

Nearly four years into the Trump Administration, we're now accustomed to waking up every morning to learn about a new attack on the environment. It's also been an awful year in terms of the pandemic. But there are some things to be thankful for.

Here's how I started a similar post in 2017, nearly a year after Trump took office:

“Overall, it's been a pretty lousy year since last Thanksgiving. If you care about the environment, there are a lot of things NOT to be thankful for, or rather one big thing in the form of He Who Must Not Be Named. But there are also some things for which we should feel thankful, many of them involving resistance to You Know Who.”

In broad strokes, that remains pretty much true now.

I then followed up with a list of things from 2017 to be thankful for. I thought it would be fun to follow up to see where we are on these same things as Trump's presidency is winding down.. Here goes, with the items from the 2017 list in **bold**, followed by the updates:

2017: “Nicaragua and Syria have joined the Paris Agreement, leaving the U.S. as the only outlier.”

2020: Fortunately, no other country ever followed Trump's lead and announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. The U.S. is set to rejoin on January 20 after Biden takes the oath of office.

2017: “Some countries and car companies have announced plans to phase out gasoline vehicles.”

2020: This trend has continued. Trump dismayed car companies with his plans to roll back fuel efficiency standards, and several went so far as to enter into a voluntary agreement with California to continue to follow stricter standards. The major U.S. car companies are all committed to electric vehicles. California is now planning to have only EVs for sale by 2035.

2017: “The new governors of New Jersey and Virginia are committed to fighting climate change.” (2017)

2020: New Jersey has now adopted an ambitious plan of action. Action in Virginia was hampered by resistance from a GOP-controlled legislature but is now moving forward.

2017: “Tens of thousands of Americans have lined up to support environmental

groups opposing You Know Who's Administration."

2020: Public opinion has continued to move toward a recognition of the reality and seriousness of climate change. Climate has achieved higher political priority, featuring heavily in the Democratic primaries and getting airtime during the Trump-Biden debates.

2017: "States from California to New York have strengthened their own climate change policies in direct response to the Administration."

2020: This trend has really accelerated, with many additional states adopting goals of deep emission cuts over the next decades.

2017: "China and the EU have remained firm in their support for the Paris Agreement."

2020: This still remains very much true. China has entered into a new cooperative effort with the University of California to find new ways to reduce carbon, led on the U.S. side by former Governor Jerry Brown.

2017: "The courts seem determined to rigorously review Administration actions."

2020: The Trump Administration has been reversed in case after case in their efforts to hurry the rollback process. Courts have been quick to overturn rollbacks over procedural flaws or lack of reasoned analysis of the evidence.

2017: "China is about to announce its cap-and-trade plan, and may already have reached peak coal use."

2020: China hasn't moved as quickly as many were hoping with emission trading. But China recently made its emissions goals much more ambitious, which represents a big step forward.

2017: "Solar and wind prices are continuing to fall, making coal less and less competitive."

2020: Coal declined sharply under Trump despite his much ballyhooed support. Wind and solar prices have continued to decline, and there has been an even faster decline in the cost of battery storage. This is making rapid emission cuts much more economically feasible.

2017: *“There’s another presidential election in three years.”*

2020: Well, we had that election. Trump lost. Biden will be hampered by the disappointing performance of Democrats in down-ballot races. But he will still put all the considerable powers of the executive branch behind protection of the environment. That’s a 180° turn from the past four years.

Have a Great Thanksgiving!