

Scott Pruitt wants to take the EPA 'back to basics'

**BASICALLY BACKWARD**

**Basically Backward: How the  
Trump Administration is Erasing  
Decades of Air, Water and Land  
Protections and Jeopardizing  
Public Health**

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee  
Minority Staff

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## **In Review: The Trump Administration's First Year of Environmental Actions**

During his presidential campaign, then-candidate Donald Trump repeatedly [vowed](#) to “get rid of the [Environmental Protection Agency] in almost every form.”

A year into his administration, it is clear that President Trump is determined to make good on that campaign promise. While President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says it is moving “[Back to Basics](#),” it is, in reality, moving our country “[Basically Backward](#)” as it works to undermine fundamental protections for our environment and public health.

From nominating extremists to some of the highest posts in our government to willfully ignoring sound science and stripping the protections that keep millions of Americans safe, this administration has spent its first year reversing the progress our country – through both Democratic and Republican administrations – has made over decades.

Former heads of the EPA under Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, respectively, have repeatedly warned of this EPA's [unprecedented secrecy](#) and its dangerous [attacks on science](#). Even Republican lawmakers have opposed [this EPA's draconian cuts to states](#) that fund basic environmental programs.

Despite all of candidate Donald Trump's rhetoric, his administration has prioritized:

- [Filling the Swamp](#)
- [Erasing Clean Air, Clean Water and Chemical Safety Protections](#)
- [Dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency and its Support of State Environmental Programs](#)
- [No Environmental Cop on the Beat](#)
- [Denying the Science and Silencing the Scientists](#)
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When Americans went to the polls in 2016, they certainly did not ask for water that is less safe to drink, air that is less safe to breathe, exposure to chemicals that are more dangerous or a planet that is less healthy for their children and grandchildren. Unfortunately, that is what the American people are getting, thanks to the backwards agenda that the Trump Administration is aggressively pursuing through executive actions and agency policies.

## Filling the Swamp

*“If you look at these Cabinet nominees, they were selected for a reason, and that is deconstruction [of the administrative state].”*

- Former Chief Strategist Steve Bannon ([February 2017](#))

Many of the political appointees selected by the Trump Administration to lead the nation’s environmental policy efforts have dedicated much of their careers to weakening or dismantling rules designed to protect America’s air, water and land. Many also have failed to address conflicts of interest by refusing to promise not to work on issues that they previously worked on at the behest of industry. Some of the more notable examples include:

- **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**, who, as Oklahoma Attorney General, [sued EPA](#) more than a dozen times to overturn clean air and water rules, [failed to answer basic questions](#) about his record in Oklahoma, climate science and air pollution submitted to him by Democratic Senators, and whose nomination and job performance [has raised concerns](#) by former Republican EPA Administrators. Mr. Pruitt also [refused to recuse himself](#) from working on the same issues that were the subject of Oklahoma’s lawsuits against the agency despite the [request](#) of 30 Democratic Senators that he do so.
- **Council on Environmental Quality Chairman Nominee Kathleen Hartnett White**, whose nomination was [returned](#) to the White House by Senate Democrats, but was recently re-nominated. Ms. White’s record is replete with examples of [controversial](#), inaccurate and troubling statements such as crediting fossil fuels for the [end of slavery](#), asserting that [ozone](#) is not harmful “unless you put your mouth over the tailpipe of a car for eight hours,” and comparing those who believe in climate change to [pagans](#) or [communists](#).
- **EPA Air and Radiation Assistant Administrator William Wehrum**, who during his tenure at the Bush Administration EPA, helped to craft air regulations that were subsequently [defeated in court](#) 27 times because the rules didn’t follow the law or protect public health, and who represented industry clients 31 times in lawsuits against EPA since 2009.
- **Failed EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Nominee Michael Dourson**, whose nomination was [withdrawn](#) after it was made clear that he could [not be confirmed](#) because of [concerns](#) that he had spent the majority of his career advocating for less protective chemical safety standards at the behest of chemical industry sponsors.
- **Dozens of non-confirmed EPA political appointees**, [many of whom](#) recently [worked](#) for the [industries](#) they now regulate, and [some of whom](#) have performed roles at EPA that appear to pose financial or ethical [conflicts](#) of [interests](#).

