

Trump has been in office for a year and a half. Where do things stand? How permanent will the damage be to environmental protection? Answer: bad, but not nearly as it might have been.

The degree of resistance especially impressive when you consider the circumstances just how much of American government is controlled by Republicans. Conservative Republicans control the Presidency, the Supreme Court, and both Houses of Congress. At the state level, Democrats are in an almost unprecedentedly weak position. They control the legislatures in only about a dozen states, many with GOP governors, whereas the Republicans control the legislature *and* the governor's mansion in half the states.

Obviously, the damage done by the Trump Administration will be very real. With at least two Supreme Court appointments, he will create an unfavorable venue for environmental regulations for years to come. Important regulations have been wiped out by congressional resolutions. Valuable initiatives have been kneecapped. Millions of tons of carbon will be emitted, to linger in the atmosphere for centuries. Wetlands will be destroyed, and wilderness will be trammelled. The fight against this heedless attack on environmental protection should be unceasing.

The good news is that he hasn't succeeded in two efforts that would cause great long-term harm to environmental protection. The massive budget cuts he proposed for environmental agencies would have devastated those agencies for years to come. His effort to eliminate research on climate and energy have also come to nothing. Despite being under Republican control, the Republican Congress has handily rejected those two efforts.

There is also good news from many states. Progressive states across the country have ramped up their climate change and renewable energy policies. In the meantime, other states have resisted rolling back their current renewables policies. Wind and solar power continue to expand quickly, while coal plants are shutting across the country.

The Administration has engaged in a flurry of efforts to roll back major Obama-era regulations. Those efforts are still underway. None of them has yet been through the courts. It remains to be seen how they will fare there. One favorable sign: In cases involving Trump's efforts to suspend Obama-era regulations pending reconsideration, the courts have given him a notably chilly reception.

If the litigation over rule-repeals isn't over by January 2020, a new Administration may be able to put these rollbacks on hold. Other Trump initiatives can be eliminated more easily by a later president. What one executive order does, another can undo just as quickly. A new

president could rejoin the Paris Agreement, with an even stronger commitment level. Executive orders can be repealed as easily as they are issued.

It seems likely that even if implemented, Trump's policies may not have the effects he is seeking. For one thing, some key Trump policies clash. Rolling back pollution standards for cars will increase carbon emissions, but tariffs will raise car prices, resulting in fewer sales of the polluting cars. Trump wants to encourage natural gas production, but his plan to prop up coal-fired generators will limit the market for gas. By the same token, encouraging fracking only hurts the market for coal.

Sooner or later, the reign of Trump and his anti-regulatory appointees will come to an end. At that point, it may be possible, not just to restore Obama's achievements, but to make rapid progress. Rather than coal-plants closing incrementally over time, Trump's efforts to support uneconomical coal plants foretell a wave of plant closings when subsidies are removed. Prices for renewable energy, electricity storage, and electric vehicles are dropping constantly. When the time is ripe, it may be possible to adopt something much more ambitious than Obama's Clean Power Plan and to push vehicle standards well beyond what the Obama Administration planned. But while we plan for a new day sometime down the road, environmentalists still need to continue trench warfare to resist the anti-environmental forces emanating from the current White House.