

A Guide to Fact Checking President Trump's claims about the environment and his record.

When President Trump tries to obfuscate his long record denying climate change

The scientific community has been certain about climate change for decades, and yet, Trump has repeatedly -- and falsely -- called [it a "hoax."](#) He is trying to change his tune, but the fact remains: he has [written over 120 Twitter posts](#) questioning or making light of [climate change/global warming](#).

And even when he doesn't use the word "hoax," he's still denying the [well-established scientific consensus](#) that climate change is predominantly due to human activities like burning fossil fuels.



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Brutal and Extended Cold Blast could shatter ALL RECORDS - Whatever happened to Global Warming?

7:23 PM · Nov 21, 2018 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

At the same time, Trump and his administration's actions speak louder than words. His administration has [systematically targeted](#) just about every major climate change initiative on the books, a startling 98 total attempted rollbacks, from the ground-breaking Clean Power Plan to the historic Paris climate agreement to state and federal clean car standards. Anyone who was truly concerned about climate change wouldn't be trying to take us backwards, but instead would be taking additional steps to reduce our emissions.

When Trump falsely claims that America has the cleanest air and water in the world (as he's done [at least 24 times](#) and counting)

America is not actually number one, but the United States *does* rank relatively highly among countries with the cleanest [air \(10th\)](#) and [water \(29th\)](#), and that is due to the bedrock environmental laws like the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act – bipartisan laws that have been under assault during Trump's presidency. Trump and his administration have allowed industrial facilities to increase their emissions of toxic chemicals like [benzene, mercury, and more](#) and [undermined](#) a crucial rule that set the [first-ever national limits](#) on these and other dangerous pollutants, and this is disproportionately impacting low-income and communities of color. Meanwhile, he [rolled back the Clean Water Rule](#), which protected streams and wetlands that provide drinking water for one-third of the United States. [Altogether](#), Trump is working to roll back 27 different rules governing air pollution and emissions, and another 11 dealing with water pollution.

Combined with the growing impacts of climate change – which Trump nor his administration have done anything to combat – their destructive environmental policies are bound to have a major impact on our air quality and water quality. When it comes to air quality, we're [already headed in the wrong direction](#). According to [the American Lung Association](#), America's air quality has gotten markedly worse since 2016, and nearly half of all Americans now live in counties with unhealthy ozone or particle pollution. That's a real concern for all Americans, particularly those with [asthma or other chronic illnesses like heart disease](#). Now is the time to strengthen our environmental protections, not decimate them.

When Trump or his Administration [claims](#) he listens to scientists and values science

The truth is that the Trump administration has let corporate polluters and lobbyists craft much of his policy agenda, while sidelining scientists and health experts from day one. He has brought in [a whole host of former fossil fuel industry officials](#) to implement his anti-environmental agenda at the agencies, including former coal industry lobbyist Andrew Wheeler who now heads the EPA and former oil and gas lobbyist David Bernhardt who now heads the Department of the Interior. At the same time, the Trump administration has [censored scientists](#) from mentioning the phrase "climate change" on government websites to [blocking congressional](#)

[testimony](#) on the issue. Trump is also seeking to weaken the scientific review process for [mines, pipelines](#), and [undermine chemical safety](#), while [repeatedly proposing to make deep cuts to the budgets](#) of agencies and programs that deal with science, health, and the environment.

Given who Trump surrounds himself with and whom he relies on for advice, it should come as no surprise that Trump [frequently butchers scientific facts](#) from the White House podium. In addition to [dismissing the science of climate change](#), Trump has [falsely claimed](#) that wind turbines cause cancer, and [mis-represented](#) which areas of the country were in the path of Hurricane Dorian. Most recently, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump has contradicted experts (and common sense) by dangerously encouraging people to [inject disinfectants](#), [use ultraviolet light](#), or [take an unproven malaria drug](#) to fight the virus.

