

# The Cost of Nitrate Pollution

The contamination of surface water and drinking water with nitrate is dangerous to human health and harmful to the environment. But what is the economic impact of nitrate pollution?

## WATER TREATMENT COSTS

When nitrate is present in drinking water sources, water utilities must remove the excess to meet the EPA standard. Specialized nitrate removal infrastructure is required, which is expensive to install and operate.

## IMPACT ON THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Algae blooms that harbor toxic cyanobacteria can contaminate fish and shellfish, meaning the commercial fishing industry suffers.

Visit [www.nitratewatch.org](http://www.nitratewatch.org) to learn about nitrate pollution and how you can help protect clean water in your community.



## MEDICAL COSTS

Health conditions associated with nitrate pollution - like thyroid disease, birth defects, and some cancers - are costly to treat.

## DECLINING PROPERTY VALUES

Unightly and dangerous algae blooms affect the value of waterfront property.

## LOSS IN RECREATION

Nitrate pollution can lead to unsightly and dangerous algae blooms. It makes sense that this would negatively impact recreation activities, like fishing and paddling.

ESTIMATED U.S.  
ECONOMIC IMPACT:

**\$210 BILLION/YEAR**<sup>1</sup>

1. Sobota, D. J., Compton, J. E., McCrackin, M. L., & Singh, S. (2015). Cost of reactive nitrogen release from human activities to the environment in the United States. *Environmental Research Letters*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/10/2/025006>