

95 Environmental Rules Being Rolled Back Under Trump

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President Trump has made eliminating federal regulations a priority. His administration, with help from Republicans in Congress, has often targeted environmental rules it sees as burdensome to the fossil fuel industry and other big businesses.

A New York Times analysis, based on research from Harvard Law School, Columbia Law School and other sources, counts more than 90 environmental rules and regulations rolled back under Mr. Trump.

Our list represents two types of policy changes: rules that were officially reversed and rollbacks still in progress.

The Trump administration has often used a “one-two punch” when rolling back environmental rules, said Caitlin McCoy, a fellow in the Environmental and Energy Law Program at Harvard Law School who tracks regulatory rollbacks. “First a delay rule to buy some time, and then a final substantive rule.”

But the process has not always been smooth. In some cases, the administration has failed to provide a strong legal argument in favor of proposed changes and agencies have skipped key steps in the rulemaking process, like notifying the public and asking for comment. In several cases, courts have ordered agencies to enforce their own rules.

Several environmental rules — summarized at the bottom of this page — were rolled back and then later reinstated, often following legal challenges. Other regulations remain mired in court.

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All told, the Trump administration’s environmental rollbacks could significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions and lead to thousands of extra deaths from poor air quality every year, according to a report prepared by New York University Law School’s State Energy and Environmental Impact Center.

Are there rollbacks we missed? Email climateteam@nytimes.com or tweet @nytclimate.

Air pollution and emissions

Completed

1. Canceled a requirement for oil and gas companies to report methane emissions. Environmental Protection Agency | [Read more](#)

2. Revised and partially repealed an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions on public lands, including intentional venting and flaring from drilling operations. Interior Department | [Read more](#)
3. Replaced the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, which would have set strict limits on carbon emissions from coal- and gas-fired power plants, with a new version that would let states set their own rules. Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
4. Revoked California's power to set its own more stringent emissions standards for cars and light trucks. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
5. Repealed a requirement that state and regional authorities track tailpipe emissions from vehicles traveling on federal highways. Transportation Department | [Read more](#)
6. Loosened a Clinton-era rule designed to limit toxic emissions from major industrial polluters. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
7. Revised a permitting program designed to safeguard communities from increases in pollution from new power plants to make it easier for facilities to avoid emissions regulations. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
8. Amended rules that govern how refineries monitor pollution in surrounding communities. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
9. Stopped enforcing a 2015 rule that prohibited the use of hydrofluorocarbons, powerful greenhouse gases, in air-conditioners and refrigerators. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
10. Weakened an Obama-era rule meant to reduce air pollution in national parks and wilderness areas. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
11. Weakened oversight of some state plans for reducing air pollution in national parks. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
12. Directed agencies to stop using an Obama-era calculation of the "social cost of carbon" that rulemakers used to estimate the long-term economic benefits of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Executive Order | [Read more](#)
13. Withdrew guidance that federal agencies include greenhouse gas emissions in environmental reviews. But several district courts have ruled that emissions must be included in such reviews. Executive Order; Council on Environmental Quality | [Read more](#)
14. Lifted a summertime ban on the use of E15, a gasoline blend made of 15 percent ethanol. (Burning gasoline with a higher concentration of ethanol in hot conditions increases smog.) E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
15. Changed rules to allow states and the E.P.A. to take longer to develop and approve plans aimed at cutting methane emissions from existing landfills. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
16. Revoked an Obama executive order that set a goal of cutting the federal government's greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent over 10 years. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

In process

17. Proposed relaxing Obama-era requirements that companies monitor and repair methane leaks at oil and gas facilities. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
18. Proposed weakening Obama-era fuel-economy standards for cars and light trucks. E.P.A. and Transportation Department | [Read more](#)
19. Submitted notice of intent to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement. The process of withdrawing cannot be completed until November 2020. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

- 20. Proposed eliminating Obama-era restrictions that in effect required newly built coal power plants to capture carbon dioxide emissions. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
- 21. Proposed a legal justification for weakening an Obama-era rule that limited mercury emissions from coal power plants. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
- 22. Proposed revisions to standards for carbon dioxide emissions from new, modified and reconstructed power plants. Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
- 23. Began a review of emissions rules for power plant start-ups, shutdowns and malfunctions. In April, the E.P.A. proposed reversing a requirement that Texas follow the emissions rule, with implications for 35 other states. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
- 24. Proposed the repeal of rules meant to reduce leaking and venting of hydrofluorocarbons from large refrigeration and air conditioning systems. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
- 25. Opened for comment a proposal limiting the ability of individuals and communities to challenge E.P.A.-issued pollution permits before a panel of agency judges. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Drilling and extraction