## Erasing Clean Air, Clean Water and Chemical Safety Protections

*“My administration wants to work with members in both parties . . . to promote clean air and clean water.”*

- President Donald Trump ([January 2017](#))

In just one year, EPA has repeatedly (see Addendum) attempted to deregulate or delay its way out of protecting public health and the environment through a wide range of air, water and chemical safety regulatory roll-backs.

- EPA proposed to repeal, announced a reconsideration or decided not to finalize part or all of at least 18 environmental and public health protections that were either in effect or far along in the rule-making process.
- EPA attempted to delay at least seven environmental and public health protections from going into effect.

Some notable examples include:

### Clean Air

- EPA’s issuance of a proposed [rule](#) in October 2017 to repeal the Clean Power Plan. The proposal claimed the repeal would save up to \$33 billion in avoided costs by using [mathematical sleights of hand](#) to minimize or ignore the environmental and public health benefits of the Obama Administration’s rule. The Plan was projected to cut pollution from power plants 32 percent below 2012 levels by 2030 while also delivering \$90 billion in climate and health benefits.
- The March 28, 2017 [Executive Order 13783](#), through which President Trump halted policies that required the federal government to account for the costs of climate change in federal actions and policies – such as [Executive Order 13653, Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change](#), and [Executive Order 13690 Federal Flood Risk Management Standard](#) - that helped prepare communities for the impacts of climate change.
- President Trump’s [announcement on June 1, 2017](#) that the United States would no longer participate in the Paris Climate Agreement. The announcement leaves the United States as the only country in the world that is not a party to the agreement.
- EPA’s initial decision to delay the implementation of the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard – despite 85 percent of the country meeting the standard. However, EPA faced legal challenges and instead delayed informing nonattainment communities of their [status](#). The [rule](#) was [projected to save up to 660 individuals from premature deaths nationwide, prevent 230,000 asthma attacks among children, and avoid 160,000 missed school days and 28,000 missed work days.](#)

- EPA’s decision to review the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule, signaling the [potential](#) for future repeal or weakening of this air pollution measure that protects children from harmful mercury and air toxics power plant pollution. According to industry accounts, these standards are already being met with technology that is running on almost all power plants.
- The initiation of a process to [weaken](#) EPA’s model year 2022-25 clean car standards, which [were projected](#) by EPA to reduce oil consumption by 1.2 billion barrels. EPA has also signaled it intends to revisit rules that address pollution from [heavy duty vehicles](#) and [oil and gas](#) production.
- Through written guidance, EPA [rescinded](#) its “[once in, always in](#)” policy, which required major industrial sources of air toxics, including mercury, arsenic and lead, to meet and maintain performance-based technology standards throughout its lifetime. EPA’s actions will now allow major sources of air toxics to be able to be downgraded to an area source, which will result in [weaker](#) pollution control standards or no standards at all. Withdrawal of the policy allows some of the nation’s largest sources of cancer-causing air toxic pollution to dramatically increase their emissions, endangering the health of millions.

#### Clean Water

- A decision to [rescind](#) the 2015 Clean Water Rule and a plan to replace the rule with a regulation that will jeopardize drinking water sources for 117 million Americans and remove pollution protections for millions of wetland acres. In EPA’s legally questionable proposal to eliminate this rule, the agency [simply deleted](#) the \$500 million per year of benefits that were projected to be achieved by the 2015 Clean Water Rule.

#### Chemical Safety

- Decisions not to finalize bans on the remaining uses of the pesticide [chlorpyrifos](#) (which has been shown to cause neurological damage), and decisions not to finalize [proposed rules](#) to ban some uses of the chemicals [trichloroethylene](#) (a known carcinogen), [methylene chloride](#) (which causes acute and sometimes fatal organ damage) and [n-methylpyrrolidone](#) (which harms the reproductive system).
- A two-year [delay](#) in the effective date of a rule to prevent and [mitigate](#) the effects of chemical accidents. From 2004 to 2013, there were more than 1,500 serious [incidents](#) at chemical facilities, resulting in 58 deaths, over 17,000 injuries, and billions of dollars in property damage, including the accidents that that occurred in [West, Texas](#) and [Institute, West Virginia](#).

