



The Assault on Our Health and Environment

“Less than five weeks after taking office, Trump and his Republican allies in Congress have rushed to set back progress achieved through decades of bipartisan cooperation on clean water and air, the protection of our public lands and coastal waters, and our obligation to protect future generations from the dangers of climate change.

“Trump has killed rules to protect coal communities and mountain streams from the ravages of mountaintop removal. He’s swept aside the voice of the Standing Rock Sioux and vowed to force the Dakota Access pipeline across their water sources and sacred lands. And he’s put a career opponent of environmental protections in charge of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.” – *Rhea Suh, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council.*

President Trump’s administration and GOP lawmakers have targeted dozens of key environmental protections for rollback or repeal. This list addresses some, but not all, of the programs, policies and initiatives currently under threat. The actions that have already been taken, and those that are expected to come, make up the worst legislative and executive assault in history against the common sense safeguards we all depend on to protect our environment and health. At risk is the water we drink, the air we breathe, our public oceans, coasts and lands and the very approach we’ve taken for generations in this country to protect our common inheritance.

At NRDC, we are standing up to hold this administration accountable. In the first month, we’ve already filed three lawsuits: 1) against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for illegally rescinding a rule that would protect the public from [mercury discharges](#), 2) to block President Trump’s “[two for one](#)” executive order, and 3) for illegally suspending the rule to put the [rusty patched bumble bee](#) on the Endangered Species List. We will continue to use all the tools at our disposal moving forward. We are fighting to make sure the public understands what’s at stake - for our country, our people and the common future we share.

Nominees

Scott Pruitt: The GOP-led Senate confirmed Scott Pruitt to lead the EPA on the narrowest vote in the agency’s history. The Oklahoma Attorney General sued the EPA more than a dozen times opposing public health standards to reduce ozone, methane, mercury and carbon dioxide pollution from industry. NRDC President Rhea Suh called Trump’s nominee “the worst pick ever” to be EPA administrator. [More here.](#)

Climate and Energy

The Clean Power Plan: The EPA set the first national standards reducing dangerous carbon pollution from our largest source, fossil fuel power plants. The Clean Power Plan provides reasonable state-specific

goals for carbon cuts, flexibility for states to meet them and a federal plan that will cut a key driver of climate change 32 percent by 2030, and stimulate growth in clean energy. More [here](#) and [here](#).

International Climate Agreement: The Paris Climate Agreement signed by nearly 200 nations and effective as of November 4, 2016 is a global response to the threat of climate change. It aims to hold global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. More [here](#) and [here](#).

HFC International Commitments: In October 2016, more than 140 countries signed onto the Kigali Agreement, which calls for phasing down powerful climate-warming pollutants called hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) under the Montreal Protocol, the treaty that saved the ozone layer. Industry supports the agreement. [More here](#).

Reducing Methane Pollution and Natural Gas Waste in the Oil and Natural Gas Industry (BLM & EPA): These standards will reduce methane, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and toxic air emissions from fracking and other oil and gas operations. Leaks and purposeful venting waste gas that could be sold and used while threatening health and worsening climate change. More [here](#) and [here](#).
****RECENT ACTION:** House lawmakers recently passed Congressional Review Act legislation that would repeal BLM's methane regulation that limits natural gas venting, flaring and leakage on public and tribal lands. The Senate is expected to take up the bill next. More [here](#).

Restrictions on public financing for overseas coal projects: The Obama administration restricted U.S. funding for overseas coal power plants to limit climate change. This affects the Export Import Bank and other entities. [More here](#).

Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (CEQ): The White House Council on Environmental Quality issued guidance to federal agencies on analyzing the climate impacts of their proposed actions before deciding on how to proceed. More [here](#).

SEC Rule to Improve Transparency: The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) enacted a recent rule, based on a provision that originated in the Dodd-Frank Act, that would have required natural resource extraction corporations to report any payments to foreign governments.
****RECENT ACTION:** As the first law he signed, Trump repealed the rule, making it easier for companies to bribe to develop fossil fuels, and putting polluters above taxpayers, public health, and transparent foreign policy. More [here](#).

Clean Energy

Vehicle Standards: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the EPA set tighter carbon pollution standards for cars and light trucks for 2022-2025. The State of California has similar auto standards through 2025, authorized under the Clean Air Act via an EPA waiver. EPA also set standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks to save fuel and reduce carbon pollution. More [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Clean Energy Tax Incentives (PTC & ITC): Renewed by Congress in 2015, these wind and solar incentives are driving clean energy investment over new natural gas in the electric sector. The clean energy economy now employs more than 2.5 million Americans. More [here](#) and [here](#).

