

# 76 Environmental Rules on the Way Out Under Trump

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UPDATED July 6, 2018

Since taking office last year, President Trump has made eliminating federal regulations [a priority](#). His administration, with help from Republicans in Congress, has often targeted environmental rules it sees as overly burdensome to the fossil fuel industry, including major Obama-era policies aimed at fighting climate change.

To date, the Trump administration has sought to reverse more than 70 environmental rules, according to a New York Times analysis, based on research from Harvard Law School’s [Environmental Regulation Rollback Tracker](#), Columbia Law School’s [Climate Tracker](#) and other sources.

	46 RULES OVERTURNED	30 ROLLBACKS IN PROCESS	76 TOTAL ROLLBACKS
 Air pollution and emissions	6	12	18
 Drilling and extraction	11	6	17
 Infrastructure and planning	11	1	12
 Animals	8	1	9
 Toxic substances and safety	4	3	7
 Water pollution	3	3	6
 Other	3	4	7

The Environmental Protection Agency has been involved in more than a third of the policy reversals identified by The Times. Scott Pruitt, the head of the E.P.A. who spearheaded the administration’s agenda of environmental deregulation, [resigned](#) after facing a number of

ethics scandals. Andrew Wheeler, [the new acting chief of the agency](#), is a former coal lobbyist who also wants to roll back environmental regulations.

Rules targeted for reversal so far include key Obama-era efforts to curb planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions, as well as broader air and water pollution controls and protections for threatened animals and habitats. The Trump administration has, in many instances, pared back these regulations in favor of more expansive energy extraction policies — often as a direct response to [petitions from oil, gas and coal companies](#). Mr. Trump has argued that supporting the fossil fuel industry strengthens the economy.

The list above represents two types of policy changes: rules that have been officially reversed and those still in progress. Other rules, summarized at the bottom of this page, were undone but later reinstated [after legal challenges](#).

The process of rolling back regulations has not always been smooth, in part because the administration has in some cases skipped steps like notifying the public and asking for comment. In several cases, courts have been asked to intervene to get agencies to follow their own policies.

All told, the Trump administration's environmental rollbacks could lead to at least 80,000 extra deaths per decade and cause respiratory problems for more than one million people, according to [a recent analysis](#) conducted by researchers from Harvard University. That number, however, is likely to be “a major underestimate of the global public health impact,” said Francesca Dominici, a professor of biostatistics at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Here are the details for each policy targeted by the administration so far. *Are there rollbacks we missed? Email [climateteam@nytimes.com](mailto:climateteam@nytimes.com) or tweet [@nytclimate](https://twitter.com/nytclimate).*

## Air pollution and emissions

### Overtaken

1. Canceled a requirement for oil and gas companies to report methane emissions. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
2. Loosened a Clinton-era rule designed to limit toxic emissions from major industrial polluters. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
3. Directed agencies to stop using an Obama-era calculation of the “social cost of carbon” that rulemakers used to estimate the long-term economic benefits of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Executive Order | [Read more](#)
4. Revoked a 2015 rule that prohibited the use of hydrofluorocarbons – powerful greenhouse gases – as a replacement for ozone-depleting substances. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
5. Repealed a requirement that state and regional authorities track tailpipe emissions from vehicles traveling on federal highways. Transportation Department | [Read more](#)
6. Withdrew guidance for federal agencies to include greenhouse gas emissions in environmental reviews. (But several district courts have ruled that emissions must be included in such reviews.) Executive Order; Council on Environmental Quality | [Read more](#)

### In process

7. Proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan, which set strict limits on carbon emissions from existing coal- and gas-fired power plants. In July 2018, the E.P.A. drafted a new, more conservative replacement plan. Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
8. Announced intent to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement. The process of withdrawing cannot be completed until 2020. Executive Order | [Read more](#)
9. Drafted changes to fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks made between 2020 and 2025 that would have reduced tailpipe emissions.

E.P.A. and Transportation Department | [Read more](#)

10. Reviewing recently updated standards for limiting carbon dioxide emissions from new, modified and reconstructed power plants. Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

11. Reviewing emissions rules for power plant start-ups, shutdowns and malfunctions. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

12. Proposed repealing an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions on public lands. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

13. Changed rules for oil and gas facilities to allow methane leaks to go unrepaired during unscheduled or emergency shutdowns, and proposed withdrawing guidelines that reduce emissions from existing sources. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

14. Put on hold rules aimed at cutting methane emissions from landfills. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

15. Proposed repealing emissions standards for trailers and “glider kits” in response to petitions from the glider industry. (Glidens are trucks retrofitted with older, often dirtier engines.) E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

