

Why groups as epa  
should be helped in  
their important health  
safety mission throu...

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## **Funding a Safe Environment**

Through recent discussion of the Flint Water Crisis over the past few months, Americans have started becoming aware of how altering our environment can affect our health. Organizations such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) serve to protect U. S. citizens from getting hurt by our environment while also teaching us how to not hurt the environment ourselves. Funding groups like the EPA is therefore very important for the safety of our citizens and decreasing this funding to the EPA negatively impacts the environment because it lessens the amount of resources they have for oversight, research, and public awareness. If no action is taken regarding the ever growing list of damages we are causing, future generations will suffer.

The Flint Water Crisis began when officials in Flint, Michigan switched the area's water supply from Lake Huron's water to Flint River's water. In order for water to be qualified as safe, its source must have corrosion inhibitors but " the corrosion-control treatments required by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lead and Copper Rule were, for some reason, discontinued" in Flint River (Bellinger, 2016). This was thought to have been done in an attempt to save money but the outcome of these actions has proved that risk was not worth taking. With more corrosion in the water being sourced to these residents, the more metals like lead are able to dissolve in it (Bellinger). If Flint officials would have treated the water from Flint River for corrosion when they first made the switch, it would have cost a mere \$100 per day but officials decided against that for financial reasons and now they

are paying much more as they battle lawsuits from people affected by consuming this water (Lansing, 2016). Michigan officials are being told that fixing the damage that has been caused could cost them a massive \$1.5 billion (Bellinger). Consuming this contaminated water hurts children and pregnant women the most but can also have serious effects on all adults. The damages that could be caused to residents here by consuming this contaminated water include behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia for children, reduced growth of the fetus, and premature birth for pregnant women and for all other adults it can have serious cardiovascular effects, increased blood pressure and incidence of hypertension, as well as decreased kidney function, and reproductive problems (EPA, Mar. 2016). Taking care of our environment and the resources that go out to citizens across the nation and across the world is extremely important for keeping everyone safe. Preventing crisis like this from happening starts with informing others of how to keep our environment safe. The EPA is a well known source that provides information and tips about our environment and the actions that can be taken to keep it safe.

Without the EPA, many people would not have known how to take care of themselves or their children during the Flint Water Crisis but, fortunately, organizations like this provide free information for citizens who need it. The EPA runs on government funding which has been reduced in recent years. "Funding is maintained for core priorities, such as enforcement of environment and public health protections" however it was decreased by \$1.3 billion from 2011 to 2012 (The White House). If the amount of money that

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organizations such as the EPA continues to decline then they will no longer be able to continue “ assisting others, through grants, technical assistance and other means, in arresting pollution of the environment” which could lead to a very poor environment for the generations to come (EPA, Feb. 2016). They will not be able to afford the research necessary to keep citizens of the U. S. safe. Information taken from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shown in the graph below displays the amount of children over 72 months of age have been tested for lead poisoning in recent years compared to how many results turned out positive.

As the graph displays, a lack of funding in recent years has caused organizations who work to research environmental hazards such as lead poisoning has lead to less testing on citizens. If funding continues to decrease then less citizens will have access to this sort of research leading to less public awareness and safety of our environment and its citizens.

It is clear to see why having organizations such as the EPA and CDC are vital resources for protecting our environment and the citizens who live here. They provide oversight of hazards, perform research to learn about these hazards, and spread that information for better public awareness. If the funding for these people continues to decline then the quality of American life is going to continue to decline.