

In a field in which all the candidates are weak in terms of protecting the environment, Ron Paul is unquestionably the worst. Here is his [position](#) (taken directly from his website):

Eliminate the ineffective EPA. Polluters should answer directly to property owners in court for the damages they create - not to Washington.

OK, what's wrong with this proposal? Here are a few things:

1. Why just property owners? Why not other people with health effects? Is there some reason why a tenant with asthma can't sue, but a company with paint damage can go to court? Because property values matter, but not human health?
2. Who would be the defendants? If you live in a big city, how do you sue all of the polluters for damage? Do you sue everyone who has a car or truck for contributing to air pollution? How do you pay for the expert witnesses and legal fees?
3. Why only damages? If he truly believed in property rights, he'd allow injunctions to stop the harm from continuing.
4. How would courts handle the immense body of litigation? The pollution suits would be the world's biggest class actions, with millions of plaintiffs, swarms of defendants, huge fees for expert witnesses, etc. Is that really what conservatives want?

We've already tried this approach, and it didn't work. This is more or less where the law stood fifty years ago. We didn't pass modern environmental laws because we loved regulation; we passed them because the old system led to massive air and water pollution.

This isn't a policy proposal. It's a libertarian fantasy. And a callous one at that.