



Twitter.com/NMELC  
Facebook.com/NMELC

from left to right:  
US Attorney General Jeff Sessions;  
US Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke;  
EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt;  
US Secretary of Energy Rick Perry;  
NM Governor Susana Martinez;  
US President Donald Trump

Photography Courtesy of:  
CC Gage Skidmore, (Jeff Sessions,  
Scott Pruitt, Donald Trump); U.S.  
Congress, Ryan Zinke; Michael  
Vadon, Rick Perry; State of New  
Mexico, Susana Martinez

# Green Fire Report 30 YEARS

New Mexico Environmental Law Center | SPRING 2017 YEARS



## Environmental Defense in the Trump Era: and what we're up against

It will take some time to realize the full impact of the Trump administration's anti-environmental policies on New Mexico's communities and natural resources. But we believe that there will be widespread fallout that will touch everything from the air we breathe and the water we drink to civil rights. The one thing we know is that it's going to be a tough fight for the next couple of years under two administrations (state and federal) that put little value on environmental protection.

While we work to defend our state, we know that Trump has installed leadership antithetical to agency missions, will defund agencies, slash staffing and muzzle those who remain. These are the folks who protect New Mexico's surface water; who are tasked with enforcing environmental justice; and who have been working to address climate change at the national and international levels.

In addition, federal agencies, especially the Department of Energy and Department of Defense, have created significant environmental liabilities in our state. While Trump has announced his intent to boost nuclear and

military spending, it's uncertain at this point what he will do to fix the massive contamination at federal energy and defense sites. And that's before Congress gets around to gutting federal laws.

The federal government doesn't regulate everything, however. *New Mexico employees handle many environmental matters: groundwater quality, air quality and hazardous waste are just some of the issues under their jurisdiction.* For the past six years, the Martinez administration has worked hard to weaken environmental protections and erode the public's ability to participate in decision-making. And it's about to get worse, currently the New Mexico Environment Department receives 27% of its \$79 million annual budget from the federal government. Amidst the uncertainty, what we do know is that public interest lawyers play an important role in times like these. As we've seen with Governor Martinez, politicians have a habit of adopting unconstitutional policies and regulations. The Law Center gives New Mexicans the ability to challenge them when they do.