No one can say it's been a boring year. In many ways, it's been a worse year than we expected, because the Trump Administration has gone all in on its anti-environmental vision. But there have also been some heartening positive developments. Here are some of the most important things, good and bad, that we've learned or at least been forcefully reminded of:

1. **Elections matter. A lot.** Yes, everyone knew this, but after eight years, we were lulled into a sense of false security. It turns out that elections can have a huge impact. No need to elaborate on this one.
2. **Delay is a deadly weapon.** Much of what the Trump Administration has done environmentally involves delay rather than actual rollbacks. At the request of the Trump Administration, courts have agreed to suspend their review of f Obama era regulations, leaving those rules in limbo. Meantime, the Administration has issued order after order postponing effective dates for regulations. In the end, the Administration may lose some of these fights, but in the meantime, they've put lots of important matters on hold.
3. **There are worse things than gridlock.** Under Obama, the main enemy seemed to be inertia in the face of pressing environmental problems. Some of that gridlock has now been resolved, in the worst ways possible.
4. **It's easier to destroy than create.** It took years of hard work by dozens if not hundreds of people to create the Clean Power Plan. Pruitt's effort to destroy it, however, involved merely lifting some legal arguments from industry briefs. Even more strikingly, the Congressional Review Act was surprisingly effective in wiping out regulations that were years in the making, based not on the hard work of finding and analyzing evidence but simply on backroom deals with lobbyists.
5. **States' Rights *can* be our friend.** The situation at the federal level is grim. But state governments have pushed forward with climate change policies, sometimes acting individually and sometimes joining with others. They have also resisted Trump Administration actions in court.
6. **The market can also be our friend.** Some of the most important forces favoring the environment are economic rather than legal or political. Prices for renewable energy have fallen rapidly, and coal is already being squeezed out by natural gas. States like Texas don't care about the environment, but they do care about economics. And many corporations are more forward-looking than the Administration, championing renewable energy and new technologies like electric vehicles.
7. **Cost-benefit analysis can be a tool for good.** One things that's notable

about the Trump Administration is its sloppy approach to cost-benefit analysis. I'm not sure what Neomi Rao is doing as regulatory czar, but it doesn't seem to involve serious economic analysis. This makes the Administration's regulations vulnerable.

8. ***The Chevron* doctrine isn't necessarily a plus.** The *Chevron* doctrine gives the executive branch extra leeway in interpreting statutes. Seemed like a great idea when Obama was in office. Now . . . not so much.
9. **America's international influence is limited when we stand alone.** The U.S. is a very powerful country. But so far, other countries have been remarkably unfazed by Trump's go-it-alone anti-environmentalism. No one but the U.S. has threatened to leave the Paris Agreement, and two countries have actually joined. China is forging ahead on its efforts to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions. The EU is also refusing to blink. Fortunately, the whole world doesn't dance to our tune, superpower though we may be.
10. **There are many who do support environmental protection.** Often, this isn't apparent, because for most people the environment is low on their list of priorities. But polls show continuing broad support for the environment, especially among young people. Trump has helped mobilize some of that support — there's been a huge surge in membership and donations to environmental groups.

It's been a very long year. And we're still a long way from the next presidential election. But we've learned a lot, and there's a lot of hard work ahead.