

I’m old enough to remember a time when environmental protection and public health were bipartisan values. Even in the Reagan Administration, there were positive steps such as Reagan’s support for the international ozone treaty. As late as 1990, Republicans in the White House and Congress supported major new air pollution legislation. Even George W. Bush had his moments, such as his creation of three big new marine sanctuaries. But today, any pro-environmental action seems to be taboo. Instead, the House GOP has launched an all-out campaign against the environment.

This shift in the party’s position is disheartening. It started to snowball long ago but has lately turned into an avalanche.

The [NY Times](#) has an editorial today that puts the point very nicely:

As of Friday, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives had voted 168 times this year to undercut clean air and water laws while blocking efforts to limit global warming, protect public lands and guard against future oil spills. . . .

Some of the House’s votes have seemed entirely reflexive, like a 240-to-169 thumbs down for a sensible amendment requiring regulators to seek independent advice on drilling safety from an organization not affiliated with the American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry’s lobby. Far more worrisome have been votes that would dangerously weaken basic clean air and clean water laws and undermine the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate toxic pollutants like mercury and set clean air standards based solely on science.

The sheer number of anti-environmental votes makes it clear that the motivation is not disagreement with particular regulations but a general campaign to rollback protection of the environment and public health.