16. Announced plans to review permitting programs for air-polluting plants and made two small changes through guidance documents. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

17. Announced rewrite of the E.P.A.’s 2017 update to a rule meant to reduce air pollution in national parks and wilderness areas. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

18. Proposed amendments to rules, developed after a 2014 consent decree, governing how refineries monitor pollution in surrounding communities. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

## Drilling and extraction

### Overtuned

19. Lifted a freeze on new coal leases on public lands. Executive Order; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

20. Opened nearly all of America’s coastal waters to offshore oil and gas drilling. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

21. Made significant cuts to the borders of two national monuments in Utah and recommended border and resource management changes to several more. Presidential Proclamation; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

22. Revoked an Obama-era executive order protecting ocean, coastal and Great Lakes waters in favor of a policy focused on energy production and economic growth. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

23. Rescinded water pollution regulations for fracking on federal and Indian lands. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

24. Repealed an Obama-era rule governing royalties for oil, gas and coal leases on federal lands, which replaced a 1980s rule that critics said allowed companies to underpay the federal government. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

25. Scrapped a proposed rule that mines prove they can pay to clean up future pollution. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

26. Withdrew a requirement that Gulf oil rig owners prove they can cover the costs of removing rigs once they have stopped producing. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

27. Approved the Keystone XL pipeline rejected by President Barack Obama. Environmental groups and some Nebraska landowners opposed the pipeline and legal challenges remain. Executive Order; State Department | [Read more](#)

28. Approved the Dakota Access pipeline blocked by the Obama administration following protests at Standing Rock over concerns that the

pipeline poses a risk to the region's drinking water. Executive Order; Army | [Read more](#)

29. Reversed how the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission considers the indirect effects of greenhouse gas emissions in environmental reviews of pipelines. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission | [Read more](#)

## In process

30. Opened up drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In April 2018, the Interior Department announced it was taking steps to prepare for a lease sale in the refuge. Congress; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

31. Ordered review of regulations on oil and gas drilling in national parks where mineral rights are privately owned. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

32. Proposed changes to regulations for oil well control and blowout prevention systems implemented after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

33. Recommended shrinking or opening to commercial fishing three marine protected areas. Executive Order; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more](#)

34. Proposed the use of seismic air guns for gas and oil exploration in the Atlantic. The practice, which can kill marine life and disrupt fisheries, was blocked under the Obama administration. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more](#)

35. Reviewing a rule, developed after the [2013 Kulluk accident](#), regulating offshore oil and gas exploration by floating vessels in the Arctic. Executive Order; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

## Infrastructure and planning

### Overtaken

36. Revoked Obama-era flood standards for federal infrastructure projects, like roads and bridges. The standards required building on

higher elevation in order to reduce risk of damage from sea-level rise and other climate change effects. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

37. Relaxed the environmental review process for federal infrastructure projects. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

38. Revoked directive for federal agencies to cut impacts on water, wildlife, land and other natural resources of development projects. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

39. Revoked a 2016 order protecting the northern Bering Sea region in Alaska. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

40. Revoked an Obama-era order which set a goal of cutting the federal government's greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent over 10 years. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

41. Revoked an update to the Bureau of Land Management's public land use planning process. Congress | [Read more](#)

42. Rescinded an Obama-era order to consider climate change in managing natural resources in national parks. National Park Service | [Read more](#)

43. Restricted Interior Department environmental studies to one year in length and a maximum of 150 pages, citing the need to reduce paperwork. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

44. Rescinded Obama-era Interior Department climate change and conservation policies that were seen to “potentially burden the development or utilization of domestically produced energy resources.” Interior Department | [Read more](#)

45. Eliminated the use of an Obama-era planning system designed to minimize harm of oil and gas activity on sensitive landscapes, such as national parks. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

46. Eased the environmental review processes for small wireless infrastructure projects with the goal of expanding 5G wireless networks. Federal Communications Commission | [Read more](#)

## In process

47. Announced plans to speed up and streamline the environmental review process for forest restoration projects. Agriculture Department | [Read more](#)

## Animals

### Overtured

48. Overtured ban on use of lead ammunition, fish weights and tackle on federal lands. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

49. Overtured a ban on the hunting of predators in Alaskan wildlife refuges. Congress | [Read more](#)

50. Ended an Obama-era rule barring hunters on some Alaska public lands from using bait to lure and kill grizzly bears. National Park Service; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

51. Removed a number of species from the endangered list (including the Yellowstone grizzly bear, which the Obama and George W. Bush administrations had also proposed removing). Interior Department | [Read more](#)

