

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Don't cut EPA funding

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The Trump administration's budget proposes deep cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency, including a 93 percent reduction in funding for the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program. This makes no fiscal sense. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation published a well-documented estimate that a restored Chesapeake Bay has an annual economic value of nearly \$130 billion in the region. Not only does enforcing the Clean Water Act in our region make fiscal sense, but enforcing the Clean Air Act saves money and lives.

According to *The Nation's Health*, a publication of the American Public Health Association, the Clean Air Act saved 160,000 lives last year and the number is expected to grow to 230,000 by 2020. Why? Bad air quality causes fatal heart attacks, asthma attacks and causes or aggravates other serious health issues. Improving air quality saves us money. Independent analysis estimates that savings associated with reduced medical expenditures in 2015 totaled \$18 billion.

I appreciate the security that comes from living in a country that has the strongest military in the world, but consider this: According to the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, 3,024 Americans died from 1975 through 2016 from foreign-born terrorism. Of course, we should take action to prevent future lives being lost to terrorism. But to do so at the expense of programs that save millions of dollars and more than a 100,000 lives annually makes no fiscal or moral sense. I urge all of Virginia's congressional representatives to provide EPA with the resources needed to keep us healthy and prosperous here at home.