

International Meetings and Journals Research Association ISSN: 2791-5596 / E-ISSN: 2790-0177 Established: 2020 Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems Editor-in-Chief: C. Öner / Editor: H.
--



Introduction

During President Barack Obama's tenure, the United States confronted an increasingly urgent environmental crisis. Given the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, climate change became a pressing and escalating global threat that demanded urgent action. The United States is among the wealthiest and most industrialized countries in the world. However, this prominent status also comes with significant environmental and economic costs. Historically, the United States has been the largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG), which has made the country particularly vulnerable to the impacts of global warming. This includes enduring severe storms, devastating wildfires, and historic floods. Coastal areas from Florida to New Jersey are all facing the dire consequences of rising sea levels and intensified hurricanes.

In this context, the urgency of addressing environmental policy during Obama's presidency was unprecedented. Scientists, environmental advocates, and the most affected communities, who have been disproportionately impacted by climate change and pollution, called on American lawmakers to implement stronger and more permanent environmental regulations. However, powerful lobbying by polluting industries like coal, oil, and gas sought to obstruct the establishment of stricter environmental protections necessary to combat the worsening climate crisis.

Ever since Obama's first term, his administration has dedicated a significant part of its domestic policy agenda to environmental policy. Addressing climate change by reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions has always been a central theme in Obama's and Democratic officeholders' rhetoric and platforms. During his 2008 presidential campaign, Obama pledged to prioritize combating global warming, revitalizing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ensuring cleaner air and water, and responsibly managing the country's natural resources.

Obama's commitments translated into significant actions. His administration achieved notable reductions in toxic emissions, protected public lands and endangered species, and invested in clean energy and green technology as part of both environmental and economic policy. However, due to political and economic reasons, including the 2008 financial crisis, Obama's environmental efforts were more noteworthy during his second term. The 2015 Clean Power Plan (CPP) was Obama's environmental signature achievement, which represented the U.S. commitment to the global emission reduction goals in an international and coordinated 196-nation environmental agenda, the Paris Climate Accord.

Nonetheless, Obama's environmental agenda and legacy were far from being unanimously applauded or left uncontested. There has always been some form or another of environmental lobbying in the United States. However, attempts to influence legislation and regulation took on other dimensions during the Obama presidency. On the one hand, there were environmental groups who were in favor of more stringent environmental protections. They conducted research about political issues, studied new policies and bills, met with government officials, and educated both voters and politicians about policies that affected the environment. They also planned campaigns and fundraisers to support environmental issues or political candidates who shared their ideas and opinions.

On the other hand, industrial lobbyists worked tirelessly to protect the interests of highly polluting industries, often impeding policies aimed at reducing fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions. These lobbyists represented sectors such as the automotive and fossil fuel industries, influencing legislation and elections at all levels of government to favor their interests.

The clash between pro-environmental protection and pro-fossil fuel advocacy groups triggered other issues that further complicated matters. Many Republican-controlled states, more particularly those with economies dependent on employment and tax revenues from the fossil fuel companies, challenged the constitutionality of Obama's climate-related regulatory actions and filed multiple lawsuits to repeal most of them. Furthermore, the subsequent administration under President Donald Trump profoundly affected these achievements. Through aggressive deregulation, withdrawal from key international agreements, and systematic rollbacks of environmental protections, Trump's policies reversed many of Obama's initiatives. This political shift not only stalled progress but also created new challenges for maintaining long-term environmental reforms, further complicating the legacy of Obama's climate action.



This article argues that while the Obama administration achieved notable regulatory and diplomatic successes in advancing climate action, these accomplishments were marked by legislative gridlock (even within his own party), industry opposition, litigations, and persistent federal-state conflicts over environmental governance. Moreover, the deregulatory agenda pursued by President Trump significantly undermined Obama's efforts, exposing the vulnerability of environmental progress achieved through the administrative tools of the presidency—such as executive orders and agency rulemaking—to changes in political leadership as compared to legislation passed by Congress.

To evaluate Obama's environmental record and his ability to convert campaign pledges into measurable outcomes, this study relies on analyses of data from lobbying reports and official governmental institutions—including Congress, the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), the White House, and the EPA. By examining Obama's speeches, regulatory achievements, and international engagements, the article also assesses how lobbying dynamics, environmental federalism, court cases, and equity concerns ultimately shaped his climate agenda. The analysis reveals that Obama's reliance on executive actions and international diplomacy enabled progress where legislation stalled, highlighting both the potential and limitations of presidential authority in advancing environmental protections within a polarized and ever-shifting federal political system, further constrained by the constitutional two-term limit on presidential tenure.

