

There's been a lot of sound and fury, and many proposals are in the works. But what have the concrete results been so far? And how does Trump's effectiveness stack up against Obama's?

I was prompted to ask that question by a note from [Jonathan Rosenbloom](#), an environmental law scholar at Drake University. I had published a post about eight setbacks for the Trump Administration relating to energy and environment. Jonathan wrote to ask whether I'd considered doing something similar about Trump's achievements. (Maybe I should have put "achievements" in quotes, since they're all destructive of the environment some way.) That seemed like a great idea, though I've only been able to come up with a list of five so far.

Before I give the list, I should explain the criteria. I included only actions that have legal effect – that is, legislation from Congress or final administrative actions (even if challenged in court). Thus, I didn't include procedural or staffing changes that don't have the force of law. For instance, I didn't include Trump's announcement that he's withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, since he can't actually take formal action for another couple of years.

Here is my list:

1. With Trump's support, Congress used the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to overturn [three](#) Obama-era environmental regulations. The Obama regulations dealt with stream protection, resources management planning, and non-subsistence hunting and fishing in Alaska. The CRA provides a fast-track for Congress to invalidate regulations and prohibits the agencies from issuing the same regulations in the future.
2. President Trump issued [proclamations](#) reducing the boundaries of two national monuments, Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante.
3. The Department of Homeland Security [waived](#) over two-dozen environmental laws that would otherwise apply to construction of a border wall with Mexico.
4. Trump issued an order [raising tariffs](#) on solar panels for four years. This will temporarily hamper continued expansion of the solar industry, at least.
5. Trump [approved](#) the Keystone pipeline. Whether the pipeline will actually be built remains a bit unclear.

Interestingly, for all the talk about Pruitt's effectiveness in implementing Trump's agenda, none of these actions came from EPA. Pruitt is doing his best to repeal a number of major regulations, as is Zinke at the Interior Department. But these efforts haven't been finalized yet.

Major administrative actions take time, so it may not be surprising that Trump hasn't

accomplished more yet. How does he compare with Obama?

I found a nice [list](#) by the NRDC of Obama's environmental actions during the first year. Many of them didn't meet my fairly stringent criteria, but there were four that did, and two of them were really blockbusters:

1. The stimulus bill contained over \$50 billion for energy efficiency and renewables, including \$5 billion for the Weatherization Assistance Program, \$3.2 billion for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, and \$300 million for the Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate program. It also included \$1 billion for water and energy efficiency and green infrastructure.
2. Regulations (later mostly upheld by the courts) officially found that climate change endangered human health and welfare, imposed stringent standards on greenhouse gas emissions from cars, and required new stationary sources to get permits for emissions of greenhouse gases. Trump hasn't even tried to undo the endangerment finding or the permitting rules, although there's an effort to slow down or stop the second phase of the car rules.
3. The Department of the Interior issued new efficiency standards for fluorescent bulbs.
4. The Interior Department canceled the sale of 77 oil and gas leases in wilderness quality lands in Utah.

In quantity terms, Trump and Obama aren't all that different. But in terms of impact, Obama's first year seems more momentous than Trump's.