cate Bonacini, Communications Manager for CIEL. There are countries that argue health should be excluded from the treaty's scope. These topics will be front-and-center going back into the talks, and UN member states have spent the last eight months "working hard in closed-door meetings to find points of agreement," Bonacini said in an email. "We'll see the fruits of that labor soon."

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"At the heart of the issue," Bonacini said, "there is a large disagreement about what plastic pollution is, and what measures are needed to end plastic pollution." While the commitment focuses on the full life cycle of plastics, there's been much dispute over where that cycle really begins.

"As scientists, we interpret the full life cycle as starting with extraction and production," said Bethanie Carney Almroth, a professor of ecotoxicology at the University of Gothenburg and a member of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty. "That would be fossil fuels and raw plastic production all the way through to product, to use, to trade, to transportation, to waste management, mismanagement and environmental pollution, including remediation of existing legacy plastics. All of it."

While over 100 countries last December were in favor of a treaty that would impose production limits, others including [Saudi Arabia and Russia](#) opposed the caps. Ahead of that session, the US reportedly also made the decision [not to support production caps](#), despite earlier indications that it would. Unsurprisingly, the countries that have taken issue with the scope of the treaty are also some of the world's top oil producers.

"There are other actors," Carney Almroth said, "that are trying to narrow that scope to go from plastic products, like water bottles, to waste management, so sort of excluding the outer boundaries of how we define the plastics life cycle so that it would, in essence, become more of a waste management treaty."

## Outside influence

In addition to representatives from the participating member states, scientists, environmental organizations and industry lobbyists are present for the negotiation sessions. According to Carney Almroth, who has attended every Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meeting and is now in Geneva for INC-5.2, increasingly it's been lobbyists who take up the most space.

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"At the last round of talks, lobbyists for the petrochemical and plastics industries made up the single largest delegation," wrote Bangor University lecturer Winnie Courtene-Jones, who is also a member of the Coalition, in a recent article for *The Conversation*. CIEL found that "there were three times more fossil fuel and chemical industry lobbyists than scientists" at the Busan meetings. Bonacini noted that "plastics are 99 percent fossil fuels, and these companies have a vested interest in continuing to generate fossil fuel-based products, including plastics."

Their influence has played a big role in the stalemate. They "have a lot of power, money and influence," Carney Almroth said, "and their lobbying efforts go beyond the walls of the negotiating space...They have access to decision makers in ways that other observers do not."

"They don't want to look at chemicals," Carney Almroth said. "They don't want to look at production." But the science indicates that looking at chemicals (additives, processing aids, etc.) and production is of utmost importance, not only in the context of environmental sustainability but also human health.

In an editorial for the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* in July, a group of scientists pointed to the numerous potential health effects that recent studies have linked to plastics, via exposure to hazardous chemicals and from micro- and nanoplastics. That includes an increased risk of "multiple chronic diseases, including cancer, neurodevelopmental harm and infertility" as well as "respiratory, reproductive and gastrointestinal harm, with potential links to lung and colon cancer."

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The authors called on delegates to prioritize these concerns in the upcoming negotiations and work toward a treaty that would end production of toxic chemicals in plastics, ban the recycling of plastics containing those chemicals and reduce plastic production overall. Their letter comes alongside a separate study published this summer in the journal [\*Nature\*](#) that identified over 4,200 chemicals of concern in plastics, out of the 16,325 total [known plastic chemicals](#). The researchers argue that, on top of establishing transparency around the makeup of plastics and removing chemicals of concern, plastics must be simplified if they're going to be made safer.

The many chemicals that go into plastics "can be released throughout the entire plastic life cycle, from feedstock extraction and production to use and waste," the authors write. "Specific end-of-life treatments, such as uncontrolled landfilling or incineration, can further exacerbate chemical releases." The [UN](#) has warned that the negative effects at every stage in the life cycle of plastics disproportionately harm vulnerable populations worldwide, including indigenous peoples, low income families and rural communities.

## Where things stand

Today, plastic is more or less inescapable — microplastics can even be [found in Antarctica](#) now. And research increasingly suggests we aren't fully aware of how bad pollution levels really are.

Global plastic production has more than doubled in the last 25 years, with upwards of [450 million metric tons](#) now estimated to be produced annually. Recycled plastics make up just 6 percent of that total, a figure that's expected to stay the same even as global plastic use and waste generation are projected to rise 70 percent by 2040, according to the international Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). And each year, tens of millions of tons of plastic waste is disposed of in ways considered to be environmentally unsound, ending up in uncontrolled dumpsites, burned openly or accumulating on land and in bodies of water.

