According to Trump's EPA, the greatest day in the agency's history was not, as you might think, a day when it did something to protect the environment. Instead, according to Trump's EPA, the agency's finest moment will be eliminating protections against air and water pollution. The announcement of these rollbacks was, EPA said, "the most momentous day in the history of the EPA."

You might have thought the prime mission of the Environmental Protection Agency was protecting the environment. Lee Zeldin, the Trump appointee running EPA, has a different idea: "The EPA is going to aggressively pursue an agenda powering the Great American Comeback… that's our purpose, and it's what will keep us up at night." In an interview, Zeldin announced his "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative.

The initiative rests on five pillars. Only one of them is about what *used* to be EPA's mission, protecting the environment. The others focus on boosting the economy through expanded use of fossil fuels:

> "The first is pushing for 'Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American.' The second is to 'Restore American Energy Dominance,' and the third is for 'Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership.' The fourth pillar is to 'Make the United States the Artificial Intelligence Capital of the World,' and the fifth is 'Protecting and Bringing Back American Auto Jobs.'"

Of these pillars, only the first one has any basis in law. There's nothing in any of the environmental laws that govern EPA about energy dominance, promoting AI, or expanding the car industry.

How does expansion of fossil fuels, which inevitably cause pollution, fit with the agency's environmental goals? The answer, to the extent that Zeldin pauses to consider the environment, is that it's better for the environment for the U.S. to produce fossil fuels than for other countries to do so, presumably because of whatever lingering environmental regulations will still apply to the industry after Zeldin finishes all his rollbacks.

And what about climate change? Not to worry, because it is only the fever dream of demented zealots. According to Zeldin, advocates for climate action are pushing a

discredited apocalyptic vision:

> “There has been talk through the years about how the world was imminently about to end because of climate change, and in the name of that threat there was a push to do some crazy things.”
>
> The timelines of those predictions of “climate change” ending the world have ‘come and *have ‘come and gone’ Zeldin said, and the world is still here.*“

Have no fear, these (imaginary) climate zealots will be vanquished. In trumpeting his rollbacks, Zeldin breathlessly said EPA was “driving a dagger straight into the heart of the climate change religion.”

All of this is thrilling, if you adore fossil fuels. Or chilling, if you happen to take scientific evidence and economic analysis seriously.