



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO **ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**



[www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org)

# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

## The Trump Era: Turbulent Prospects on the Energy and Environment Beats

- Amid Trump's "war" on the press, journalists must do our jobs better: Cut through misinformation with more facts, better reporting
- Conditions ripe for revolutionary change at federal level; major changes coming all at once



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO **ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

The Future Will  
Not Look Like the Past



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

- Trump admin. environmental policy rhetoric in a nutshell:
  - Deregulate, deregulate, deregulate
  - Eviscerate the EPA
  - Climate change is real, but extent of humans' impact is unsettled if not a “hoax”
  - But climate action is “harmful”
  - Locals should have more say in how the federal government regulates them
  - Oil, gas and coal key to economic prosperity, energy independence



## The Paris Climate Agreement

- 194 nations agreed in 2015 to cut GHGs to prevent warming from exceeding 2°C
- Obama signed, Trump vowed to pull out
- Will Trump attempt to withdraw?
- Staging a withdrawal would mean loss of U.S. global climate leadership role
- Watch for legal fight over U.S. withdrawal, other nations assuming climate leadership



## The Clean Power Plan

- Obama's most significant domestic climate policy expected to fade and die in Trump administration, either through administrative action, a court ruling or both
- Aims to cut GHG emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired power plants
- More than two dozen states have challenged it, but many states are on track to hit reduction
- Coal losing market to natural gas



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

## CPP Coverage Will Focus On:

- How will Trump admin attempt to undo the plan?
- How will court rule, and how will Trump admin defend CPP?
- Will Pruitt recuse?
- Coal power on decline as utilities switch to natural gas; power sector CO2 emissions falling below transportation





## The Endangerment Finding

- A 2009 EPA determination that greenhouse gases are harmful to public health because they cause climate change
- Allows GHGs, including CO2 to be regulated under the Clean Air Act
- It's the basis for EPA climate regulations
- What to watch for: Whether Trump officials attempt to reverse the finding



## Scientific Integrity

- Trump team questions established science on climate change
- Has ordered political vetting of EPA scientific publications
- Fears of deep funding cuts to federal agencies conducting science



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

## Deregulation

- Watch for use of Congressional Review Act
- CRA is a potent kill switch to last-minute Obama-era regulations because agencies are barred from considering any similar rules
- Senate used CRA for first time in current Congress yesterday to kill Obama rule protecting stream water from coal mine waste
- Congress likely to kill other Obama rules



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

## Deregulation

- Trump campaigned on rescinding regulations, signed order Jan. 30 mandating two federal rules to be cut for every new rule introduced
- Executive Order sure to be challenged in court
- GOP opposes regulations on air pollution from oil refineries, methane emissions from oil and gas wells, stream water pollution from coal mines



## Deregulation

- Watch for:
  - Efforts to make good on Trump and GOP promises to abolish or restructure the EPA
  - GOP could propose to make good on 2016 platform which calls for EPA to become independent commission similar to NRC.
  - Efforts to give states more regulatory responsibilities



## Public Lands

- GOP aiming to cut 1906 Antiquities Act, requiring Congressional review of presidential monument proposals
- Trump may test unilateral reversal of previous monument designations
- Obama-designated Bears Ears National Monument in Utah could be first to be tested



## Public Lands

- GOP platform calls for Congress to create way to transfer public lands to states
- Congressional support for land transfers unclear
- Chaffetz bill that would have aimed to sell lands marked for “disposal” withdrawn this week
- Watch for future efforts to shrink federal land holdings



## Public Lands and Energy

- Offshore wind industry dependent on federal leasing for long-term growth
- Trump admin. offshore wind policy unclear
- New wind farm development to continue in waters already leased
- Watch for: Changes in federal offshore wind leasing program





## Public Lands and Energy

- GOP targeting Obama last-minute offshore oil, gas drilling restrictions in Arctic, Atlantic
- Trump eager to widely open lands to oil, gas, coal development
- Obama coal leasing moratorium in hands of Interior nominee who strongly supports coal
- Trump coal policy unlikely to revive industry unless natural gas prices rise, becomes less attractive to utilities



## The Road Ahead

- Too soon to predict how far Trump admin., Congress will take deregulation
- The future of regulatory environment is unlikely to look like the past
- Deregulatory groundswell to reshape air, water quality, energy policy for years to come



# 2017 JOURNALISTS' GUIDE TO ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Special Thanks to SEJ Publications Team:

Joe Davis

Adam Glenn

Contact Me:

Bobby Magill

SEJ President

Senior Science Writer, Climate Central

[bmagill@sej.org](mailto:bmagill@sej.org)

[bmagill@climatecentral.org](mailto:bmagill@climatecentral.org)

(970) 430-6250