Completed

- 26. Made significant cuts to the borders of two national monuments in Utah and recommended border and resource management changes to several more. Presidential Proclamation; Interior Department | [Read more](#)
- 27. Rescinded water pollution regulations for fracking on federal and Indian lands. Interior Department | [Read more](#)
- 28. Scrapped a proposed rule that required mines to prove they could pay to clean up future pollution. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
- 29. Withdrew a requirement that Gulf oil rig owners prove they could cover the costs of removing rigs once they have stopped producing. Interior Department | [Read more](#)
- 30. Approved construction of the Dakota Access pipeline less than a mile from the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Under the Obama administration, the Army Corps of Engineers had said it would explore alternative routes. Executive Order; Army | [Read more](#)
- 31. Revoked an Obama-era executive order designed to preserve ocean, coastal and Great Lakes waters in favor of a policy focused on energy production and economic growth. Executive Order | [Read more](#)
- 32. Changed how the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission considers the indirect effects of greenhouse gas emissions in environmental reviews of pipelines. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission | [Read more](#)
- 33. Permitted the use of seismic air guns for gas and oil exploration in the Atlantic Ocean. The practice, which can kill marine life and disrupt fisheries, was blocked under the Obama administration. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more](#)
- 34. Lifted ban on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Congress; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

35. Loosened offshore drilling safety regulations implemented by the Obama administration following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill, including reduced testing requirements for blowout prevention systems. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

In process

36. Proposed opening most of America's coastal waters to offshore oil and gas drilling, but delayed the plan after a federal judge ruled that Mr. Trump's reversal of an Obama-era ban on drilling in the Arctic Ocean was unlawful. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

37. Lifted an Obama-era freeze on new coal leases on public lands. But, in April 2019, a judge ruled that the Interior Department could not begin selling new leases without completing an environmental review. A month later, the agency published a draft assessment that concluded restarting federal coal leasing would have little environmental impact. Executive Order; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

38. Repealed an Obama-era rule governing royalties for oil, gas and coal leases on federal lands, which replaced a 1980s rule that critics said allowed companies to underpay the federal government. A federal judge struck down the Trump administration's repeal. The Interior Department is reviewing the decision. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

39. Proposed revising regulations on offshore oil and gas exploration by floating vessels in the Arctic that were developed after a 2013 accident. The Interior Department previously said it was "considering full rescission or revision of this rule." Executive Order; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

40. Proposed "streamlining" the approval process for drilling for oil and gas in national forests. Agriculture Department; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

41. Recommended shrinking three marine protected areas, or opening them to commercial fishing. Executive Order; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more](#)

42. Proposed opening land in the Alaska National Petroleum Reserve for oil and leasing. The Obama administration had designated the reserve as a conservation area. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

43. Proposed lifting a Clinton-era policy that banned logging and road construction in Alaska's Tongass National Forest. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

44. Approved the Keystone XL pipeline rejected by President Barack Obama, but a federal judge blocked the project from going forward without an adequate environmental review process. Mr. Trump later attempted to side-step the ruling by issuing a presidential permit, but the project remains tied up in court. Executive Order; State Department | [Read more](#)

Infrastructure and planning

Completed

45. Revoked Obama-era flood standards for federal infrastructure projects, like roads and bridges. The standards required the government to account for sea-level rise and other climate change effects. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

46. Relaxed the environmental review process for federal infrastructure projects. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