52. Withdrew proposed limits on endangered marine mammals and sea turtles unintentionally caught by fishing nets on the West Coast. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more](#)

53. Amended fishing regulations for a number of species to allow for longer seasons and higher catch rates. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

54. Rolled back an Obama-era policy aimed at protecting migratory birds. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

55. Overtured a ban on using parts of migratory birds in handicrafts made by Alaskan Natives. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

## In process

56. Released a plan that weakens greater sage grouse habitat protections by allowing oil and gas

drilling on lands previously set aside for the bird's protection. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

## Toxic substances and safety

### Overtured

57. Rejected a proposed ban on a potentially harmful pesticide, chlorpyrifos. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

58. Narrowed the scope of a 2016 law mandating safety assessments for potentially toxic chemicals, like dry-cleaning solvents and paint strippers. The E.P.A. will focus on direct exposure and exclude air, water and ground contamination. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

59. Removed copper filter cake, an electronics manufacturing byproduct comprised of heavy metals, from the "hazardous waste" list, based on a petition by Samsung. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

60. Reversed an Obama-era rule that required braking system upgrades for "high hazard" trains hauling flammable liquids, like oil and ethanol. Transportation Department | [Read more](#)

## In process

61. Proposed elimination of two programs limiting children's exposure to lead paint, which is known to damage brain and nervous system development. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

62. Proposed changes to a rule aimed at improving safety at facilities that use hazardous chemicals. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

63. Announced a review of an Obama-era rule lowering coal dust limits in mines. The head of the Mine Safety and Health Administration said there were no immediate plans to change the dust limit, but the review continues. Labor Department | [Read more](#)

## Water pollution

### Overtaken

64. Revoked a rule that prevented coal companies from dumping mining debris into local streams. Congress | [Read more](#)

65. Withdrew a proposed rule reducing pollutants, including air pollution, at sewage treatment plants. E.P.A.

66. Revoked federal rules regulating coal ash waste from power plants and granted oversight to the states. Mr. Pruitt's home state, Oklahoma, was the first to be granted this power and has applied the regulations only loosely. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

### In process

67. Suspended a rule, known as Waters of the United States, that protected tributaries and wetlands under the Clean Water Act. Executive Order; E.P.A. and Army Corps of Engineers review | [Read more](#)

68. Delayed by two years an E.P.A. rule regulating limits on toxic discharge, which can include mercury, from power plants into public waterways. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

69. Proposed new rule rolling back groundwater protections for certain uranium mines. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

## Other

### Overtaken

70. Prohibited funding third-party projects, like environmental projects, through federal lawsuit settlements. Justice Department | [Read more](#)

71. Announced intent to stop payments to the Green Climate Fund, a United Nations program to help poorer countries reduce carbon emissions. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

72. Reversed restrictions on the sale of plastic water bottles in national parks designed to cut down on litter despite a [Park Service report](#) that

the effort worked. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

### In process

73. Proposed limiting the studies used by the E.P.A. for rulemaking to only those that make data publicly available. The move was widely criticized by scientists, who said it would effectively block the agency from considering landmark research that relies on confidential health data. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

74. Proposed changes to the way cost-benefit analyses are conducted under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other environmental statutes. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

75. Delayed compliance dates for federal building efficiency standards until Sept. 30, 2017. No updates have been published, and the status of the rule remains unclear. Energy Department | [Read more](#)

76. Withdrew a proposed rule that would help consumers buy more fuel-efficient tires. The Transportation Department is scheduled to republish a proposal in summer 2018. Transportation Department | [Read more](#)

## Some other rules were reinstated following lawsuits and other challenges

Environmental groups have sued the Trump administration over many of the proposed rollbacks, and, in some cases, have succeeded in reinstating environmental rules.

Delayed by one year a compliance deadline for new ozone pollution standards, but later reversed course. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Suspended effort to lift restrictions on mining in Bristol Bay, Alaska. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Reversed course to regulate paint removers containing methylene chloride following increasing pressure from families who had lost relatives to paint-stripper poisoning. The E.P.A.

previously indicated it would not finalize regulatory action on the substance. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Delayed implementation of a rule regulating the certification and training of pesticide applicators. In March 2018 a judge ruled that the E.P.A. had done so illegally and declared the rule in effect. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Initially delayed publishing efficiency standards for household appliances, but later published

them after multiple states and environmental groups sued. Energy Department | [Read more](#)

Reissued a rule limiting the discharge of mercury by dental offices into municipal sewers following a lawsuit by the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Re-posted a proposed rule limiting greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft, after initially changing its status to “inactive” on the E.P.A. website. E.P.A.