Summary

Whenever the Trump Administration wants to take aim at environmental protection, it's go-to excuse is national security. That's a label that can cover almost any action, regardless of truth.

Here’s a new one: “Why did Trump’s chicken cross the road?” The answer: “National security!”

In a more serious vein, a recent NY Times article recounts how often President Trump has invoked national security. It dissects his latest and most absurd claim: that his planned “Arc de Trump” monument will be filled with snipers, ammunition, and drones. It turns out that the snipers would be in an excellent position to target visitors to Arlington National Cemetery but not to protect anything of strategic importance.

Environmental law has been one of the most fertile areas for such claims of national security. Environmental law is probably even involved with Trump’s golden arch. Don’t be surprised when Trump claims that environmental reviews of the project have to be kept top secret.

It’s hard to overstate how widely Trump has used national security as an excuse for weakening environmental safeguards. Here are a dozen examples, covering everything from windmills to herbicides:

1. Windmills, which have been routinely approved by the Defense Department in the past, are now a national security threat due to radar echoes. Texas, which uses the most wind power, is presumably the most at risk of invasion.

2. Coastal states like California are threatening national security and the national economy by opting for renewable energy.

3. Our country is beset by environmentalist terrorists. If you see a backpacker in the countryside, call the FBI immediately!

4. The Endangered Species Act needs to be suspended for national security reasons throughout the entire Gulf of Mexico, lest protection for endangered whales interfere with maximizing oil production.

5. There’s a national emergency because we might not have enough electricity to power as many AI data centers as we want, which would threaten national security.

6. Preventing coal-fired power plants from emitting toxic chemicals would threaten national security.

7. Preventing chemical and plastics plants from emitting toxic chemicals would threaten national security.

8. Preventing copper smelters from emitting toxic chemicals would threaten national security.

9. The same is true of tire manufacturers, steel mills,and processors of low quality iron ore. National security requires toxics maxxing.

10. Nuclear power is vital to providing the energy needed for national security, so we need to minimize environmental reviews of new experimental reactors.

11. A small oil pipeline near Santa Barbara is critical to our national defense.

12. So is the herbicide Roundup, despite any cancer risks it might pose.

The next time you see a polluting tire factory, plastics factory, or aging coal plant, you should take a moment to remember just how important they are for national security. If Trump had not given them a license to spew out toxics, who knows what might have happened to our beloved homeland?