

100 Days Of Trump: Environmental Policy

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On January 20th 2017 Donald Trump was sworn into office as our 45th President of the United States. Donald Trump campaigned on a platform of rolling back environmental protections, renegotiating or exiting the Paris Climate Accord, and returning to a time of coal or “clean coal”. Trump has since enacted a sweeping measure of environmental reform policies based on his campaign promises and has elected officials to further deliver upon his promises. This is a list of reports on the policies and decisions Trump is making, will make or has made to fulfil his rhetoric.

1. Hiring Scott Pruitt

Donald Trump started his campaign against environmental protection by hiring Scott Pruitt. As the *Environmental Defense Fund* writes:

“Pruitt is beginning to staff the EPA with Beltway insiders who have made their living lobbying for weaker pollution rules on behalf of industry. A recent analysis by Columbia University Law School showed that more than one quarter of the administration’s appointees so far to environmental, energy and natural resource agencies have close ties to the fossil fuel industry. The likely result: Thousands of decisions over the next four years made by those more interested in protecting polluters than public health.”

Source: <https://www.edf.org/blog/2017/04/27/100-days-4-worst-and-1-good-thing-trump-has-done-environmen>

2. Rolling Back Protections Against Dirty Energy and Chemical Safety

The Trump administration is aiming to cut regulations and protections against harmful chemicals while also ending preventive measures to stop for possible health risks and damage caused by factories. Last year congress overwhelmingly passed the Lautenberg Act, a set of rules and safety nets to protect against harmful chemicals reaching our products. The bill still has to be finished and for this finishing Pruitt has hired chemical industry insider Nancy Beck to finish the final language. Pruitt has also expressed an interest in examining protective acts against Mercury and Air Toxic rules as well as the Clean Air Act.

As the *Washington Times* reports:

The latest EPA budget plan would abolish programs that study known environmental hazards including lead, poor indoor air quality, and radiation. Others programs that help protect Americans from cancer would also face the axe — including the \$ 1.34 million indoor air radon program which works to protect the public against the invisible gas that is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon kills 21,000 people annually, according to the EPA. The EPA’s radiation program, currently funded at \$2.34 million, which sets standards for safe levels of ionizing radiation in the environment caused by radioactive elements such as uranium, is also slated for elimination — but it is unclear how fully eliminating its activities is possible.

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/31/new-epa-documents-reveal-even-deeper-proposed-cuts-to-staff-and-programs/?utm_term=.8d651443abdo

3. Slashed EPA programs:

EPA programs slated to be cut

In an EPA budget document obtained by The Washington Post, a spending plan detailed proposed program budget reductions.

SOME OF THE LARGEST PROGRAMS AND GRANTS THAT WILL BE DEFUNDED

\$289 million	Great Lakes Restoration 71.7 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE EQUIVALENTS (FTE) Returns responsibility to local and state governments. Provides funding and research to restore and clean up the region.	
\$165 million	Nonpoint Source grant Mitigates pollution from land runoff into waterways. Proposal encourages the EPA to continue working with the USDA to address these issues.	0 FTE
\$70M	Climate Protection Program Includes elimination of 14 programs, such as Energy Star, Green Power Partnership and Combined Heat & Power Part.	224.1 FTE
\$67M	Chesapeake Bay Returns responsibility to local and state governments. Provides funding and research to restore and clean up the region.	39.9 FTE
\$27M	Puget Sound Returns responsibility to local and state governments. Provides funding and research to restore and clean up the region.	6 FTE
\$26M	Water Quality Research and Support grants Develop sustainable solutions for water resource problems.	4 FTE
\$25M	Leaking Underground Storage Tank prevention Enforces petroleum releases from federally regulated underground storage tanks.	0 FTE
\$21M	Multipurpose grants Supports implementation of air and climate activities as well as water quality standards	0 FTE
\$20M	National Estuary Program/Coastal Waterways Protects and restores the water quality and ecological integrity of estuaries.	43.6 FTE
\$20M	Infrastructure Assistance: Alaska Native Villages Returns responsibility to local and state governments. Assists these communities with the construction of new or improved wastewater and drinking water systems.	0 FTE
\$158M	Other programs and grants	550.9 FTE

