

There are clear signs of a strong backlash against Trump. Consider support for environmental organizations. A [report](#) in February indicated that giving to the Sierra Club was up 700% over the same period of the preceding year, as part of a major trend across environmental NGOs. According to the same report, other environmental groups were seeing a similar surge. According to [Grist](#), as of April, there had also been a big upswing in the number of people joining or donating to environmental groups:

“The climate action group 350.org has gained tens of thousands of new supporters since Election Day, spokesman Jamie Henn said, and has seen donations surge. . . . The Sierra Club said it has gained more than 15,000 new monthly donors since the election, double the number that joined during the rest of the calendar year. Earthjustice has seen a 711 percent increase in online donors over last month [Oct. 2017], and during the week of Nov. 7.”

One [outcome](#) has been a [stream](#) of lawsuits filed by these organizations against the Trump Administration - roughly forty lawsuits from the top three groups alone. As of mid-July, according to the McClatchey newspaper website, “environmental groups and Democratic state attorneys general have filed more than four dozen lawsuits challenging his executive orders and decisions by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Interior Department and other agencies. Environmental organizations are hiring extra lawyers.”

A report from [Nonprofit Quarterly](#), perhaps a more objective source, reports a surge not only for national groups but for state and local environmental groups. It went on to observe that the surge could be similar to the temporary upswing in giving after a natural disaster, or might instead have more lasting effects. April was already almost six months after the election, which suggests a more lasting surge than one might see in the days after a hurricane. And as of June, [US News](#) was still reporting a big increase over past donations and participation levels.

Notably, Trump has also galvanized a new effort to coordinate work between national environmental groups and others. According to [E&E News](#),

“The Combined Defense Project essentially fills an organizational vacuum for dozens of national environmental groups, local partners and allied [non-environmental] groups.... It conducts polling, runs social media campaigns and alerts activists across the country in daily phone calls about where Trump

administration officials are heading or what hearings are underway so people can protest in person.”

Trump also seems to have helped galvanize action by jurisdictions inside the United States and elsewhere . I haven't seen data that would satisfy a econometrician. Still, there is a lot of anecdotal evidence. For instance, the UK [Independent](#) says that “more than 7,400 cities and local councils have signed up to a ‘Global Covenant of Mayors’ to fight climate change, galvanized by Donald Trump’s dismissal of scientists’ concerns for the future. The mayor of Atlanta remarked that “What President Trump has done is he has - unintentionally as he does with so many things - organized and focused people who have been doing a number of good things in hundreds of different places.”

In any event, Trump doesn't seem to have rallied public opinion around his environmental policies—[Gallup](#) shows a fall in the number of people prioritizing the economy over the environment since his election. And in May, the Yale Program on Climate Change and Communication [found](#) that the percentage of Americans who believe that humans are the main cause of climate change had risen since the election. Thus, rather than a conversion to Trump’s environmental views, the public is moving in the opposite direction, either because of or in disregard of Trump. The situation in state governments seems similar. For example, according to the [Energy Information Agency](#), seven states have extended or strengthened their energy efficiency mandates to utilities in the past year; none rolled them back.

Whether caused by Trump or not, there have certainly been a lot of positive environmental developments in the months since Trump took office. California passed a new cap-and-trade law with a two-thirds legislative majority. The state is now [reportedly](#) about to expand its wetlands regulations to compensate for a planned federal rollback. The governor of Virginia has [announced](#) a new emissions trading program. Canada adopted a [strategy](#) of working directly with American states on climate policy. Britain and France have announced plans to phase out new gasoline cars by 2040, and India and Norway have [set](#) earlier deadlines for phasing out gasoline-fueled cars. Responding to these trends, Volvo became the first traditional car company to announce plans to go all-electric, and Tesla for a while had a market valuation higher than General Motors.

What all this evidence adds up to is this: the “Resistance” is very much alive and well in the environmental area. Only time will tell how effective it will be. To my mind, the most encouraging sign is the increase in grassroots participation, which has been a weak spot of the environmental movement in recent years.