## **Dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency and its Support of State Environmental Programs**

*"We're going to have little tidbits [of the Environmental Protection Agency] left, but we're going to get most of it out."*

- Candidate Donald Trump, ([March 2016](#))

When the Trump Administration released its budget request for Fiscal Year 2018, the agency proposed cutting the Environmental Protection Agency [by over 30 percent](#), larger than any other agency within the federal government. This proposed cut is on top of the [more than 20 percent](#) that EPA's budget has declined over the last 8 years. The cuts would bring the [staffing level](#) of the agency down to its [lowest level since 1985 and impede EPA's ability](#) to perform its mission to protect health and the environment. [Reports](#) indicate that 700 EPA staff have already left the agency in part due to their frustration with the agency's failure to perform its mission.

Roughly 44 percent of EPA's budget goes to [state and local governments](#) to assist communities in achieving and maintaining clean air and clean water, reducing pollution and cleaning up contaminated lands. These funds help finance the construction of drinking water treatment plants and sewage facilities, aid in monitoring pollution levels and help support enforcement actions against polluters who violate the law. The Trump Administration is seeking to make massive cuts to these grant programs, at the same time that it is also seeking to transfer EPA's workload to the states. A bipartisan group of [former state environmental officials](#) agree that "providing insufficient funding to either EPA or the states can compromise the overall effectiveness of the federal environmental safety net." The Trump Administration's budget request manages to deny necessary funding to both at the same time.

### [President Trump's plan for the EPA includes:](#)

- Cutting enforcement against polluters by 24 percent.
- Cutting funding for Superfund sites by 30 percent, making it harder to clean up and reclaim contaminated and polluted sites across the country.
- Eliminating the Regional Watershed Programs, like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Chesapeake Bay program, which are designed to restore basic water quality standards for these important waterways.
- Eliminating the [Lead Risk Reduction Program](#), which is designed to reduce the ways in which children are exposed to lead.
- Eliminating the Indoor Radon Program to protect against cancer caused by exposure to radon.

- Eliminating the Energy Star program, which saves the typical household nearly \$600 annually and which since 1992 has [saved Americans over \\$430 billion](#) on utility bills.

At the same time, EPA has managed to find the funds for:

- At least four foreign trips and [dozens of domestic trips](#), some of which cost [tens of thousands of dollars apiece](#), including most recently to [Morocco](#) to promote natural gas exports which has [nothing to do](#) with EPA's mission.
- A \$25,000 soundproof [phone booth](#) in the Administrator's personal office.

## **No Environmental Cop on the Beat**

*“...the EPA was never intended to be our nation’s frontline environmental regulator.”*

- Attorney General Scott Pruitt ([May 2016](#))

EPA has [ratcheted back](#) the initiation of environmental enforcement cases, reduced the penalties for environmental violations, made it harder for EPA career staff to request information from potential polluters, and created barriers for community or other organizations who try to sue EPA to implement environmental protections, while simultaneously proposing dramatic cuts to EPA’s enforcement budget. These and other actions collectively will mean that entities polluting America’s air, drinking water or land are less likely to be caught, and if they are caught, less likely to have to pay a significant penalty or invest in environmental remediation efforts. Specifically:

- During the first nine months since EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was confirmed, EPA [sought](#) only about 39 percent of the financial penalties for environmental violations, only 12 percent (by cost) of the environmental remedies to clean up pollution, and initiated only about two-thirds the number of enforcement cases as compared to the same period during the Obama Administration.
- The Fiscal Year 2018 [budget proposal](#) for EPA proposed a 24 percent cut to the EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.
- EPA has [directed its regional offices](#) not to send “requests for information” to suspected polluters without first seeking permission from EPA headquarters, which will make it more difficult for the career staff to identify suspected polluters.
- EPA has [decided](#) to accept, [without question](#), industry’s air pollution data when determining whether to require the installation of pollution-control technologies as a condition of undertaking new construction at an existing facility, even if the company submits inaccurate – or even fraudulent – data to EPA. The EPA political appointees overseeing this policy change include Bill Wehrum and David Harlow, who until recently were attorneys at a firm that represented DTE Energy in arguments that the Supreme Court recently rejected that asserted that DTE should be allowed to [skirt air regulations](#) in the identical manner that the new EPA policy allows.
- The Department of Justice [issued a new policy](#) that appears to eliminate EPA’s authority to require polluting companies to undertake environmental projects as part of an enforcement settlement with the EPA, which have historically often been agreed to in exchange for lower monetary penalties. For example, the [\\$14.7 billion settlement](#) over Volkswagen’s use of “defeat devices” to cheat emissions rules (and pump out harmful air pollution at up to 40 times the legal limit) included almost \$2 billion that Volkswagen must invest in clean vehicle technology and \$2.7 billion in

programs in all 50 states that would reduce pollution from diesel cars and trucks. DOJ's new policy would preclude such a settlement in the future.

