

The Trump Administration's basic stance has been to pursue ideological purity at all costs, beginning with the "shock and awe" campaign of the first year. Don't expect miracles, but there are at least a few signs that the Administration is tempering that strategy. It's a bit comforting to see indications that reality is slowly sinking in. It's also evidence that resistance to Trump policies isn't futile.

Any trend toward saner policies is likely to be very limited. For instance, Trump and his supporters are too invested in climate denial to ever admit that climate change is a serious problem. The best we might hope for is that they ease up just a little on their war against clean energy. There are at least some hints that this may be starting to happen.

Here's one example from the [Wall Street Journal](#). Last Friday, the Energy Department made a surprise announcement that nearly two thousand clean energy projects whose funding had been on hold would receive the money after all. A total of \$24 billion in funding was involved. This included a \$600 million grant for two startups for a carbon-capture project in Louisiana, an EV factory in Michigan, and a solar facility in Arizona.

Another [example](#) involves solar projects on federal lands whose permits have been in limbo inside the Interior Department. Beginning in January, however, the Department has started to move those permits through the process. Possible motives include pressure from some Republican governors, permit reform talks in Congress, and response to public and industry concerns about electricity prices.

The Administration may also have backed off a bit from its vendetta against offshore wind projects. After it was hit by a series of preliminary injunctions against its efforts to shut down offshore projects, the government [decided](#) not to appeal.

One reason might have been concern about the odds of success on appeal, but the Administration was also bowing to political pressure, because Democrats refused to negotiate about permit reform while the projects were frozen.

Turning to public health, vaccine policy is another area where the Administration seems to be, ever so reluctantly, accepting reality. According to the [NY Times](#), Trump's new nominee to head the CDC, Dr. Erica Schwartz, "is viewed as a highly qualified, traditional choice for the agency's director" who "has praised vaccines as a cornerstone of prevention." One of DHS head RFK Jr.'s closest allies complained loudly that there is little hope that she will respect the rights and needs of the vaccine injured." But the White House has apparently decided that opposing

childhood vaccines is a bad electoral strategy.

Finally, the Administration seems to be grudgingly accepting the fact that the federal government needs to play a role in disaster management. True to the Administration's early desire to transfer disaster response entirely to the states, Secretary Kristi Noem did whatever she could to kneecap FEMA. Her replacement, Markwayne Mullin, has ended her virtual freeze on significant FEMA expenditures. We won't know until summer, however, how much support FEMA will ultimately get from Mullin.

I'd like to think that these changes reflected a realization that some Administration policies were indefensible. I think it's more an indication, however, that the Administration doesn't have the raw power to bulldoze everything in its path. They've suffered a series of setbacks, including the Supreme Court's tariff decision, a slew of lower court injunctions, worsening prospects for the midterm elections, and an unpopular war that has yet to yield any positive gains. All the more reason to continue pushing back against destructive Administration policies.