

# Budget cuts threaten clean-up of most polluted areas

By Paige Blankenbuehler, High Country News

This month the Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight Subcommittee had a hearing to discuss the fate of Superfund, a program of the Environmental Protection Agency. The meeting comes one week after the Superfund task force, which was created by EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in May, released its first report with recommendations for cleanups of sites.

But the fate of the program may be threatened by budget cuts proposed to the EPA and the Superfund program, which will shrink by 30 percent if President Donald Trump's budget is passed. Although Trump's proposed cut to the EPA was expected, the deep cut to Superfund was not. Pruitt has previously said he does not support cutting the Superfund program and instead promised to prioritize it.

"Unfortunately, many of these sites have been listed as Superfund sites for decades, some for as many as 30 years," Pruitt wrote in an announcement of a Superfund Task Force in May. "This is not acceptable. We can – and should – do better."

The Leviathan Mine in Alpine County is a Superfund site and the old Meyers landfill that has been cleaned up was once on that list.

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