- EPA has not finalized enforcement actions brought against major polluters by the Obama Administration. For example, just 5 days after Scott Pruitt was sworn in as Administrator, Devon Energy, a major oil and gas producer with close ties to Scott Pruitt, [backtracked](#) on its previous willingness to [address air pollution violations](#).
- EPA issued a [directive](#) that announced plans to fight – and not settle – any environmental litigation brought against it, even when the lawsuits simply point out the EPA missed a [statutory deadline](#) for writing an air, water, clean-up or chemical safety rule, adding unnecessary taxpayer costs and time before the environmental protections are provided. The policy additionally announced that EPA would not settle litigation without consensus from impacted industry and others, giving [polluters an unprecedented role](#) in the agency's decision-making.

## Denying the Science and Silencing the Scientists

*“EPA’s science advisory process needs to be overhauled to eliminate conflicts of interest and inherent bias.”*

- Trump Administration transition document ([January 2017](#))

The EPA has taken a broad approach of denying the science that forms the basis of sound environmental regulation and [silencing the scientists](#) who provide the agency with advice. Extraordinary steps include:

- In May 2017, the [EPA dismissed 12 scientists from its Board of Scientific Counselors](#), with the intent of replacing the qualified scientists with industry officials—compromising the committee’s independence, balance, and expertise. This was followed by a [November announcement](#) that EPA would nominate dozens of members to its Board of Scientific Counselors, the Clean Air Science Advisory Committee, and the Science Advisory Board (SAB).
- EPA [announced](#) that it would no longer allow scientists who had received EPA grants from serving on its scientific advisory boards and committees, while continuing to [allow industry-funded scientists](#) with questionable qualifications and potential conflicts of interests to serve in this capacity.
- The EPA instituted a [new policy](#) that would subject hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of competitive grant solicitations to review by political appointees, whose input reportedly [included directions](#) to remove all references to climate change in these solicitations.
- EPA [deleted its critical climate change website](#) (consisting of 200 webpages), [scrubbed references](#) to climate change and its risks, and [eliminated guidance](#) on how to deal with changing weather conditions such as extreme weather events and sea level rise.
- In October 2017, the [EPA reportedly canceled engagements](#) for three of its own scientists to speak at a scientific conference in Rhode Island where they were slated to present [climate change research](#).

## **Undermining Protections for Species and Their Habitats**

*“That’s the thing that’s been so striking to me as I’ve come into this position...is just the lack of focus and lack of energy and lack of commitment to actually get results[.]”*

- Administrator Scott Pruitt ([January 2018](#))

President Trump and his Administration have consistently failed to protect our nation’s iconic species and their habitats. For example:

- Despite low oil prices and high supply, on April 28, 2017, President Trump signed an [Executive Order](#) to [expand offshore drilling](#) in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans. On January 4, 2018, Secretary Zinke announced a [five-year plan](#) that would allow new drilling in the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. These actions are without regard for the hundreds of species, such as whales, polar bears and birds that depend on ocean and coastal habitats or related ecotourism economies in coastal communities.
- President Trump’s [Fiscal Year 2018 budget](#) made clear the Administration’s priority of opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for federal oil and gas leasing. Oil and gas activities could have disastrous ramifications for federally threatened polar bears, musk oxen, and Porcupine caribou that call the Refuge home.
- Federal land use plan amendments and revisions completed in the previous Administration represented one of the largest land conservation efforts ever undertaken and helped prevent a Greater sage-grouse Endangered Species Act listing. The previous administration’s collaborative process – which included a multitude of public meetings, formal comment periods and incorporated input from a diverse array of stakeholders – received [strong bipartisan support](#) from governors in affected states. Despite this tremendous success and [broad bipartisan opposition to undermining that success](#), the Trump Administration is [revisiting](#) these plans in response to industry organizations and in contrast with the best available science.
- On October 4, 2017, the Trump Administration denied protections for 25 species, several of which are highly imperiled due to climate change. Most notably, the [Pacific walrus](#) did not receive protection, even though it is dependent upon melting sea ice.
- On December 22, 2017, the Trump Administration [reversed](#) long-standing legal opinions – [from previous administrations of both parties](#) – addressing incidental “take” of migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Under the new, unprecedented legal interpretation, the Department of Interior will only regulate migratory bird deaths if such deaths were intentional. This is a sweeping change to implementation of this bedrock environmental protection law.