Source: EPA budget document

THE WASHINGTON POST

Source: <https://img.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2017/03/2300-EPACUTSo401-2.jpg>

4. Cutting Funds and “reorganizing”

As the *Washington Post* writes:

Because of the sweeping cuts to scientific programs, the administrator's own Science Advisory Board budget would be cut 84 percent. As the document explains, it would not need much money due to "an anticipated lower number of peer reviews." Reductions in research funds will curtail programs on climate change, water quality, and chemical safety, and "safe and sustainable water resources," the document said. Ken Kopocis, who headed EPA's Office of Water in 2014 and 2015, said in an interview that the \$165 million proposed cut to the agency's nonpoint source pollution program would deprive farmers of critical funds to help curb agricultural runoff. Several congressional Republicans have expressed support for reorienting the EPA's mission, though lawmakers are likely to restore some of the funding. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) said in a statement Friday, "There is room to cut wasteful programs in EPA's budget and at the same time, realign how taxpayer money is best allocated" by "giving states greater say in how they protect and manage their resources." In a recent interview, Sen. James M. Inhofe said he would like the department to focus on more traditional environmental concerns rather than addressing climate change. "What I want them to do is to do what they are supposed to be doing – be concerned about the environment, the water, the air," he said. "I'd like to see an EPA there to actually serve people and make life better for them.

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/31/new-epa-documents-reveal-even-deeper-proposed-cuts-to-staff-and-programs/?utm_term=.8d651443abdo

As the *Environmental Defense Fund* writes:

The administration's budget proposal would cut the EPA by almost a third – more than any other agency even though its budget is tiny to begin with. Out of every \$10 the federal government spends, only 2 cents go to the EPA. These cuts aren't being done to save money. They're part of an ideological crusade the public doesn't support. If the EPA budget is cut this way, the loss of experts and institutional knowledge will reverberate for years. Detailed plans obtained by the Washington Post show that Trump and Pruitt want to cut a quarter of the workforce and abolish 56 programs with impacts from the Chesapeake Bay to Puget Sound. Together, this will lead to more asthma attacks, more health problems for the elderly and a more dangerous future.

Source: <https://www.edf.org/blog/2017/04/27/100-days-4-worst-and-1-good-thing-trump-has-done-environment>

5. Paris Climate Accord Renegotiating or Exiting

As the *Arnold Porter Kaye Scholar* writes:

The Trump administration has yet to take a stand on whether the United States will withdraw from the landmark international climate change agreement brokered in Paris at the December 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, which went into effect in November 2016. Under the Paris agreement, the United States pledged to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 26 to 28 percent by 2025 (from 2005 levels). It is widely reported that the Paris agreement is being hotly debated within the administration. A decision is expected by the time the United States participates in the G7 summit at the end of May 2017. If the United States remains in the Paris agreement, the next question will be whether the United States seeks to modify the agreement or revise the U.S. pledge, given the Trump administration's decision to reconsider regulatory

initiatives, such as the Clean Power Plan, aimed at controlling greenhouse gas emissions. Such decisions could, in turn, provoke reactions from other nations.

Source: <https://www.apks.com/en/perspectives/publications/2017/04/trumps-environmental-agenda-the-1st-100-days>

Though the decision has not been made there is a great deal of fighting going on within the Trump administration.

As *The Guardian* reports:

Different factions in Trump's orbit have clashed over whether the US should pull out. Steve Bannon, Trump's top strategist, favors withdrawal, as does Scott Pruitt, the EPA administrator, who has called it a "bad business deal for this country". Rick Perry, the energy secretary, said last month "we probably need to renegotiate" the agreement. Meanwhile, Rex Tillerson, the secretary of state, and Trump's family members and advisers Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, are understood to favor remaining in the deal. Discussions have become somewhat bogged down in a legal debate over whether the US could downgrade its emissions reduction goals. Barack Obama's administration set a target of a 26-28% reduction in emissions by 2025, based in 2005 levels.

