

Yesterday I posted a confused discussion of Paul's environmental views. (Probably due to brain lock from spending too many hours puzzling over the numerical examples in *EME Homer!*) I wanted to replace it with a clearer description of his views, so I pulled it from the website. Let's try this again.

This first thing to know about Senator Paul is that he loves coal. His favorite period of the past must be the Permian Era. He's a co-sponsor of Mitch McConnell's S. 861 Coal Jobs Protection Act. He also favors mining and oil drilling on public lands — according to his website, either the federal government should just sell the lands outright or it should stop restricting these activities as it has done for “two generations.” (That is, since about the time Nixon was elected President). He also, not surprisingly, favors the XL Pipeline, And even less surprisingly, he supports legislation to stop EPA from regulating carbon.

In terms of his broader views, his Senate website advertises the support of the National Mining Association for his views, another appeal to the interests of coal. His proposed “*The Defense of Environment and Property Act of 2013*” seems to be all about hindering the government's ability to protect wetlands but it would also make it much harder to enforce water pollution regulations against industry. He also introduced the REINS Act, which is designed to give industry lobbyists an easier shot at blocking EPA regulations in Congress, regardless of whether the regulations are valid under existing law. Another of his proposals is the FOCUS Act, which would decriminalize trafficking in illegally captured wildlife. In case you're wondering, FOCUS stands for “The Freedom from Over-Criminalization and Unjust Seizures Act of 2012”. FOCUS would also make it legal to import wildlife poached in violation of foreign law — Paul says it's unconstitutional for Congress to ban such imports because doing so delegates legislative authority to foreign governments. Presumably, so do extradition treaties, since they authorize foreign governments to demand extradition for people who violated foreign laws on their soil.

Paul's website says he “seek to find a balance between environmental, safety and health protection, without compromising the ability of family businesses to flourish.” But it's hard to see a lot of balancing going on there — business always seems to win, whether it's a family business, a publicly held corporation, or just a hard-working smuggler of illegally poached ivory.