## **Addendum: Partial List of Adverse Environmental Actions Taken by EPA in 2017**

### **Deregulatory Actions**

**January 2017:** EPA [withdrew](#) the Mercury Effluent Rule, which reduces the discharge of mercury from dental offices. EPA was later ordered by a federal court to reinstate the rule, [which it did in June](#).

**March 2017:** [Rejected a petition to ban the remaining uses of a harmful pesticide chlorpyrifos, which poses a risk to fetal brain and nervous system development](#)

**April 2017:** EPA announced that it was reviewing its Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule, signaling the [potential](#) for future repeal or weakening of this air pollution measure that protects children from harmful mercury and air toxics power plant pollution.

**April 2017:** [EPA announced that it was reviewing greenhouse gas emissions rules for power plant start-ups, shutdowns and malfunctions](#)

**May 2017:** EPA [announced that it had settled a lawsuit](#) over a mine near Alaska's Bristol Bay, allowing the plaintiff mining company to apply for a permit, and would [withdraw](#) an Obama-era [determination](#) that the proposed mine would be a risk to the long-term health of the fishery and wider ecosystem.

**June 2017:** EPA [finalized rules](#) implementing reforms made to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Critics [argued](#) that the rules for assessing existing chemicals include "loopholes that could allow EPA to ignore important exposure routes and chemical product uses" and that subsequently issued "operating principles" for how EPA would [assess new chemicals](#) included similar deviations from the law's requirements.

**July 2017:** EPA [Announced that it will repeal and replace](#) the Waters of the United States rule, which protects tributaries and wetlands under the Clean Water Act.

**August 2017:** EPA initiated the process to [weaken](#) EPA's model year 2022-25 clean car standards, which [were projected](#) by EPA to reduce oil consumption by 1.2 billion barrels.

**August 2017:** After a federal court blocked EPA's efforts to delay a rule limiting methane emissions at new oil and gas drilling sites, EPA announced that it would continue to review the rule and enforce it on a ["case by case" basis](#).

**September 2017:** [EPA announced that it was reconsidering parts of a rule regulating coal ash, a toxic mix of mercury, cadmium, arsenic and other heavy metals which can cause respiratory illness.](#)

**October 2017:** [EPA proposed the repeal](#) of the Clean Power Plan, which [set limits on carbon emissions from existing coal- and gas-fired power plants](#)

**October 2017:** [EPA withdrew a proposed rule reducing air pollutants at sewage treatment plants](#)

**November 2017:** EPA [announced](#) that it planned to reconsider and revise mercury, heavy metals, and acid gases emissions standards for brick and tile manufacturers by 2019. EPA had initially [asked](#) a court to delay all proceedings in litigation [over these standards](#), which was denied.

**November 2017:** EPA proposed a repeal of greenhouse gas emissions standards for [heavy duty vehicles such as commercial trucks and buses, which would allow dirty diesel engines back on the streets.](#)

**December 2017:** [Pursuant to a court order compelling EPA to take “final action” by December 1, EPA announced in a final rule that it will not be issuing regulations requiring certain hardrock mining facilities to demonstrate they can pay for their pollution cleanup.](#)

**December 2017:** Reports indicated that EPA has decided not to finalize [proposed rules](#) to ban some uses of the chemicals [trichloroethylene](#) (a known carcinogen), [methylene chloride](#) (which causes acute and sometimes fatal organ damage) [and n-methylpyrrolidone](#) (which harms the reproductive system).

