We may not have much to be thankful right now, but I do have one bright thought for Thanksgiving. These are dark days for the cause of environmental protection, and it would be easy to give way to despair. But I continue to believe that prospects will improve. This election was a huge and costly set-back, but it probably does not represent the shape of our political future. Ultimately, the future will be controlled by the people coming of age after 2000. And their views are far different from Trump's and the GOP's.

In general, the demographics do not favor Trump. White voters are going to continue to decline as a share of the electorate, slowly but surely. Also, the share of the electorate born in this century will continue to rise, while the number born before 1970 will continue to decline. According to ABC News, Clinton beat Trump 55% to 37% among millennials, while losing 45% to 53% among baby boomers like me.

Millennials also place much more importance on environmental issues like climate change. Nearly three-quarters of adults under 30 favor restricting carbon emissions from power plants. And 62% of this group oppose expanded offshore drilling, as opposed to 35% of the over-65s. 75% of the younger group think developing alternative energy sources is more important than expanding fossil fuels. In other words, young voters are much greener than the boomers.

This generation gap is not too surprising. Trump is basically pledging to recreate the world of the 1950s – that's the America he wants to "make great again," which is why he drew support from parts of the rust belt that were in their heyday 40-60 years ago.

We will be getting much better data and analysis about the election in coming months, and it is premature to draw firm conclusions now. But there is no reason to believe that the fundamental demographics will lose their relevance.

An additional reason for hope is that time and again, environmentalists have succeeded in finding new ways to move forward despite obstacles. When the U.S. failed to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and Bush rejected climate action, we turned to states, cities, and the courts. When the Waxman-Markey Act failed to pass in the Senate, lawyers found ways of invoking obscure provisions of the Clean Air Act. In the meantime, scientists and engineers have continued to work on cutting-edge energy technologies. The use of renewables has expanded rapidly even in some key Red states, as businesses have found ways to make money from clean energy. We

will need to continue to work along these lines and to find creative new approaches. Fortunately, there is no sign that we're running out of really smart, highly creative thinkers.

I don't want to minimize the body blow that this election has been to environmental protection or the damage that Trump will do. He has espoused a boundless increase in the use of fossil fuels that would be devastating for the planet.The carbon emitted as a result of Trump's win will continue to warp our climate long after he is gone. We need to fight as hard as we can to hold him back, and to join others in ensuring that this election becomes an aberration rather than a multi-year pattern. But we also need to find ways of scoring our own victories rather than merely defeating the anti-environmentalists where we can.

Along many different directions, Trump wants to bring back the "good old days" of the 1950s as older Americans imagine them: a country dominated by whites, with great jobs in a thriving, though polluting, manufacturing sector, cheap and abundant fossil fuels, and no pesky environmental regulations. It's not surprising that his call for a return to the past has its greatest appeal to older Americans, while the young are looking forward to a far different future. For myself, I'm prepared to bet on the future over the past.