Big businesses have added their voice to the debate, with a group of more than 200 large investors this week joining calls from companies, including fossil fuel interests, to stick with the status quo. A recent letter signed by BP, Shell and Rio Tinto informed Trump that the Paris deal "expands markets for innovative clean technologies, generating jobs and economic growth", adding that "climate change presents US companies with both business risks and business opportunities".

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/09/paris-climate-deal-trump-advisers>

As *The New York Times* reports:

While the president cannot, as Mr. Trump suggested, unilaterally undo a 194-nation accord that has already been legally ratified, he could initiate the four-year process to withdraw the world's largest economy and second-largest climate polluter from the first worldwide deal to tackle global warming. Such a move would rend a global deal that has been hailed as historic, throwing into question the fate of global climate policy and, diplomats say, the credibility of the United States. But it would also demonstrate to his supporters that Mr. Trump is a man of his word, putting American coal interests ahead of a global deal forged by Mr. Obama. On one side of that debate is Mr. Bannon, who as a former chief executive of Breitbart News published countless articles denouncing climate change as a hoax, and who has vowed to push Mr. Trump to transform all his major campaign promises into policy actions. President Trump spoke of "canceling" the Paris accord on the campaign trail, and last month signed an executive order to reverse most of President Barack Obama's climate change efforts, effectively ceding American leadership in the global effort to curb global warming.

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/us/politics/climate-change-trump.html>

As *Foreign Policy* reports:

It's unclear how Trump will come down on the issue, but for his inner circle, the battle lines are drawn. On one side are Trump's daughter Ivanka, his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who are lobbying the president to keep the United States in the deal, several sources tell FP. On the other side of the argument: White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon and Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt, both of whom reject climate change science.

For the United States, pulling out of the Paris agreement could have broad diplomatic repercussions, after years of difficult negotiations in which the U.S. pressed for concessions from allies and partners.

Until a couple of weeks ago, supporters of the climate agreement were cautiously optimistic the administration would opt to stay in the accord, particularly given Tillerson's comments suggesting Washington would be better off staying in and shaping the global agenda on climate. But on April 27, Trump's inner circle met to debate whether or not to withdraw the United States from the Paris deal, and opponents of the deal presented a new argument to ditch the accord.

The White House general counsel asserted that the United States could be vulnerable to legal challenges in court if it stayed in the accord while scaling back the emission pledges it made in the negotiations. If accepted, the legal interpretation would almost certainly force Trump's hand and prompt a U.S. exit from the deal.

Source: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/08/in-closed-door-climate-showdown-its-jared-and-ivanka-vs-bannon-and-pruitt-climate-change-trump-paris-agreement/>

A United Nations spokesperson had this to say about Trump's involvement:

The deputy secretary-general of the United Nations says the Trump administration must be "brought back to the table" on climate change, despite repeatedly pledging to pull out of an agreement aiming to reduce carbon emissions.

Amina J. Mohammed says the international community has a responsibility to convince President Donald Trump of the benefits of fighting global warming after he repeatedly pledged to pull out of an agreement aiming to reduce carbon emissions.

"I think that where people are not well-informed, we have to go back and do that. It seems as though we are taking 10 steps forward and five back, but it's an imperative. We don't have an option," Mohammed tells *Newsweek* in an exclusive interview. "The U.S. is an important leader in this and we believe that they will do the right thing once they are better informed about it."

Source: http://www.newsweek.com/amina-mohammed-trump-climate-change-581734?utm_source=internal&utm_campaign=incontent&utm_medium=related1

It is unclear where the Paris Accord will end up, though my money would be on it ending up as us exiting the accord. Hopefully this is not the case.

6. Approved the Dakota Access Pipeline

The Dakota Access Pipeline has been an extremely controversial project. There have been massive protests against its creation and Donald Trump steamrolled legislation on it.

High Country News reports:

In his first week in office, Trump signed executive actions to revive the controversial Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil pipelines, both of which had been in limbo. Former President Barack Obama had rejected construction of Keystone XL, saying the pipeline that would transport relatively dirty Canadian tar sands oil that would undermine U.S. leadership in global climate talks. The Dakota pipeline was held up by protests from Native American groups. “Those are major, huge infrastructure investments that mean these oil and gas resources are going to be burned,” Parenteau said. “These pipelines are going to add emissions for probably 40 years.”