**January 2018:** Through written guidance, EPA [rescinded](#) its “[once in, always in](#)” policy, which required major industrial sources of air toxics, including mercury, arsenic and lead, to meet and maintain performance-based technology standards throughout its lifetime. EPA’s actions will now allow major sources of air toxics to be able to be downgraded to an area source, which will result in [weaker](#) pollution control standards or no standards at all. Withdrawal of the policy allows some of the nation’s largest sources of cancer-causing air toxic pollution to dramatically increase their emissions, endangering the health of millions.

## **Regulatory Delays**

**May 2017:** [EPA stayed for 3 months landfill methane emissions rules requiring landfills to install and operate landfill gas collection systems and monitor methane emissions](#)

**June 2017:** [EPA extended the timeline by 12 months for the pesticide applicators rule, a rule designed to reduce the likelihood of harm from the misapplication of restricted-use toxic pesticides](#)

**June 2017:** [EPA initially tried to extend its deadline \(by 12 months\) for designating areas as compliant or not compliant with 2015 air quality \(ground-level ozone\) standards.](#) After that proposal was met with legal challenges, [EPA announced that it was “moving forward” on](#)

[designations](#). The EPA still has not designated areas that are not meeting the 2015 ozone standard, which were supposed to be designated October 1, 2017.

**June 2017:** [Delayed until February 2019](#) the effective date of its Risk Management Program (RMP) rule amendments, which called on state and local governments to report on and reduce [risks associated with hazardous chemicals](#) by enhancing the safety and security of chemical facilities

**June 2017:** [EPA proposed a two-year](#) stay of the new source performance standards (NSPS) it set for greenhouse gas emissions and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from the oil and natural gas sector

**September 2017:** [EPA postponed the compliance date for a rule limiting levels of toxic metals in wastewater discharges from steam electric power plants](#), by two years

**September 2017:** [EPA postponed rule limiting toxic discharge from power plants into public waterways until 2020](#)

### **Other Problematic EPA Actions**

**March 2017:** [EPA withdrew requests for information previously sent to 15,000 oil and gas companies asking them to report methane emissions to EPA](#)

**March 2017:** [EPA sent letters to state governors advising them that they are under no obligation to adhere to the Clean Power Plan \(CPP\) rule](#)

**April 2017:** [EPA removed 200-page climate change website from EPA.gov](#)

**May 2017:** [EPA's budget proposed eliminating thousands of EPA jobs, slashing its enforcement budget, and cutting its ADR program, the Environmental Justice Program, and many state grants.](#)

**July 2017:** Reports confirmed that EPA's [Superfund Taskforce](#) never kept records of their meetings or work, and Administrator Pruitt [appointed Albert Kelly – a political supporter and former bank executive who settled an FDIC case against himself for \\$125,000 –](#) to head the Taskforce, even though he had no relevant experience to head the Taskforce

**August 2017:** [EPA announced](#) that its new chemical review process would not include a consideration of the chemical safety risk across all known and reasonably foreseeable uses of a new chemical, and instead would allow new chemicals to enter the marketplace after considering only the intended uses identified by the industry applicant, in [direct contravention of what the Toxic Substances Control Act requires](#).

**October 2017:** EPA released a draft of its [five-year strategic plan](#), which omits any reference to climate change.

**October 2017:** EPA issued a [directive](#) that announced plans to fight - and not settle - any environmental litigation brought against it, absent industry consensus on settlement, adding unnecessary taxpayer costs and time before the environmental protections are provided

**October 2017:** EPA issued a Directive that forbids scientists who receive EPA grants from serving on EPA's scientific Federal Advisory Committees, [claiming they present a conflict of interest](#). EPA may instead intend to [fill these committees](#) with industry-funded scientists.

**November 2017:** EPA issued a [notice of data availability](#) and a supporting [memorandum](#) announcing revisions to the "social cost of methane" that [minimize the estimated benefit](#) of cutting methane emissions from oil and gas drilling operations.

**December 2017:** [Announced](#) that EPA will now rely only on regulated industry's estimates of future pollution in determining whether a company must install pollution-control technologies as a condition of undertaking new construction, even if the company submits inaccurate—or even fraudulent estimates.

**December 2017:** [EPA released its semiannual deregulatory plan](#), which proposed 54 "deregulatory actions"