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This Tiny Startup is Knocking the Retirement Industry on Its Head

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<b>66</b> completed	<b>34</b> in progress	<b>100</b> total rollbacks
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# The Trump Administration Is Reversing 100 Environmental Rules. Here's the Full List.

By NADJA POPOVICH, LIVIA ALBECK-RIPKA and KENDRA PIERRE-LOUIS UPDATED May 20, 2020

After three years in office, the Trump administration has dismantled most of the major climate and environmental policies the president promised to undo.

Calling the rules unnecessary and burdensome to the fossil fuel industry and other businesses, his administration has weakened Obama-era limits on planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions [from power plants](#) and from [cars and trucks](#), and rolled back many more rules governing clean air, water and toxic chemicals. Several major reversals have been finalized in recent weeks as the country has struggled to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

In all, a New York Times analysis, based on research from [Harvard Law School](#), [Columbia Law School](#) and other sources, counts more than 60 environmental rules and regulations officially reversed, revoked or otherwise rolled back under Mr. Trump. An additional 34 rollbacks are still in progress.

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Air pollution and emissions

19 overturned	8 in progress	27 total
<hr/>		
Drilling and extraction		
12 overturned	8 in progress	20 total
<hr/>		
Infrastructure and planning		
11 overturned	1 in progress	12 total
<hr/>		
Animals		
9 overturned	2 in progress	11 total
<hr/>		
Toxic substances and safety		
6 overturned	2 in progress	8 total
<hr/>		
Water pollution		
4 overturned	7 in progress	11 total
<hr/>		
Other		
5 overturned	6 in progress	11 total
<hr/>		
All		
66 overturned	34 in progress	100 total

With elections looming, the administration has sought to wrap up some of its biggest regulatory priorities quickly, said Hana V. Vizcarra, a staff attorney at Harvard Law School's Environmental and Energy Law Program. Further delays could leave the new rules [vulnerable to reversal under the Congressional Review Act](#) if Democrats are able to retake Congress and the White House in November, she said.

The bulk of the rollbacks identified by the Times have been carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency, which repealed and replaced the Obama-era emissions rules for power plants and vehicles; weakened [protections for more than half the nation's wetlands](#); and withdrew [the legal justification for restricting mercury emissions from power plants](#).

At the same time, the Interior Department has worked to open up more land for oil and gas leasing by [cutting back protected areas](#) and

[limiting wildlife protections.](#)

“Over the past three years, we have fulfilled President Trump’s promises to provide certainty for states, tribes, and local governments,” a spokeswoman for the E.P.A. said in a statement to The Times, adding that the agency was “delivering on President Trump’s commitment to return the agency to its core mission: Providing cleaner air, water and land to the American people.”

But environmental and legal groups said the rollbacks have not served that mission. Ms. Vizcarra, who has tracked environmental rollbacks for Harvard since 2018, said the agency under Mr. Trump has often limited its own power to regulate environmental harm, especially when it comes to climate change.

Many of the rollbacks have faced legal challenges by states, environmental groups and others, and some could remain mired in court beyond November, regardless of the outcome of the election.


Hillary Aidun, who tracks deregulation at Columbia University’s Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, said many of the rollbacks had not been adequately justified, leaving them vulnerable to legal challenge.

The New York Times analysis identified 10 rules that were initially reversed or suspended but later reinstated, often [following lawsuits](#) and other challenges. Other rollbacks were rebuffed by the courts but later revised by the administration and remain in effect.

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 each year](#), according to energy and legal analysts.

Below, we have summarized each rule that has been targeted for reversal over the past three years.

*Are there rollbacks we missed? Email [climateteam@nytimes.com](mailto:climateteam@nytimes.com) or tweet [@nytclimate](https://twitter.com/nytclimate).*

Jump to section 

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## Air pollution and emissions

Completed

1. Weakened Obama-era fuel economy and **greenhouse gas standards for passenger cars and light trucks.**

E.P.A. and Transportation Department | [Read more »](#)

2. Revoked **California's power to set stricter tailpipe emissions standards** than the federal government.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

3. Withdrew the legal justification for an Obama-era rule that limited **mercury emissions from coal power plants**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

4. 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 »](#)

5. Canceled a requirement for oil and gas companies to **report methane emissions**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

6. 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 »](#)

7. Loosened a Clinton-era rule designed to limit **toxic emissions from major industrial polluters**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

8. Revised a 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 »](#)

9. Amended rules that govern **how refineries monitor pollution** in surrounding communities.

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. Relaxed **air pollution regulations for a handful of plants that burn waste coal for electricity**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

13. Repealed rules meant to reduce **leaking and venting of powerful greenhouse gases known as hydrofluorocarbons** from large refrigeration and air conditioning systems.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

14. 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 »](#)

15. Withdrew guidance directing federal agencies to 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 »](#)

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 »](#)

17. Repealed a requirement that state and regional authorities **track tailpipe emissions** from vehicles on federal highways.