Source: <http://www.hcn.org/articles/100-days-a-damage-report>

7. Big Coal Reforms

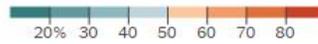
High Country News reports: Trump signed an executive order lifting Obama’s temporary ban on new coal leasing on public lands. While other orders merely begin the process of rolling back environmental regulations, this one was immediate: Interior Department Secretary Ryan Zinke lifted the Obama-era ban as soon as Trump signed the order. Right now, federal land accounts for 40 percent of U.S. coal production, according to The Hill. That translates into 13 percent of America’s energy-related carbon emissions. With Trump’s decision, 600 million tons of coal buried under federal lands are now open for mining. That’s not to say the coal industry is rushing to do so. “Practically, lifting the ban is not going to unleash a whole flood of coal burning, because the market’s already saturated,” Gallagher said. Indeed, the market has been saturated of late—that’s why so many coal companies are going bankrupt. But as Trump continues to deregulate coal power plants, it’s possible that demand could rise, at least temporarily.

Source: <http://www.hcn.org/articles/100-days-a-damage-report>

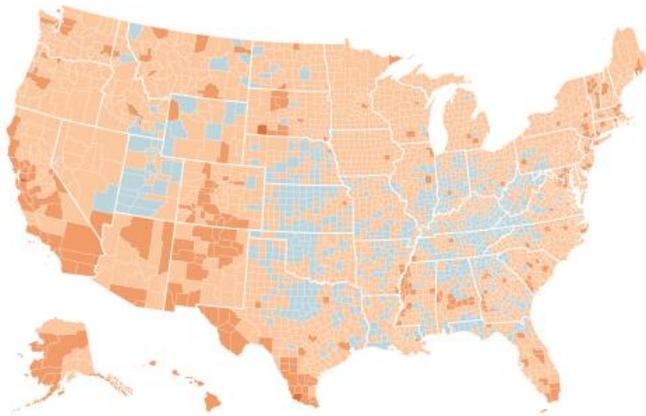
A New York Times graph:

Most people think that climate change will harm Americans, but they don't think it will happen to them.

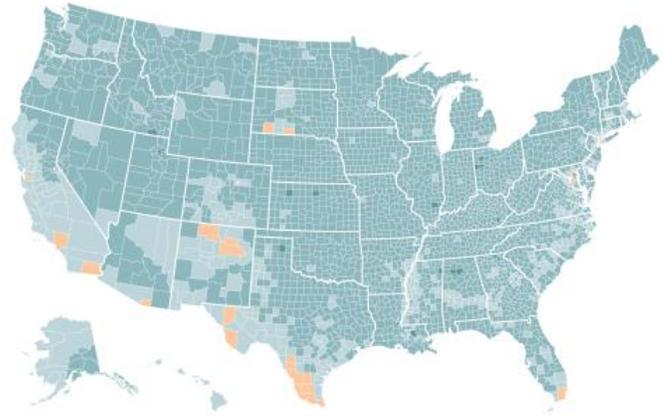
Percentage of adults per county who think ...



Global warming will harm people in the United States



Global warming will harm me, personally



Source:

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/21/climate/how-americans-think-about-climate-change-in-six-maps.html?mc=aud_dev&mcid=keywee&mccr=domdesk&kwp_0=368380&kwp_4=1375943&kwp_1=607002

Seattle Times reports:

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Four U.S. states filed a lawsuit Tuesday over President Donald Trump's decision to restart the sale of coal leases on federal lands, saying the Obama-era block of the leasing program was reversed without studying what's best for the environment and for taxpayers.

The attorneys general of California, New Mexico, New York and Washington, all Democrats, said bringing back the federal coal lease program without an environmental review risks worsening the effects of climate change on those states while shortchanging them for the coal taken from public lands.

