

Yes, it was a grim year in many ways. But there actually were some bright spots. Here are just the high points, but if you want more detail, I've added links to relevant earlier blog posts at the end of this post on the website.

1. **Scott Pruitt.** Pruitt resigned under fire. While his successor may be more successful in some ways, the fact remains that Pruitt was a disgrace. We're better off without him. Trump was apparently unfazed by his incompetence and aversion to hard work. But the succession of scandals and investigations, about personal travel at government expense, extravagance, the top-secret phone booth in his office, and so on and so on — eventually got to be too much of a distraction that threatened to undermine Trump's own monopoly on the spotlight.
2. **Ryan Zinke.** Yet another bad apple who was forced out. His acting replacement is equally wrong-headed and more competent, but has multiple conflicts of interest that require him to recuse himself from many disputes. Which is probably a good thing.
3. **Judicial rulings.** The Trump Administration continued to have a terrible record in court on environmental issues. According to Brookings, their record is now one in eighteen. Apart from losing litigation over its efforts to postpone Obama-era rules without obeying the proper procedures, the Administration also lost a couple of efforts to defend Obama-era efforts, resulting in mandates that it take regulatory action.
4. **States.** As I blogged previously, some states have responded to Trump by redoubling their commitments to addressing climate change. California and New York led the list, but they're far from the only ones. Just this month, Nine Northeastern states and the District of Columbia agreed to create a cap-and-trade system for the transportation sector. and DC also created a 100% renewable mandate for 2032.
5. **Regulations.** Some Trump Administration proposals have been derailed. That includes Rick Perry's efforts to justify subsidies for coal plants, either based on their supposed contribution to grid resiliency or as needed for national security. The Administration seems to be powerless to halt the steady stream of closing of coal power-plants, by utilities eager to shed uneconomic plants and modernize their operations.
6. **2018 elections.** The Democrats retook the House and picked up seven governorships. Winning the House will allow genuine oversight of the Administration for the first time, and governors can lead the charge on renewables. Democrats did respectably in the Senate races, considering that they were facing a very difficult electoral map. Flipping the Nevada and Arizona Senate seats suggests that these parts of the Southwest may be in play, and as O'Rourke's strong showing in Texas showed that it is edging toward becoming truly competitive.
7. **The private sector.** Like states, leading corporations from Apple to Wal-Mart are

continuing to pursue renewable energy goals. And Ford and GM parted company with the Administration on all or part of the rollback of CAFÉ full efficiency standards. Utilities in many states, Red as well as Blue, are investing enormous sums to modernize their grids in order to prepare for the new regime of solar and wind power. Meanwhile, basic economics is continuing to squeeze out coal-fired plants, and renewables are becoming competitive even with natural gas. .

Let's hope for more good news in 2019.

P.S. Sorry about all the typos in earlier versions! My New Year's resolution will be to do a couple of [online proofreading jobs](#) in hopes of becoming a better proofreader! Though if I haven't gotten there by now, it's probably pretty hopeless.