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A [study](#) published this summer, led by researchers from Utrecht University and the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, found that there may be far more plastic in the oceans than previously thought when accounting for particles even smaller than

microplastics. The team collected water samples from 12 locations across the North Atlantic Ocean and measured the concentration of nanoplastics (plastic particles under 1 micrometer) at different depths. By the researchers' estimate, there could be as much as 27 million metric tons of nanoplastic in the North Atlantic alone. That's in the ballpark of previous global estimates for larger plastic waste across all of the ocean.

In another new [study](#), researchers from France's University of Toulouse found we may be breathing in up to 100 times more microplastic particles indoors than previous estimates, based on measurements of airborne microplastics in the researchers' own apartments and car cabins.

The situation is urgent, especially for vulnerable populations, said Carney Almroth. "The amounts of plastics we're producing today and the amount of plastic in the environment are astronomical," said Carney Almroth. As of a few years ago, "we had twice the mass of plastic on the planet as the mass of all the animals on land, in water, including insects, and we have produced far more plastic since then."

Plastics are "overwhelming any and all of our waste management infrastructure, so we are not able to prevent pollution. We're not able to mitigate harm," Carney Almroth said. "The impacts of plastics in the environment are very large scale, to the point where they're destabilizing vital Earth functions like climate, like nutrient cycling, like biodiversity. And then we have the human health impacts on top of that. It's an acute problem."

## **The logistics of averting catastrophe**

But, as the past five sessions have illustrated, reaching an agreement on how to solve that problem isn't going to be easy. The trouble, in part, boils down to how the decisions are being made. So far, it's all being done by consensus rather than voting, Carney Almroth and Bonacini explained. That approach allows "a single country veto power over decisions," Bonacini said.

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Petrochemical countries including Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, India and Brazil have [reportedly](#) latched onto this, using "obstructionist tactics" to drag out the negotiations. Some have insisted "without legal basis," according to CIEL, "that decisions can only be made by consensus." Consensus, however, isn't the only option.

The draft Rules of Procedure allow for majority voting in the event a consensus can't be reached, but whether that will happen is yet to be seen. "There are opportunities to force that rule," Carney Almroth said. But, a country (or countries) would have to step up and invoke it.

At this stage of the negotiations, there is a risk that countries will compromise on key provisions for time's sake, Bonacini said, which would ultimately weaken the treaty. And once a treaty is finalized, "it can take years, if not decades, to make amendments to the original text," so getting it right the first time is crucial. International agreements that have taken a softer approach to addressing environmental issues, like the Paris Agreement — which lets countries set their own targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions — have been [criticized for being insufficient](#) in the face of rapidly rising global temperatures and climate change.

In June at the UN Ocean Conference, representatives for 95 countries that are part of the INC reaffirmed their commitment to a treaty that addresses the full life cycle of plastics, phases out "the most problematic plastic products and chemicals of concern," improves product design to reduce environmental and health impacts and employs effective means of implementation. "A treaty that lacks these elements, only relies on voluntary measures or does not address the full lifecycle of plastics will not be effective to deal with the challenge of plastic pollution," the group — which includes Canada, Australia, Colombia, Zimbabwe, the UK and Germany — wrote in [a joint statement](#). These countries added that "the treaty should provide for the possibility of decision-making, through regular UN procedures if all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted."

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If an agreement isn't reached this time around, there are a number of ways the next steps could play out. The talks could be stretched even further into another meeting, or countries could decide to take the matter somewhere else.

"Many countries are considering alternatives if negotiations fail," Christina Dixon, Ocean Campaign Lead for the Environmental Investigation Agency told [Mongabay](#). "Options include returning to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) to establish a new expanding mandate, creating a convention outside the UN for committed

countries to move forward or adopting a protocol under an existing convention." The UNEA meets next in December.

We are, as Courtene-Jones wrote in *The Conversation*, at "a critical crossroads." That's something advocates for a strong, science-based treaty all seem to agree on. "There are a lot of places where we can really do a lot to make a difference, and make things better," said Carney Almroth. "Countries need to be ambitious, and need to stand up and demand this."

# Why Donald Trump's environmental data purge is so much worse this time

Resources on climate change and inequity have vanished, and disinformation is taking its place.

by  **Justine Calma**

Aug 9, 2025, 1:00 PM UTC



Image: Cath Virginia / The Verge; Getty Images



**Justine Calma** is a senior science reporter covering energy and the environment with more than a decade of experience. She is also the host of **Hell or High Water: When Disaster Hits Home**, a podcast from Vox Media and Audible Originals.

Now that we're about halfway into the first year of President Donald Trump's second term, we can take stock of his administration's destruction of online environmental resources. It's worse than last time. It's also, seemingly, just the beginning — paving the way forward for the president's polluting agenda.

A watchdog group that monitors publicly-available environmental data has recorded 70 percent more federal website changes during Trump's first 100 days in office in 2025

compared to the start of his first term in 2017.

