

Trump's first term led to him being called the most anti-environmental president in U.S. history. This term is shaping up to be much worse. Regulatory rollbacks promise to be even more extensive than last time. In addition, the Administration has withheld funding for clean technology, denounced the very idea of environmental justice, and begun a campaign to gut environmental agencies. And that's only the first hundred days of Trump's second term.

A complete catalogue of Trump's anti-environmental actions would be many pages long. It sometimes seems that a day never goes by without an executive order targetting the environment. Below, I touch on some of the main efforts to undermine environmental protection. For every initiative that I discuss, there are probably a dozen others that would be part of a complete accounting.

Regulatory Rollbacks

EPA [announced](#) plans to roll back thirty-one environmental actions. These included Biden climate-change regulations, but also protections against air pollution that are important to public health and water pollution limits for coal plants.

The list also included a repeal of the Obama-era Endangerment Finding. Apparently, EPA means to challenge the massive scientific evidence that human carbon emissions are causing dangerous climate change. This is part of the Administration's general skepticism about science of all kinds. For instance, it is [firing](#) most of the scientists in EPA's research office.

Topping off these more particular efforts Trump instructed agencies to implement time bombs to all their past environmental regulations, set to go off a year later unless the agency chooses to reset the clock. This is a long shot at best, but if it works would allow the Administration to eliminate environmental law with a stroke of the pen.

Attacks on Clean Energy

Trump froze permitting for wind turbines and called for reconsideration of existing permits. The government also froze funding that was already due for clean energy projects and scientific research relating to climate change.

In an extraordinary move, the government even froze the bank accounts of green banks that had *already* received money from the government, with little or no effort

to provide a legal justification. Even the conservatives at a property rights conference I spoke at were shocked by this blatant attack on private property.

Disavowing Environmental Justice.

Trump called for ending all efforts to ensure that disadvantaged communities did not suffer disproportionate harm from pollution. Such impacts are apparently not a concern. The government's efforts to deal with environmental justice issues date back to an executive order by Bill Clinton. You don't have to believe in affirmative action to think that the government should try to avoid doing things that make minority groups and the poor worse off than they already are.

Destroying Environmental Agencies

Trump has shuttered environmental justice offices and fired agency scientists. The head of EPA plans to go much farther, however. With Trump's support, he has [announced](#) plans to cut EPA's budget by at least two-thirds. Another agency, NOAA studies ocean and atmospheric systems, providing crucial information about climate change. It also issues regulations to protect fisheries and endangered marine mammals. Managers at NOAA have already been told to plan to fire 20% of their staff. The Forest Service is [cutting](#) 7000 staff positions. The Fish and Wildlife Service will be [required](#) to eliminate four positions whenever it hires a new person. It won't matter much what environmental laws are on the books if there's no one left to implement them.

This makes for a depressing list. How far Trump gets with this anti-environmental jihad will depend partly on the courts but mostly on politics. Events relating to the economy and provision of basic government services are likely to have as much impact on how things play out than anything specific to the environment.