Department of Energy (DOE) Energy Efficiency Standards: Minimum efficiency standards for equipment and appliances, including refrigerators, air conditioners, clothes washers and other common products, save U.S. households an average of \$500 each year on energy bills. These standards, which are

required by law and have been developed by the Department of Energy for decades, also are often supported by manufacturers who prefer one national standard compared to a patchwork of state regulations. More [here](#).

Nature & Our Natural Heritage

Arctic/Atlantic: In 2016 the Obama administration excluded the Arctic and Atlantic oceans from the next 5-year oil and gas leasing plan and provided permanent protections from all future drilling for the majority of the U.S. Arctic and key portions of the Atlantic. More [here](#) and [here](#).

Turning Federal Lands and Waters over to Private Fossil Fuel Companies: The Trump administration may quickly move to expand coal, oil, and gas leasing across the federal estate, opening new areas and accelerating permitting and approvals for existing leases. Legal challenges are expected for each action. More [here](#).

Coal Leasing: In early 2016, the Obama administration moved to protect public lands from new coal leasing while reforms are developed to ensure taxpayers receive fair value from mining companies. More [here](#).

Keystone XL: In November 2015, President Obama rejected the proposed Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, which would have undercut America's global leadership on fighting climate change. The pipeline would have run 1,200 miles from Canada through Nebraska to the Gulf Coast carrying more than 800,000 barrels of carbon-heavy petroleum daily. More [here](#).

****RECENT ACTION:** President Trump reversed President Obama's decision, called for approval of the pipeline, and issued an executive order allowing the application for construction to be resubmitted for consideration and approval.

Dakota Access Pipeline: Last month, the Obama administration ordered a full environmental impact statement of the pipeline and a review of the route in response to concerns of Native Americans that their voices had not been heard. More [here](#).

****RECENT ACTION:** Despite a commitment to perform a full environmental assessment of the pipeline, the Trump Administration approved the project before the completion of a public comment period. More [here](#).

Pebble Mine: This proposed acid-generating copper and gold mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska, threatens the world's greatest wild salmon fishery, endangered beluga whales, a critical watershed, Native Americans, and other wildlife. The IUCN World Conservation Congress opposed it. The EPA has made significant progress protecting the area through the Clean Water Act. More [here](#)

****RECENT ACTION:** The US House Committee on Science, Space and Technology urged EPA Administrator Pruitt to rescind the agency's 2014 proposed determination that would have protected Bristol Bay from Pebble. After a highly critical report, issued by an independent investment firm, numerous class action lawsuits have been filed against the company in California and New York alleging violations of federal securities laws. More [here](#)

Antiquities Act: Under the 1906 Antiquities Act, President Obama protected more than 550 million acres of public lands and waters – that include more than 1 million acres of land in Utah to be co-managed by tribes, and the world's largest marine area in Hawaii-- preserving America's natural, cultural, and historical heritage for generations to come. There could be challenges to the Act and individual monuments. More [here](#) and [here](#).

Public Lands: The Obama Administration has expanded areas designated as public lands, which are held in the public trust for all Americans, helping protect them from environmental damage. Republicans in Congress, meanwhile, have launched a concerted effort to sell off public lands through budget riders and bills. More [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

Roadless Rule: Enacted in 2001 under President Clinton, this protects almost 60 million acres of national forest land against logging and road building, 17 million of which is old-growth forest in the Tongass in Alaska. Alaska is challenging the rule in federal court in DC. More [here](#).

Endangered Wildlife

Endangered Species Act: The law has added protections for endangered sage grouse, gray wolves, and salmon. The Department of Justice also is defending in court recovery plans. More [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

Marine Mammal Protection Act: The act has been used to limit offshore oil and gas development and to protect marine mammal species such as whales and dolphins from excessive Navy sonar. More [here](#).

Wildlife Trafficking: By executive order, Obama committed to increased efforts in combatting wildlife trafficking. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a near complete ban on the domestic trade of African elephant ivory imports from African and Asian countries to the United States. More [here](#) and [here](#).

Agricultural Pollution and Dangers to Health

Decision Regarding “Neonic” Insecticides & Bees: Early in 2016, EPA issued a scientific finding that the most prominent “neonic” (neonicotinoid) insecticide, Imidacloprid, widely used on cotton and soybeans, is harmful to bees. More [here](#).

Clean Air & Water

Clean Water Rule: The Obama administration advanced this rule to protect from pollution water sources for drinking water supplies of 117 million Americans. More [here](#) and [here](#).

Ozone Standard: In 2015, the administration strengthened ozone health standards that protect public health, especially for children, older adults, and people with lung diseases such as asthma. The standards also will improve the health of trees, plants and ecosystems. More [here](#).

