

Given that Trump has shifted his positions so often, there's always been at least a faint hope that he would rethink his vehement opposition to environmental protection. True, he had called climate change a Chinese hoax, but he later said he had an open mind about the Paris Agreement and then he had an apparently cordial meeting with Al Gore.

Trump's nomination of Scott Pruitt to head EPA has ended any of those hopes. Pruitt has a record of opposition to environmental regulation that goes back years. In terms of climate change, Pruitt has fought against any effort to limit carbon emissions. According to the [Washington Post](#),

"Pruitt was quoted as saying: 'The American people are tired of seeing billions of dollars drained from our economy due to unnecessary EPA regulations, and I intend to run this agency in a way that fosters both responsible protection of the environment and freedom for American businesses.'

"Pruitt, who has written that the debate on climate change is 'far from settled,' joined a coalition of state attorneys general in suing over the agency's Clean Power Plan, the principal Obama-era policy aimed at reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector. He has also sued, with fellow state attorneys general, over the EPA's recently announced regulations seeking to curtail the emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, from the oil and gas sector."

Trump and Pruitt have pledged to continue efforts to protect clean air and water. But I haven't seen any evidence of Pruitt championing environmental enforcement efforts in Oklahoma.

Pruitt does know something about environmental law from the Oklahoma AG's office, although we don't know how deeply involved he was in the actual legal work or how big a share of the office's work was environmental. There's a big difference between litigating a few controversial regulatory actions and running a regulatory agency as big and complex as EPA.

The last time we had an EPA nominee with such outspoken anti-environmental views, it was Reagan's first appointee to head the agency. She only lasted a couple of years before going down in flames.