Much of Trump's damage to the environment is obvious: his efforts to increase gas and oil production, his regulatory rollbacks, and his efforts to gut the agencies charged with protecting the environment. But he has also done deeper damage to the institutions we need to address climate change and other daunting environmental challenges. These problems go far beyond environmental law, but perhaps environmental law can be part of the solution.

Restoring international relations. Trump has had a hugely disruptive effect on the U.S.'s relationships with allies and other countries. Environmental law can be part of the solution her. One obvious step is to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the Paris Agreement. Another step is to ratify the Kigali Amendment, banning chemicals in HFC family. These chemicals are extremely potent greenhouse gases. The Amendment isn't part of the UN climate negotiations; instead, it's part of the Montreal Protocol protecting the ozone layer. There's no reason to delay on this – even the industry is on board, and enough other countries have already ratified to put the treaty into effect this year. Even a Republican Senate should be willing to ratify. Another no-brainer is to (finally) ratify the Law of the Sea Convention, which every Democratic and Republican President before Trump supported. Ratification has been blocked by right-wing extremists, but even so, it should be possible to find a way for the U.S. to join the rest of the world on this one.

Upholding science.

This is another area where there are obvious steps to be taken, such as replacing the ideological appointments on the EPA Science Advisory Board with genuine scientists, restoring scientific integrity rules, and de-politicizing the grant process for research. It would be ideal if scientific integrity rules could be written into statute; failing that, government agencies should promulgate formal rules. The Trump Administration has tried to use transparency claims as a screen for excluding important public health studies from being considered by agencies. Obviously, that effort should be abandoned, but we should also recognize that transparency of scientific studies is an important goal. Agencies should work with the scientific community to increase to make scientific data and models as transparent as possible, consistent with countervailing interests such as privacy.

In terms of increasing public buy-in for environmental science, efforts to expand the use of citizen science coud help. With advances in technology, it has become increasingly possible to involve ordinary citizens in collecting scientific data. One idea: work with schools to create a national data collection project for high school

students. People can be expected to have more confidence in science if they feel that people like them are involved in the effort, not just experts.

Transparency and respect for the free press.

Again, much of the remedy is to simply undo Trump Administration actions. The Administration has tried to do its best to censor science on government websites, limit the use of the Freedom of Information Act, and attack the motives of the press whenever possible. That needs to end. What about affirmative steps? One useful step would be to place more emphasis on establishing connections between the government and the press outside of D.C. EPA has regional offices, while federal land managers are scattered across the country. More emphasis could be placed on their media outreach and responsiveness to media inquiries.

Reaffirming the government's core missions.

In terms of regulation, the Trump Administration's main goal has been to cut corporate costs. President's "Two-for-One" Executive Order embodied this goal, requiring agencies to set priorities on the basis of cost cutting. That Executive Order should be immediately repealed. But it's not enough to undo Trump's mistakes. The process of White House regulatory review needs to be revamped to make it clear that the goal is smart protection of public health and the environment, not minimizing costs or nitpicking regulations to death. There's already an Office of Advocacy within the Small Business Administration, whose job it is to advocate on behalf of those businesses before other government agencies. Maybe we need an Office of Advocacy at the National Institutes of Health to advocate for public health in regulatory proceedings.

A more fundamental problem is political polarization. Unfortunately, most environmental issues have become highly polarized as well. But there do seem to be some areas where there is broad public support, including expansion of renewable energy, adaptation to climate extremes, and regulation of toxic chemicals (especially in drinking water). More can be done to pursue those goals, and perhaps help broaden public support for environmental protection more generally.