- 47. Revoked a directive for federal agencies to minimize impacts on water, wildlife, land and other natural resources when approving development projects. [Executive Order](#) | [Read more](#)
- 48. Revoked an Obama executive order promoting “climate resilience” in the northern Bering Sea region of Alaska, which withdrew local waters from oil and gas leasing and established a tribal advisory council to consult on local environmental issues. [Executive Order](#) | [Read more](#)
- 49. Reversed an update to the Bureau of Land Management’s public land use planning process. [Congress](#) | [Read more](#)
- 50. Withdrew an Obama-era order to consider climate change in managing natural resources in national parks. [National Park Service](#) | [Read more](#)
- 51. Restricted most Interior Department environmental studies to one year in length and a maximum of 150 pages, citing a need to reduce paperwork. [Interior Department](#) | [Read more](#)
- 52. Withdrew a number of Obama-era Interior Department climate change and conservation policies that the agency said could “burden the development or utilization of domestically produced energy resources.” [Interior Department](#) | [Read more](#)
- 53. Eliminated the use of an Obama-era planning system designed to minimize harm from oil and gas activity on sensitive landscapes, such as national parks. [Interior Department](#) | [Read more](#)
- 54. Eased the environmental review processes for small wireless infrastructure projects with the goal of expanding 5G wireless networks. [Federal Communications Commission](#) | [Read more](#)
- 55. Withdrew Obama-era policies designed to maintain or, ideally improve, natural resources affected by federal projects. [Interior Department](#) | [Read more](#)

In process

- 56. Proposed plans to streamline the environmental review process for Forest Service projects. [Agriculture Department](#) | [Read more](#)

Animals

Completed

- 57. Changed the way the Endangered Species Act is applied, making it more difficult to protect wildlife from long-term threats posed by climate change. [Interior Department](#) | [Read more](#)
- 58. Overturned a ban on the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle on federal lands. [Interior Department](#) | [Read more](#)
- 59. Overturned a ban on the hunting of predators in Alaskan wildlife refuges. [Congress](#) | [Read more](#)
- 60. Amended fishing regulations for a number of species to allow for longer seasons and higher catch rates. [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) | [Read more](#)
- 61. Withdrew proposed limits on the number of endangered marine mammals and sea turtles that can be unintentionally killed or injured with sword-fishing nets by people who fish on the West Coast. (In 2018, California issued a state rule prohibiting the use of the nets the rule was intending to regulate.) [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) | [Read more](#)

62. Rolled back a roughly 40-year-old interpretation of a policy aimed at protecting migratory birds, potentially running afoul of treaties with Canada and Mexico. Interior Department | [Read more](#)
63. Overturned a ban on using parts of migratory birds in handicrafts made by Alaskan Natives. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

In process

64. Opened nine million acres of Western land to oil and gas drilling by weakening habitat protections for the sage grouse, an imperiled bird with an elaborate mating dance. An Idaho District Court injunction blocked the measure. Interior Department | [Read more](#)
65. Proposed ending an Obama-era rule that barred using bait to lure and kill grizzly bears, among other sport hunting practices that many people consider extreme, on some public lands in Alaska. National Park Service; Interior Department | [Read more](#)
66. Proposed relaxing environmental protections for salmon and smelt in California's Central Valley in order to free up water for farmers. Executive Order; Interior Department | [Read more](#)

Toxic substances and safety

Completed

67. Rejected a proposed ban on chlorpyrifos, a pesticide linked to developmental disabilities in children. (A European Union ban is to take effect in 2020.) E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
68. Narrowed the scope of a 2016 law mandating safety assessments for potentially toxic chemicals like dry-cleaning solvents. The E.P.A. said it would focus on direct exposure and exclude indirect exposure such as from air or water contamination. In November, a court of appeals ruled the agency must widen its scope to consider full exposure risks. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
69. Reversed an Obama-era rule that required braking system upgrades for "high hazard" trains hauling flammable liquids, like oil and ethanol. Transportation Department | [Read more](#)
70. Removed copper filter cake, an electronics manufacturing byproduct comprised of heavy metals, from the "hazardous waste" list. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
71. Ended an Occupational Safety and Health Administration program to reduce risks of workers developing the lung disease silicosis. Labor Department | [Read more](#)

In process

72. Proposed changing safety rules to allow for rail transport of liquefied natural gas, which is highly flammable. Transportation Department | [Read more](#)
73. Rolled back most of the requirements of a 2017 rule aimed at improving safety at sites that use hazardous chemicals that was instituted after a chemical plant exploded in Texas. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
74. Announced a review of an Obama-era rule lowering coal dust limits in mines. The head of the Mine Safety and Health Administration said there were no immediate plans to change the dust limit but has extended a public comment period until 2022. Labor Department | [Read more](#)

Water pollution

Completed

75. Scaled back pollution protections for certain tributaries and wetlands that were regulated under the Clean Water Act by the Obama administration. E.P.A.; Army | [Read more](#)

