

Trump's EPA Budget Cuts Would Eliminate Funding For Some California Programs

By Amy Quinton

Capital Public Radio, Tuesday, March 7, 2017

The White House is proposing to slash a quarter of the EPA budget and eliminate grants to programs that help protect clean air and water in California.

Under the proposal, grants provided to states to reduce diesel emissions and test water quality at beaches would be eliminated.

Funding for the San Francisco Bay Program would also be cut. The program restores wetlands and protects habitat and water quality in the Bay. It's part of the largest estuary on the west coast.

"It's really going to be devastating if these cuts go through because San Francisco Bay actually needs more federal investment to be clean and healthy, not less," says David Lewis, executive director of Save The Bay.

Last June, Bay Area residents approved a parcel tax that will generate \$500 million over 20 years to restore marshes around the bay.

"That's actually only a third of the estimated cost," says Lewis. "So we really need the federal government and the state government to be partners in restoring the bay by contributing resources and budgets to do that."

The San Joaquin Valley receives about \$10 million to reduce emissions from agricultural equipment and replace old fireplaces. These targeted airshed grants are given to air districts that currently aren't meeting air quality standards.

"It's critically important to the valley," says Seyed Sadredin, executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

"We are at a point where 85 percent of air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley comes from sources of air pollution that we have no regulatory authority to control...having funding like this is really the only way that we have to bring about changes," says Sadredin.

President Trump's budget is not yet final and the EPA's new administrator, Scott Pruitt, has cautioned that he will make changes.

Any proposal would also have to be approved by Congress, where even some Republican members have suggested the cuts might be too steep.