



The Cuyahoga River burns, 1969: this time, it won't be so obvious.

On Tuesday, [I wrote about the demise of local newspapers nationwide and in particular the collapse of the Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), arguing that universities need to fill the gap of quality journalism. I also suggested that this is an environmental issue, as it is local newspapers' coverage of the environment that often drives the conversation.

Well, thanks to reader [Madeline Fleisher of the Environmental Law and Policy Center's Columbus office](#), we now know of a particular and awful case: energy reporter John Funk, who has accepted the buyout. He will not be replaced. And if you want to know how that affects things, just [take a look at the stories Funk has covered in recent years and will not covered again without intervention](#): pretty much everything concerning public utilities, the state legislature's bailout of Ohio's utility, its shortchanging of renewables, the background of Ohio PUC Commissioners, preferences of even conservative Ohio voters concerning renewables, First Energy Solutions bankruptcy proceedings, and more.



John Funk

[Dan just wrote about other issues needing investigation.](#) Who will do the investigating? We can't expect it *all* to be Congress — indeed, Congress gets ideas for investigations from journalistic sources. House Ways and Means Committee chair Richard Neal is demanding Donald Trump's tax returns, and much of the predicate for that comes from [the exhaustive NYT piece on rampant tax fraud by Trump, his family, and his organization.](#)

John Funk now needs a job: universities, are you listening?