Transportation Department | [Read more »](#)

18. 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 »](#)

19. 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 »](#)

In progress

20. 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 »](#)

21. Proposed relaxing Obama-era requirements that companies monitor and repair **methane leaks at oil and gas facilities**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

22. Proposed eliminating Obama-era restrictions that, in effect, required **newly built coal power plants to capture carbon dioxide emissions**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

23. Proposed revisions to standards for **carbon dioxide emissions from new, modified and reconstructed power plants**.

Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

24. Began a review of **emissions rules for power plant start-ups, shutdowns and malfunctions**. One outcome of that review: In February 2020, E.P.A. reversed a requirement that Texas follow emissions rules during certain malfunction events.

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 »](#)

26. Delayed issuing a rule limiting **greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft**. (The E.P.A. acknowledged it is legally required to issue the rule, but has not done so yet. The delay is being challenged by environmental groups.)

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

27. Proposed limiting **pesticide application buffer zones** that are intended to protect farmworkers and bystanders from accidental exposure.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

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## Drilling and extraction

Completed

28. 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 »](#)

29. Lifted ban on **drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**.

Congress; Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

30. Rescinded water pollution regulations for **fracking on federal and Indian lands**.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

31. Scrapped a proposed rule that required **mines to prove they could pay to clean up** future pollution.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

32. Withdrew a requirement that **Gulf oil rig owners prove they can cover the costs of removing rigs** once they stop producing.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

33. Approved construction of the **Dakota Access pipeline** less than a mile from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation after the Army Corps of Engineers had said it would explore alternative routes. (A court has since ruled the agency must investigate how the pipeline is impacting the environment and local tribes, but it can continue to operate in the meantime.)

Executive Order; Army | [Read more »](#)

34. Moved the **permitting process for certain projects that cross international borders**, such as oil pipelines, to the office of the president from the State Department, exempting them from environmental review.

Executive Order | [Read more »](#)

35. 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 »](#)

36. 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 »](#)

37. 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 »](#)

38. Loosened **offshore drilling safety regulations** implemented by the Obama after following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill, including reduced testing requirements for blowout prevention systems.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

39. Lifted an Obama-era freeze on **new coal leases on public lands**. In April 2019, a judge ruled that the Interior Department could not begin selling new leases without completing an environmental review. In February, the agency published an assessment that concluded restarting federal coal leasing would have little environmental impact.

Executive Order; Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

In progress

40. 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 Atlantic and Arctic Oceans was unlawful.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

41. 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 »](#)

42. 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 »](#)

43. Proposed "streamlining" the approval process for **drilling for oil and gas in national forests**.

Agriculture Department; Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

44. Recommended shrinking **three marine protected areas** or opening them to commercial fishing.

Executive Order; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more »](#)

45. Proposed **opening more land in the Alaska National Petroleum Reserve for oil drilling**. The Obama administration had designated about half of the reserve as a conservation area.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

46. Proposed lifting a Clinton-era policy that banned **logging and road construction in Tongass National Forest, Alaska**.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

47. 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 sidestep the ruling by issuing a presidential permit. Initial construction has started, but the project remains tied up in court.

Executive Order; State Department | [Read more »](#)

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## Infrastructure and planning

Completed

48. Revoked Obama-era **flood standards for federal infrastructure projects** that required the government to account for sea level rise and other climate change effects.

Executive Order | [Read more »](#)

49. Relaxed the **environmental review process** for federal infrastructure projects.

Executive Order | [Read more »](#)

50. Overturned an Obama-era guidance that ended **U.S. government financing for new coal plants overseas** except in rare circumstances.

Executive Order; Treasury Department | [Read more »](#)

51. 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 »](#)

52. 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 »](#)

53. Reversed an update to **the Bureau of Land Management's public land-use planning process**.

Congress | [Read more »](#)

54. Withdrew an Obama-era order to consider climate change in the **management of natural resources in national parks**.

National Park Service | [Read more »](#)

55. 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 »](#)



56. 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 »](#)

57. 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 »](#)

58. Withdrew Obama-era policies designed to **maintain or, ideally, improve natural resources** affected by federal projects.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

In progress

59. Proposed plans to speed up the **environmental review process for Forest Service projects**.

Agriculture Department | [Read more »](#)

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## Animals

Completed

60. 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 »](#)

61. Relaxed **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 »](#)

62. Overturned a ban on the **use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle** on federal lands.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

63. Overturned a ban on the **hunting of predators in Alaskan wildlife refuges**.

Congress | [Read more »](#)

64. Amended **fishing regulations** to loosen restrictions on the harvest of a number of species.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more »](#)

65. Proposed revising limits on the number of endangered marine mammals and sea turtles that can be unintentionally killed or injured with sword-fishing nets on the West Coast. (The Obama-era rules were initially withdrawn by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, but were later finalized following a court order. The agency has said it plans to revise the limits.)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more »](#)

66. Loosened fishing restrictions intended to reduce **bycatch of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna**.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | [Read more »](#)

67. 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 »](#)

68. Overturned a ban on **using parts of migratory birds in handicrafts** made by Alaskan Natives.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

In progress

69. Opened nine million acres of Western land to oil and gas drilling by weakening **habitat protections for the sage grouse**, an imperiled bird. An Idaho District Court injunction temporarily blocked the measure.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

70. 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 »](#)

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## Toxic substances and safety

Completed

71. Rejected a proposed **ban on chlorpyrifos**, a pesticide linked to developmental disabilities in children. (Several states have banned its use and the main manufacturer of the pesticide in 2020 stopped producing the product because of shrinking demand.)

