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Subject: House bill would cut EPA budget, reduce state grants

By Alex Guillén and Annie Snider

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The House's EPA spending bill would shrink the embattled agency's fiscal 2018 funding by \$528 million to the lowest level in a decade, but a far more modest cut than the one sought by the Trump administration.

The bill would provide EPA with \$7.5 billion, according to the House Appropriations Committee, its lowest funding level since 2008.

The proposal would cut the State and Tribal Assistance Grants, which make up a major portion of EPA's budget and doles out money to states for implementing and enforcing environmental laws, as well as for specific projects.

STAG would get just under \$3.3 billion, down from the \$3.5 billion spent in 2017 but significantly more than the \$2.9 billion requested by the White House. Many states, facing their own budget crunches, oppose serious cuts to those grants.

One category of STAG grants, however, would see funding held steady with current levels: the popular state revolving funds that support sewer and drinking water infrastructure projects level, which would receive a combined budget of \$2 billion.

The bill would also raise funding for the new Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act — a new funding mechanism that has yet to make its first awards — by \$5 million to a total of \$25 million.

The measure also offers a rebuke of the Trump administration's move to end funding for popular regional watershed programs across the country, providing \$397 million for such cleanup efforts. Details on how the dollars are allocated, from the Great Lakes to the Chesapeake Bay, are included in the yet-to-be-released bill report.

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