



Insider's Update: Federal Budget Cuts **April 21, 2017**

Megan Desrosiers, CEO

The 100th day of the new federal administration is almost here, and we at One Hundred Miles can firmly attest that the arena of coastal conservation has changed.

Since January 20th, President Trump's administration has launched an assault on environmental protection by taking actions such as repealing regulations aimed at slowing climate change, issuing an Executive Order changing the implementation of the "Clean Water Rule," and taking steps to open the Atlantic Ocean to offshore oil exploration and drilling. His targeted environmental rollbacks extend far beyond coastal conservation and will ensure that we have plenty to do over the next four years.

For many of us, it's been easy to get discouraged about the changes being made at the federal level. But our coast is too important to sit back and watch. That's why OHM is working at the local, state, and federal level to influence policies that affect our 100 miles. Please know that we have already started to either fight, or otherwise address at the state or local level, the changes the Trump administration is making to federal environmental policy.

Below, I've included a summary of some of the work we are doing to directly address the new administration's commitment to dismantling environmental regulation:

Clean Water Rule: Last year, One Hundred Miles, along with our partners at the National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Fund, Southern Environmental Law Center, and South Carolina Coastal Conservation League appealed to courts in the 6th District to hear arguments related to the Obama Administration's changes to the Clean Water Rule (CWR), an important component of the Clean Water Act. At the time, the administration's new CWR was being challenged by many in the anti-regulation community. While we are not 100% satisfied with the CWR, we felt it was important to have a seat at the negotiating table about this very important rule protecting water in coastal Georgia.

One of President Trump's first actions was to pass an Executive Order repealing this rule. Despite his order, two weeks ago the United States Supreme Court announced they will hear arguments to determine if the 6th District Circuit Court has jurisdiction over the Clean Water Act. While we did not anticipate a repeal of the Clean Water Rule at the time we filed our case, we are now in a unique position to address a serious threat to one of the most important environmental protection laws in the nation.

Federal Budget Cuts: In March, the President released a “budget blueprint” outlining his priorities for discretionary funding and detailing his recommendations for the federal budget. Overall, the budget blueprint suggests drastic cuts to many of the programs protecting our coast. For example, the President proposes the elimination of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)’s coastal flooding map effort and flood insurance subsidy program, which protects citizens from severe weather events and climate change. It also aims to eliminate funds the State of Georgia uses to monitor our water quality and wildlife, as well as coastal research programs such as Georgia Sea Grant and the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve. If these dangerous recommendations are adopted, many coastal jobs, wildlife, and programs upon which we all depend will be at risk.

OHM has launched a multi-phased campaign to connect our citizens with Georgia’s congressmen and the chairs of the US Appropriations Committees. Our first action alert went out in March. In the coming weeks, we will release a series of videos educating our citizens about coastal Georgia’s value and the importance of federal funding to protecting our world-class resources and communities. Please stay tuned for more information about how you can help.

Offshore Drilling: Last week, we received word that President Trump is expected to sign an Executive Order restarting the evaluation process for drilling for oil in the Atlantic and Arctic. Over the past two years, One Hundred Miles played a key role in this process. We worked with a multi-state coalition and local governments representing more than 200,000 coastal Georgia residents to oppose offshore drilling and seismic testing in the Atlantic. Now we stand ready to muster these same troops and grow our coalition when President Trump restarts this five-year process.

Given the new administration’s short, less-than-100-day track record, we know we have to work harder than ever to protect our coast over the next four years—and we will. With your help, we’ll continue to fight rollbacks at the federal level while bolstering the local and state laws that protect our coast.