Federal agencies are taking broader swings to ax public resources from their websites this time around, the [report](#) shows. They're hiding which communities are most affected by pollution. The Trump administration has not only tossed out the most authoritative national reports on climate change, they're starting to replace facts and evidence with disinformation. We're seeing a revisionist history unfold.

## “You can say anything you want to say if you remove evidence to the contrary.”

“If you suppress data ... you can say anything you want to say if you remove evidence to the contrary,” says Gretchen Gehrke, one of the lead authors of the [report](#) published this week by the Environmental Data & Governance Initiative (EDGI).

Looking just at the first 100 days of Trump’s second term compared to the start of his first term, EDGI noted 632 important changes to federal websites this year compared to 371 in 2017. That’s despite EDGI only keeping tabs this year on 20 percent of the websites it monitored during the first term, due to capacity constraints and because the group chose to home in on webpages it thought would be most vulnerable.

They’ve [tracked](#) 879 significant changes to 639 different federal webpages during the first 6 months of the current administration. That includes changes to content, like replacing the term “climate change” with “extreme weather,” and the wholesale removal of entire webpages.

Any information about disparities in pollution and the health impacts of climate change have been the biggest targets of deletion. The Environmental Protection Agency’s EJScreen mapping tool, [designed to show which populations are disproportionately impacted by air pollutants and other public health hazards across the US](#), was [one of the first resources lost](#). Federal agencies had essentially purged any of their publicly-available websites on [environmental justice](#) by mid-February, according to the report.

“The thing that is the most different is this total erasure of information about environmental racism and the evidence of environmental racism,” Gehrke says. “In the second Trump administration, information control was about removing evidence of inequality.”

As global warming pushes up sea levels, for example, a 2021 EPA report found that Hispanic and Latino individuals are roughly 50 percent more likely than others to live in coastal areas with the highest estimated increases in traffic delays from worsening high-tide flooding. A press release and PDF of the report are still available online. (Did it escape scrutiny because it’s described as a “social vulnerability report” rather than an environmental justice report?) A link in the press release to more “information about environmental justice,” however, is dead. It simply says “Sorry, but this web page does not exist.”

## “Information control was about removing evidence of inequality.”

For resources on climate change more broadly across federal websites, changes have “started really ramping up,” Gehrke says. “That story is yet to unfold.” So far, the EPA’s climate change website is still intact. But the Trump administration has terminated the content production team behind climate.gov, and the URL started redirecting people to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website in June. It’s a warning sign that “it is possible that another significant removal of climate change information is currently unfolding as of the writing of this report,” the EDGI report notes.

Scientists raised alarm in July when the Trump administration took down the federal website that houses national climate assessments. The Congressionally-mandated assessments show how climate change affects each region of the US, from threatening ice fishing in the Midwest to raising the risk of window-smashing hail over the Northern Great Plains. During his first term, Trump got flak for releasing the report on a Friday after Thanksgiving — accused of trying to bury it during a holiday weekend. This year, the Trump administration just went ahead and dismissed all the researchers

working on the next iteration of the report. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright went so far as to suggest in an [interview with CNN](#) this week that the administration would review previously published assessments and “will come out with updated reports on those.”

Wright, [who led an oil and gas company before joining Trump's cabinet](#), also [commissioned climate skeptics](#) to release a misleading report on greenhouse gas emissions last week that [rejects scientific consensus on climate change](#). It comes on the heels of the Trump administration attempting to take away the EPA's ability to regulate planet-heating pollution by [countering the landmark 2009 “endangerment finding”](#) that accurately finds that greenhouse gas emissions endanger public health. Climate change, caused by greenhouse gas emissions, is projected to lead to roughly 250,000 additional deaths each year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat illness between 2030 and 2050, [according to the World Health Organization](#).

Neither the Department of Energy nor NOAA immediately responded to inquiries from *The Verge*. “President Trump was elected with a mandate from the American people to create a more effective and efficient federal government that serves all Americans, and EPA is doing just that,” Brigit Hirsch, EPA Press Secretary, said in an email to *The Verge*.

#### Related

- [How extreme heat disproportionately affects Latino neighborhoods](#)
- [The new lies spreading about climate change](#)

Access to as much as 20 percent of the Environmental Protection Agency website was removed throughout Trump's first term, [according to research EDGI published in 2021](#).

Fortunately, EDGI and other groups have also been working to make data available elsewhere online for the public. The nonprofit Internet Archive's [Wayback Machine](#) can pull up snapshots of what webpages have looked like over the years. Archiving tool [Webrecorder](#) also has created [mirrors of climate.gov](#) and the [US Global Change Research Program website](#) that used to house national climate assessments.

Farmers and environmental groups have also filed suit to force the Trump administration to restore federal resources. Farmers won a legal battle to bring climate content back to US Department of Agriculture webpages. Sierra Club and other groups have sued to bring back EJScreen. In the meantime, a copy of the tool is available from The Public Environmental Data Partners.