

Trump administration to eliminate key climate-related environmental regulation

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The Trump administration announced Tuesday it is seeking to rescind the 2009 greenhouse gas endangerment finding, which determined that greenhouse gas emissions “threaten public health and welfare,” as a key step in eliminating all federal regulation regarding climate change.

If finalized, the rescission would strip the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide and methane, across transportation, power generation and other industrial sectors, affecting an estimated \$1 trillion in existing regulations, while simultaneously dismantling the agency’s scientific research capabilities.

The move comes just days after the International Court of Justice released a unanimous advisory opinion that climate change is “an existential problem of planetary proportions that imperils all forms of life and the very health of our planet.” While ultimately toothless in providing enforcement, the UN agency’s report clearly spells out the scientific reality of the risks posed by climate change.

Trump’s broadside against climate change comes amid the administration’s more general attack on science as a whole. He has always personified the most obscurantist and medieval elements of the American oligarchy which emerged in his first term in his attacks on public health during the initial stages of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. More recently, his “Big Beautiful Bill” is set to dismantle scientific research across every federal agency in the US, with a specific focus on climate and the environment.

To carry out the specific attacks against EPA regulations, Trump installed one of his close allies, Lee Zeldin, a former congressman who has been a political supporter for years, as head of the agency. Zeldin was one of the 139 Republican House members who voted against confirming Joe Biden’s victory in the 2020 federal

election in the hours following Trump’s attempted coup on January 6, 2021.

Zeldin’s approach at EPA extends far beyond the endangerment finding. In March 2025, he announced what he called “the greatest and most consequential day of deregulation in US history,” targeting 31 major environmental rules for rollback. Most dramatically, the administration this month eliminated the EPA’s Office of Research and Development, cutting the agency workforce from 16,155 to 12,448 employees—a 23 percent reduction that terminated up to 1,155 scientists focused on PFAS (synthetic “forever chemicals”) contamination, water-borne diseases, air pollution and climate research.

Zeldin made the announcement of the rescission at a truck dealership in Indianapolis, gloating that the move would be “the largest deregulatory action in the history of the United States.” Such comments mirror Zeldin’s declaration after he was nominated to lead the EPA that he would be “driving a dagger through the heart of climate-change religion.” An editorial by the *Wall Street Journal*, speaking on behalf of US fossil fuel interests, celebrated the impending rescission as “Liberation Day.”

The pseudo-scientific grounds for the decision are based on a report commissioned by the Department of Energy (DOE), which brought on five scientists, including Steven E. Koonin and John Christy, known for their rejection of virtually all evidence showing the connection between greenhouse gas emissions and rising temperatures. The DOE report was used to craft the 302-page document proposing to rescind the 2009 finding that greenhouse gases are a danger to public health and therefore can be regulated under the Clean Air Act. The new EPA document declares there is a basis to eliminate greenhouse gas regulations because the 2009 finding “unreasonably analyzed the scientific record and because developments cast significant doubt on the reliability of the findings.”

In reality, the scientific record of the impact of capitalist

industrial activity on Earth's warming climate is clear and well established. The direct connection between the amount of heat captured by Earth's atmosphere, and thus the average surface temperature, and the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was established by Svante Arrhenius in 1896. Regular measurements of atmospheric CO₂ began in 1958 at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii, which has recorded the steady increase of the concentration of the greenhouse gas in our atmosphere for 67 years.

Every record of Earth's average temperature has shown a steady increase for the past century, accelerating sharply in the past 40 years. Numerous reports from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, countless peer-reviewed papers and even scientific reports from the United States itself, including under the previous Trump administration, have all shown definitively the connection between greenhouse gases and Earth's rising temperatures and that both are human-induced.

One of the high points of this research was the 2021 Nobel Prize in Physics, which was awarded to Syukuro Manabe and Klaus Hasselmann for extending Arrhenius's original model to show with advanced computer models that changes in the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere have vast implications for Earth's climate.

This is to say nothing of the lived experience of hundreds of millions of workers and youth around the world who have suffered more than a decade and a half of longer droughts, more powerful hurricanes, polar vortexes, rampant wildfires, deadly floods and devastating heatwaves, all "extreme weather" consequences of climate change.

Millions of lives have been lost worldwide as a result, and millions more are threatened as climate change continues to accelerate unabated. It has been estimated that by 2050, up to 1 billion humans will have to relocate in order to survive famine, flooding and more as a direct result of climate change.

The consequences that have been lived through during the past 16 years make clear that not only have "developments" continued to confirm the warnings issued by climate scientists which began emerging en masse in the 1980s, but also that the Obama era rules were wholly inadequate to address one of the greatest crises induced by capitalism.

The attack by Trump is not, however, just the product of the backward and blinkered understanding of the president. It represents a turn by the entire American oligarchy to further depths of reaction and violence

against the working class in the ruling elite's ongoing pursuit of profit.

The EPA was formed in 1970 in large part to enforce the 1963 Clean Air Act and clear the polluted air that had plagued American cities for decades. Cities like Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, New York and Detroit would often go days, weeks or even months covered in industrial smog. The agency estimates that efforts to reduce air pollution have saved at least 230,000 lives in the US, prevented 200,000 heart attacks and avoided millions of cases of respiratory problems.

The efforts by the Trump administration to roll back greenhouse gas regulations mean going back to these times, when simply breathing could choke a worker to death. The cost of the regulations is seen as too high, and workers are viewed as expendable items in the cogs of capitalism.

It is not merely a question of different administrations or different bourgeois parties. The Obama and Biden administrations were equally incapable of dealing with climate change. They laid out regulations that were designed not to seriously fight global warming but rather to ensure that the American economy profited most from emerging technological developments, including different forms of renewable energy and electric vehicles.

The real solution to climate change is the replacement of the profit system with democratic and scientific planning, cutting across corporate profits and rivalries of nation states. This requires a turn to the working class, the only revolutionary international social force, as part of the political fight against capitalism and for socialism so that humanity can address the climate crisis with the urgency and on the scale it demands.



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