76. Revoked a rule that prevented coal companies from dumping mining debris into local streams. Congress | [Read more](#)

77. Withdrew a proposed rule aimed at reducing pollutants, including air pollution, at sewage treatment plants. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

78. Withdrew a proposed rule requiring groundwater protections for certain uranium mines. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

In process

79. Proposed a rule exempting certain types of power plants from parts of an E.P.A. rule limiting toxic discharge from power plants into public waterways. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

80. Proposed allowing the E.P.A. to issue permits for federal projects under the Clean Water Act over state objections if they don't meet local water quality goals, including for pipelines and other fossil fuel facilities. Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

81. Proposed extending the lifespan of unlined coal ash holding areas, which can spill their contents because they lack a protective underlay. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

82. Proposed a regulation limiting the scope of an Obama-era rule under which companies had to prove that large deposits of recycled coal ash would not harm the environment. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

83. Proposed a new rule allowing the federal government to issue permits for coal ash waste in Indian Country and some states without review if the disposal site is in compliance with federal regulations. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

84. Proposed doubling the time allowed to remove lead pipes from water systems with high levels of lead. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Other

Completed

85. Repealed an Obama-era regulation that would have nearly doubled the number of light bulbs subject to energy-efficiency standards starting in January 2020. The E.P.A. also blocked the next phase of efficiency standards for general-purpose bulbs already subject to regulation. Energy Department | [Read more](#)

86. Allowed coastal replenishment projects to use sand from protected beaches. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

87. Limited funding environmental and community development projects through corporate settlements of federal lawsuits. Justice Department | [Read more](#)

88. Announced intent to stop payments to the Green Climate Fund, a United Nations program to help poorer countries reduce carbon emissions. Executive Order | [Read more](#)

89. Reversed restrictions on the sale of plastic water bottles in national parks designed to cut down on litter, despite a Park Service report that the effort worked. Interior Department | [Read more](#)

In process

90. Ordered a review of water efficiency standards in bathroom fixtures, including toilets. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

91. Proposed limiting the studies used by the E.P.A. for rulemaking to only those that make data publicly available. (Scientists widely criticized the proposal, who said it would effectively block the agency from considering landmark research that relies on confidential health data.) E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

92. Proposed changes to the way cost-benefit analyses are conducted under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and other environmental statutes. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

93. Proposed withdrawing efficiency standards for residential furnaces and commercial water heaters designed to reduce energy use. Energy Department | [Read more](#)

94. Created a product category that would allow some dishwashers to be exempt from energy efficiency standards. Energy Department | [Read more](#)

95. Initially withdrew then delayed a proposed rule that would inform car owners about fuel-efficient replacement tires. (The Transportation Department has scheduled a new rulemaking notice for 2020.) Transportation Department | [Read more](#)

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10 rules were reinstated, often following lawsuits and other challenges

1. Weakened federal rules regulating the disposal and storage of coal ash waste from power plants. A court later ruled the administration was attempting to weaken rules that were not stringent enough. E.P.A.

2. Reversed course on repealing emissions standards for “glider” trucks — vehicles retrofitted with older, often dirtier engines — after Andrew Wheeler took over as head of the E.P.A. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

3. Delayed a compliance deadline for new national ozone pollution standards by one year, but later reversed course. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

4. Suspended an effort to lift restrictions on mining in Bristol Bay, Alaska. But the Army Corps of Engineers is performing an environmental review of an application for mining in the area. E.P.A.; Army | [Read more](#)

5. Delayed implementation of a rule regulating the certification and training of pesticide applicators, but a judge ruled that the E.P.A. had done so illegally and declared the rule still in effect. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

6. Initially delayed publishing efficiency standards for household appliances, but later published them after multiple states and environmental groups sued. Energy Department | [Read more](#)

7. Delayed federal building efficiency standards until Sept. 30, 2017, at which time the rules went into effect. Energy Department | [Read more](#)
8. Reissued a rule limiting the discharge of mercury by dental offices into municipal sewers after a lawsuit by the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
9. Re-posted a proposed rule limiting greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft, after initially changing its status to “inactive” on the E.P.A. website. In May 2019, the agency confirmed it would issue the rule. E.P.A. | [Read more](#)
10. Removed the Yellowstone grizzly bear from the Endangered Species List, but the protections were later reinstated by a federal judge. (The Trump administration appealed the ruling in May 2019.) Interior Department | [Read more](#)