When Trump falsely [claims](#) the U.S. has already reduced its carbon emissions more than any other country that signed onto the Paris agreement

This claim is highly misleading, as *The New York Times* has [documented](#). First of all, Trump is taking credit for emissions reductions that happened from 2000-2016, before he even held public office. These emissions reductions are in part due to the critical environmental and public health regulations that he is trying to gut. More importantly, he's referencing total cumulative emissions reductions, which is not a fair or useful metric for making an apples-to-apples comparison to most other countries, which are much smaller than the U.S. and have emitted far less carbon to begin with. When you look at the *percentage* of emissions reductions, the U.S. trails more than 20 other countries that joined the Paris agreement.

U.S. greenhouse gas emissions [spiked by 3.4 percent in 2018](#), before falling roughly 2 percent last year. Regardless, Trump nor his administration does not get to take credit for the emissions reductions that occurred in 2019 – or those that are [projected to happen this year](#), largely due to Covid-19. The 2019 reductions happened as a result of market forces, not policies, as InsideClimate News has [explained](#). In particular, utilities have increasingly made the business decision to shift away from coal in favor of cheaper natural gas and renewables.

Moreover, while emissions in the electricity sector did drop last year, methane emissions from oil and gas production continued to grow, just as the Trump administration was in the process of [rolling back](#) limits on methane emissions from oil and gas wells.

Before COVID, the United States was way off track to meet our commitments. However, it doesn't change the fact that the Trump administration's policies before and during the pandemic will increase our emissions. In the long run, we are way [behind](#) on reaching the goals necessary to limit the climate crisis and all his policies are sending us the wrong direction.

When Trump suggests tackling climate change will hurt the economy

Trump and his administration tend to present a false choice between climate action and economic well-being, such as when he [said](#) in 2016 that his approach to the issue "depends on how much it's going to cost our companies," or his January 2020 [remarks](#) that "[t]he environment is very important to me. I also want jobs. I don't want to close up our industry because somebody said you have to go with wind."

The truth is that clean energy and sustainability jobs already [far outnumber](#) those in the fossil fuel industry, with wind and solar jobs [outpacing](#) those in the coal industry. And that is true despite Trump's efforts to prop up the [fossil fuel with friendly policies](#) and an animosity towards clean energy, as demonstrated by his decision to [kill renewable energy tax credits](#) and [impose a steep tariff](#) on imported solar panels.



While the Trump administration has [largely failed](#) in their attempts to resuscitate the coal industry and stifle the growth of wind and solar power, it has become clearer than ever that renewable energy can and should be the driving force to

expand America's energy economy going forward. Fully transitioning the U.S. energy industry to clean sources [could ultimately create millions more jobs](#).

Conversely, our own government has [calculated](#) that failing to take meaningful action on climate change could cost the U.S. economy a tenth of our entire gross domestic product by the year 2100.

When Trump [claims](#) he's an "environmentalist"

Would a true environmentalist move to eliminate 100 environmental policies during his four years in office? Because that is

precisely what Trump has done as president, according to a [running tally](#) by *The New York Times*. Among the policies that the Trump administration has

66
completed

34
in progress

100
total rollbacks

undercut or eliminated entirely are some big ticket items, including the Clean Power Plan, Clean Car Standards, Clean Water Rule, and Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, as well as other vital safeguards protecting our public lands and wildlife.

His administration has also taken numerous steps to [undermine the landmark, bipartisan 2016 law](#) that updated the country's chemical safety system, putting American consumers, families, and workers at risk. The common element of all of these policies is that industry benefits, while the public and workers exposed to these chemicals and the environment suffer.

When Trump [claims](#) we need to be "good stewards of our public lands"

Trump's definition of being a "good steward" apparently involves putting a former oil and gas lobbyist at the helm of the Department of the Interior and devastating our public lands for every ounce of oil and coal that can be taken out of the ground. Since taking office, Trump has offered up [over 461 million acres](#) of public lands and waters for oil and gas leasing, and [reversed](#) an Obama-era ban on new coal leasing on public lands, too. Trump also ordered the [largest reversal of national monument](#)

[protections](#) in U.S. history, dramatically reducing the size of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments in Utah so that the roughly two million acres of formerly-protected land could be [used for mining and drilling](#).

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