Clean Air Act/Startup, Shutdown, Malfunction Rule: The EPA has moved to close loopholes in 36 State Implementation Plans that allow refineries, power plants and other facilities to release bursts of harmful air pollution during startups, shutdowns and malfunctions, and don’t meet Clean Air Act requirements. More [here](#).

Toxic Air Pollution Standards: There have been legal and legislative attacks on EPA standards limiting toxic air pollution from cement and brick kilns and industrial boilers. These help avoid an estimated 8,000 premature deaths and 52,000 asthma cases per year. Brick Kilns litigation could heat up in late February. More [here](#) and [here](#).

California Bay Delta and San Joaquin River: Congress and the Trump Administration could attempt to undermine federal protections for salmon and other endangered species in California’s Bay-Delta estuary, and possibly try to repeal the settlement agreement to restore California’s San Joaquin River. House

Republicans have passed similar legislation in recent years, threatening thousands of fishing jobs, water quality for millions, and the long term health of this estuary. More [here](#) and [here](#).

Toxics - Poisoning Our Children

Pesticide that Harms Kids: EPA recently said it plans to ban insecticide chlorpyrifos because it harms children's brains. The agency is due to finalize this ban in March 2017. More [here](#).

Toxic But Ineffective Chemicals in Antibacterial Soaps: In September 2016, in response to NRDC's petition and litigation, FDA banned certain antibacterial chemicals—such as triclosan—in soaps that were not proven effective and posed health hazards. More [here](#).

Bill to Exempt Pesticides Applied to Waterways from the Clean Water Act: For 5 years, various members of Congress have tried to pass a measure putting public health at risk by exempting pesticides applied directly to waterways from the Clean Water Act NPDES permit requirements. The latest iteration was renamed the “Zika Vector Control Act.” More [here](#).

Science on Carcinogens: The chemical industry has targeted a National Institutes for Health report on cancer-causing chemicals. Also targeting the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which has linked Roundup (glyphosate) to cancer. More [here](#).

Health Risks of Herbicide Glyphosate: EPA to decide whether this ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup causes cancer. The International Agency for Research on Cancer found it does. Its use is linked to butterfly decline. More [here](#).

Protecting Children from Toxics: EPA's scientific review panel set a 10-fold safety factor to protect children from widespread exposure to highly neurotoxic insecticides called organophosphates, such as chlorpyrifos. EPA cited human epidemiological evidence of harm to children. More [here](#).

Toxic Substances Control Act/2016 Amendments: Recent updates to TSCA require EPA to take several key actions by June to establish risk evaluation, prioritization, and science policy rulings. More [here](#).

TSCA/10 Priority Chemicals Determination: EPA has proposed its 10 priority chemicals to evaluate under the recently updated Toxic Substances Control Act and is due to finalize that. More [here](#).

Cross-Cutting Attacks on Environmental Protections and Regulation Generally:

Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act: This bill, which the House has passed several times, would basically shut down the entire regulatory system, not just on environmental issues, by preventing any “major” regulation from taking effect unless both houses of Congress vote to approve it within a limited time period. More [here](#).

Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome (SCRUB) Act: This bill, passed by the House, would establish a “regulatory review” commission to identify redundant or “obsolete” regulations to repeal. Requires a “cut-go” one-in, one-out approach to agency rulemaking, and 15% cut in overall “costs,” measured as costs to industry. More [here](#).

Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA): This bill, passed by the House, would revamp and significantly slow down, and even shut down, the regulatory process. One provision could result in preventing rules from ever taking effect by enabling industry to repeatedly ask for more analysis. The provision is similar

to a fatal flaw in the original TSCA law that Congress voted to remove in the new version of that Act. More [here](#).

“Secret Science” Bills: This bill, passed by the House, would make it difficult for EPA to issue environmental standards by making it impossible for the agency to use many kinds of scientific studies and economic models. More [here](#).

Trump’s 100-day Plan to Arbitrarily Cut Regulations: The president-elect has promised to eliminate two regulations for every new one it approves. But regulations exist to help ensure consumer health and safety protections. More [here](#).

****RECENT ACTION:** President Trump signed an executive order requiring agencies to identify two regulations to cut when proposing a new measure. It also requires that the total cost of new regulations in 2017 be no greater than zero. NRDC, together with Public Citizen and the Communications Workers of America, sued the Trump administration to block the order. More [here](#).

The Right to Public Engagement on Federal Actions: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Signed into law on January 1, 1970, NEPA ensures that the government assesses the environmental impacts of proposed actions—such as permit applications, federal land management and constructing highways— and provides transparency along with giving citizens a voice in government decisions. Rolling back or gutting NEPA has been considered in Congress. More [here](#).

MEDIA CONTACT: For more information or to speak with our experts please contact: Jake Thompson, 202-289-2387, jthompson@nrdc.org