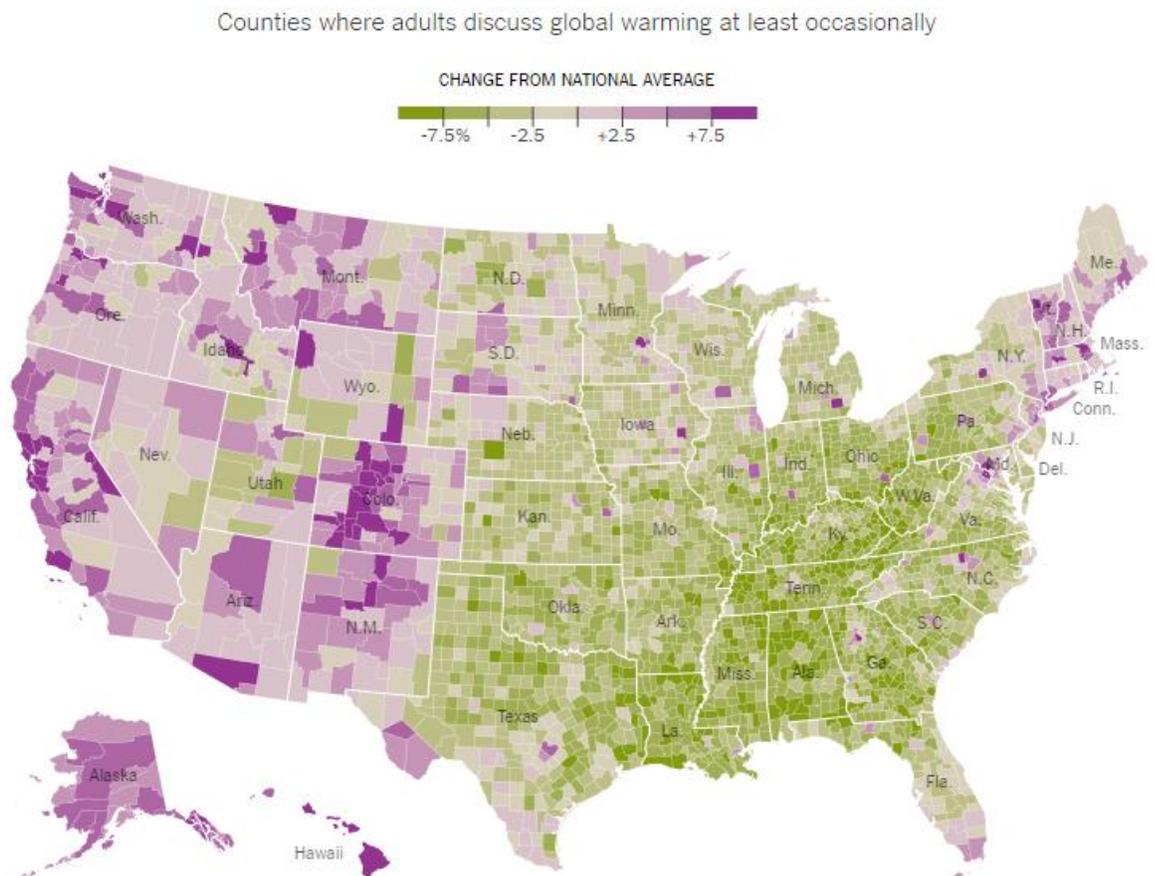
"Climate change has to be considered when we are talking about compensating states and New Mexico citizens for their resources," said Cholla Khoury, New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas' director of consumer and environmental protection.

The U.S. Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management administers 306 coal leases in 10 states, producing more than 4 billion tons of coal over the past decade. Most of that coal — 85 percent — comes from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana.

Source: <http://www.seattletimes.com/business/states-sue-over-trump-decision-to-restart-coal-lease-program/>

Conclusion:

**Everybody talks about the weather.
But the climate? Only in some places.**



Source:

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/21/climate/how-americans-think-about-climate-change-in-six-maps.html?mc=aud_dev&mcid=keywee&mccr=domdesk&kwp_0=368380&kwp_4=1375943&kwp_1=607002

One of the things that President Trump has been most steadfast and vocal about has been his environmental policy, something he has shows a clear intention to follow through on. To be more aware of this we must be more active about it and vice versa, environmental policy is something that affects us all and so we must remain vigilant in the fact of these changes and ideas.

