

✘ Today we got a sliver of hope from President-Elect Trump about remaining in the Paris Agreement. He also acknowledged a connection between human activity and climate change, something obviously at odds with his campaign rhetoric. Trump [told](#) the New York Times he would “keep an open mind” about the U.S. commitment to the Paris Agreement. He also said he thinks there is “some connectivity” between human activity and climate change. He added, “Some, something. It depends on how much.” His words are a far cry from his repeated assertions on the campaign trail and elsewhere that climate change is a “hoax,” and offer the first real hope that he may not turn his back on one of the most pressing issues facing the globe. On the other hand, Trump has made plenty of other statements, including that he will repeal the Clean Power Plan and roll back “job-killing regulations,” which suggest that today’s slight change of heart should be viewed with caution.

Moreover, the advisers Trump has surrounded himself with, not just on energy and environmental issues but more broadly, hardly inspire confidence that the President-elect will allow the U.S. to remain in the Paris Agreement. His earliest choices for official positions are all climate skeptics. Presidential advisor Steve Bannon [calls](#) environmentalists “greentards,” who are “totally fucking wrong on climate change.” Attorney General-designate Jeff Sessions [has](#) a lifetime League of Conservation Score of 7 and is a climate skeptic. Trump’s choice as National Security Advisor [does not believe](#) that climate change is a national security threat in contrast to many leading national security experts. And Trump’s transition team leaders is full of well-known climate deniers and fossil fuel representatives. Here’s a list [published today](#) in Climate Wire of transition team members and their known positions on climate change and clean energy:

“EPA transition head: Myron Ebell, a well-known climate skeptic and director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute; Energy: Tom Pyle, president of the American Energy Alliance, a former lobbyist for Koch Industries and a former Republican congressional aide; Interior: Doug Domenech, director of the Fueling Freedom Project of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, secretary of natural resources in Virginia under then-Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) and an Interior official during the George W. Bush administration; Donald Tenpas, an attorney at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP and a former top DOJ environmental attorney who is involved in the litigation challenging the Clean Power Plan; and State: Steven Groves of the Heritage Foundation, a critic of the Paris Agreement on climate change signed by the Obama administration.”

So it's hard to know what, exactly, to make of today's statements. My hope is that Trump's own family, perhaps especially Ivanka Trump and her husband Jared Kushner, whose own politics seem more mainstream than many of Trump's professional advisors, are pushing him to reconsider his hardline stance. Who emerges in the next week or so to lead EPA, Interior and the Department of Energy will provide a signal about whether today's statements had real meaning or were just an empty gesture.