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

72. 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 2019, a court of appeals ruled the agency must widen its scope to consider full exposure risks.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

73. 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 »](#)

74. Removed **copper filter cake**, an electronics manufacturing byproduct comprised of heavy metals, from the “hazardous waste” list.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

75. Ended an Occupational Safety and Health Administration program to **reduce risks of workers developing the lung disease silicosis**. In February released guidance to include silica in OSHA's National Emphasis Program, a worker safety program.

Labor Department | [Read more »](#)

76. 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 »](#)

In progress

77. Proposed changing safety rules to allow for **rail transport of the highly flammable liquefied natural gas**.

Transportation Department | [Read more »](#)

78. 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 »](#)

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## Water pollution

Completed

79. 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 »](#)

80. Revoked a rule that prevented coal companies from **dumping mining debris into local streams**.

Congress | [Read more »](#)

81. Withdrew a proposed rule aimed at reducing **pollutants, including air pollution, at sewage treatment plants**.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

82. Withdrew a proposed rule requiring **groundwater protections for certain uranium mines**. Recently, the administration's Nuclear Fuel Working Group proposed opening up 1,500 acres outside the Grand Canyon to nuclear production.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

In progress

83. Attempted to weaken federal rules regulating the disposal and storage of **coal ash waste from power plants**, but a court determined the rules were already insufficient. Proposed a new rule to allow coal ash impoundments of a type previously deemed unsafe a pathway to proving safety.

E.P.A.

84. 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 »](#)

85. Proposed weakening a portion of the Clean Water Act to make it easier for the E.P.A. to **issue permits for federal projects over state objections** if the projects don't meet local water quality standards, including for pipelines and other fossil fuel facilities.

Executive Order; E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

86. 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 »](#)

87. 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 »](#)

88. 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 »](#)

89. Proposed doubling the time allowed to **remove lead pipes** from water systems with high levels of lead.

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

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## Other

### Completed

90. 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 Energy Department also blocked the next phase of efficiency standards for general-purpose bulbs already subject to regulation.

Energy Department | [Read more »](#)

91. Changed a 25-year-old policy to allow **coastal replenishment projects** to use sand from protected ecosystems.

Interior Department | [Read more »](#)

92. Limited **funding of environmental and community development projects** through corporate settlements of federal lawsuits.

Justice Department | [Read more »](#)

93. Stopped payments to the **Green Climate Fund**, a United Nations program to help poorer countries reduce carbon emissions.

Executive Order | [Read more »](#)

94. 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 »](#)

95. Proposed a sweeping **overhaul of the National Environmental Policy Act** that would limit the scope of environmental concerns federal agencies need to take into account when constructing public infrastructure projects, such as roads, pipelines and telecommunications networks.

Council on Environmental Quality | [Read more »](#)

96. 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, saying it would effectively block the agency from considering landmark research that relies on confidential health data.)

E.P.A. | [Read more »](#)

97. 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 »](#)

98. Proposed withdrawing **efficiency standards for residential furnaces and commercial water heaters** designed to reduce energy use.

Energy Department | [Read more »](#)

99. Created a product category that would allow some **dishwashers to be exempt from energy efficiency standards**.

Energy Department | [Read more »](#)

100. Initially withdrew, and 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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## Some rules were rolled back, then reinstated

These rules were initially reversed by the Trump administration but were later reinstated, often following lawsuits and other challenges.

1. Stopped enforcing a 2015 rule that prohibited the use of hydrofluorocarbons, powerful greenhouse gases, in air-conditioners and refrigerators. A court later restored the prohibition.

E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

2. Sought to repeal emissions standards for “glider” trucks — vehicles retrofitted with older, often dirtier engines — but reversed course after Andrew Wheeler took over as head of the E.P.A.

E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

3. Sought to lift restrictions on mining in Bristol Bay, Alaska, but later suspended the effort. (A court ruled the E.P.A. could withdraw a 2014 determination that the project was a too great a threat to the Bay's salmon. The federal permit for the mine is pending with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.)

E.P.A.; Army | [Read more](#)

4. Delayed a compliance deadline for new national ozone pollution standards by one year, but later reversed course.

E.P.A. | [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. 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](#)

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. Delayed federal building efficiency standards until Sept. 30, 2017, at which time the rules went into effect.

Energy Department | [Read more](#)

10. Ordered a review of water efficiency standards in bathroom fixtures, including toilets. E.P.A. determined existing standards were sufficient.

E.P.A. | [Read more](#)

Note: This list does not include new rules proposed by the Trump administration that do not roll back previous policies, nor does it include court actions that have affected environmental policies independent of executive or legislative action.

Sources: Harvard Law School's [Environmental Regulation Rollback Tracker](#); Columbia Law School's [Climate Deregulation Tracker](#); Brookings Institution; Federal Register; Environmental Protection Agency; Interior Department; U.S. Chamber of Commerce; White House.

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