



## ENERGY &amp; ENVIRONMENT

## Dismantling EPA regulations hurts both health and economy

BY AMANDA D. RODEWALD - 12/10/16 12:35 PM ET



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This week, we learned that President-elect [Donald Trump](#) will appoint Scott Pruitt, the Republican attorney general of Oklahoma, to lead the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Pruitt is well-known for his adversarial relationship with the agency he may soon lead.

{mosads}Since 2011, he has sued the EPA to stop critical protections for public health, including regulations to reduce soot and smog in our cities; laws to protect our water and

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He also has challenged the centerpiece of the U.S.'s climate change strategy, the Clean Power Plan, in a pending lawsuit.

Despite failing in each of these efforts, Pruitt has been relentless in his attempts to dismantle federal regulations to protect human health and the environment.

But what would be the cost if he succeeds?

The global burden of unhealthy environments is staggering. A 2016 [report](#) by the World Health Organization estimates that 12.6 million deaths each year are attributable to environmental risks — including air, water, and soil pollution exposures and climate change. That amounts to a sobering 23 percent of all global deaths and 26 percent of deaths in children under 5. The majority of these deaths (6.5 million) are attributable to air pollution, according to a [report](#) by the International Energy Agency.

The air we breathe has become the world's [fourth-greatest threat](#) to human health.

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In addition to the personal loss borne by families and friends, these deaths carry tremendous economic burden, costing the global economy [approximately \\$225 billion](#) in lost labor income in 2013 alone.

Americans do not escape this risk. Combustion emissions remain a major source of air pollution, with small particulate matter (PM2.5) and ozone causing over 200,000 premature deaths each year in the U.S. alone, according to a 2013 [study](#) in Atmospheric Environment.

Moreover, according to EPA [data](#), over 74 million Americans are exposed to PM2.5 concentrations exceeding safety standards and more than 131 million people live in regions that are not compliant with maximum allowable ozone levels.

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And yet that is not the message we hear from Trump or his nominees to head the EPA.

In a statement released Thursday from his transition team, Trump said:

“For too long, the Environmental Protection Agency has spent taxpayer dollars on an out-of-control anti-energy agenda that has destroyed millions of jobs, while also undermining our incredible farmers and many other businesses and industries at every turn.”

In that same release, Pruitt claimed that:

“The American people are tired of seeing billions of dollars drained from our economy due to unnecessary EPA regulations.”

Are the costs of reducing the global and national health burden due to unhealthy environments too great?

To the contrary: several studies show that environmental regulations save us far more than they cost. Not only do they prevent premature deaths, but such regulations help us avoid heart attacks, respiratory illness, hospital and emergency room visits and lost work days.

On top of that, these regulations often create jobs.

One study by the White House’s Office of Management and Budget found that the annual benefits of major federal rules over a decade ranged between \$193 billion to \$800 billion, with costs of only \$57 billion to \$84 billion. EPA air regulations were the greatest source of these benefits.

An analysis by the Economic Policy Institute also found that for each major EPA rule enacted by the Obama administration, annual benefits exceeded costs by \$10 billion to \$95 billion per rule and generated more new jobs than were lost. One example was the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, which had estimated costs (approximately \$8 billion) that were dwarfed by the \$28 billion to \$77 billion in annual benefits.

Likewise, a study by the EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation estimated the costs of implementing the Clean Air Act at approximately \$65 billion, while its estimated benefit was expected to reach \$2 trillion for the decades between 1990 and 2020.

This we know: a healthy environment is the foundation for public, community and individual health and prosperity. We don’t need altruism as justification for supporting environmental

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By protecting our environment, we protect the health and well-being of current and future generations, and provide a powerful stimulus to our economy.

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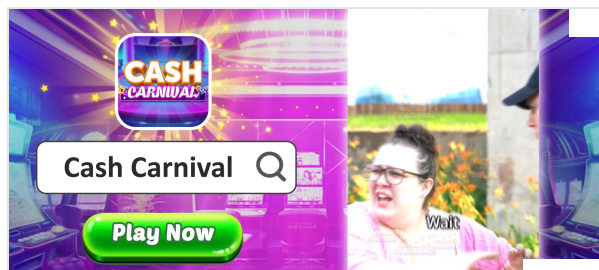


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