1. President Obama's Climate Promises and Initial Actions

President Obama frequently emphasized the importance of addressing climate change. From his early 2008 presidential campaign speeches to his final 2016 State of the Union address, he consistently promoted the need for a cleaner energy economy (Obama, 2008d, 2016). After he won the Democratic nomination against Hillary Clinton for 2008 U.S. presidential election, Barack Obama delivered his primary-campaign victory speech on June 3, 2008, in St. Paul, Minnesota (ABC News, 2008). He drew attention to the fact that his election would mark a pivotal moment in addressing two critical issues: health care and climate change. He asserted: "We will be able to look back and tell our children that this was the moment when we began to provide care for the sick... When the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal" (Lizza, 2010; Obama 2008d). Furthermore, in many of his subsequent speeches during the 2008 Presidential campaign—such as in Denver, Colorado; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Indianapolis, Indiana—Obama (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008e, 2008f) promised to invest \$150 billion over the next decade in renewable energy sources (solar, wind, and hydraulic), create new jobs in the renewable energies sector, implement a cap-and-trade system, and improve fuel efficiency standards.

Throughout the campaign, Obama frequently argued that tackling climate change was crucial to the nation's energy policy. In his debates with the then Republican nominee John McCain, he consistently underscored that the transition to clean energy was the immediate challenge, with healthcare being the second priority (Lizza, 2010).

After winning the election, Obama committed to addressing both issues concurrently and he quickly started working on these promises. Mainly due to the Democratic majority in both chambers of Congress at the time—even though not a single Republican voted for and 11 Democrats voted against it in the House of Representatives—the successful passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 was one of Obama's first major achievements (Calmes, 2009; U.S. Senate, 2009). Signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009, the act not only aimed to combat climate change, but also to create jobs and stimulate economic recovery after the 2008 financial crisis (Romer, 2010).

In fulfillment of its transparency obligations included in the ARRA to provide quarterly reports to Congress on the Act's economic efficiency, the Council of Economic Advisers, or CEA—a United States agency within the Executive Office of the President—conducted an analysis on the impact of the ARRA on the country's economy and clean energy transformation, which concluded with the release of its third quarterly report and supplement to Congress on April 14, 2010 (Romer, 2010). Drawing on the CEA's report and supplement (2010), the ARRA allocated approximately \$90 billion for clean energy projects—including renewable energies, energy efficiency improvements, and smart grid initiatives—which directly contributed to creating more than 83,000 clean energy jobs in the first quarter of 2010 alone. Over the next six years, the number of these jobs increased substantially to exceed 900,000 by 2015 (CEA, 2016, pp. 2–24).



Briefly after the passage of the 2009 ARRA, President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress on February 24, 2009, and stated: “To truly transform our economy, protect our security, and save our planet from the ravages of climate change, we need to ultimately make clean, renewable energy the profitable kind of energy. So I ask this Congress to send me legislation that places a market-based cap on carbon *pollution* and drives the production of more renewable energy in America.” (Obama, 2009)

A few months later after Obama’s speech to Congress, the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES), also known as the Waxman-Markey Bill, was introduced in the House of Representatives on May 15, 2009, by Representative Henry Waxman, then Democrat from California’s 30th Congressional District (U.S. House of Representatives, 2009). That bill aimed to create a cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, targeting a reduction of 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 83% by 2050 (U.S. House of Representatives, 2009). The bill passed the House on June 26, 2009, by 219 to 212, which unexpectedly included 44 Democrats (representatives for areas dependent on coal for electricity generation) voting against it and 8 Republicans voting for its passage (Broder, 2009; GovTrack.us, 2009). However, due to strong opposition from various economic interests, powerful lobbies of the fossil fuel sector and a polarized political environment, it never reached the floor of the Senate to be discussed or voted for (Reilly & Bogardus, 2016).

Despite the failure of the Waxman-Markey Bill, Obama’s administration continued to push for climate goals. In President Obama’s 2010 State of the Union address, he emphasized the importance of prioritizing and addressing climate change despite economic challenges. He declared:

I know that there are those who disagree with the overwhelming scientific evidence on climate change. But here’s the thing – even if you doubt the evidence, providing incentives for energy-efficiency and clean energy are the right thing to do for our future – because the nation that leads the clean energy economy will be the nation that leads the global economy. And America must be that nation. (Obama, 2010b)

During that same year, the Obama administration started laying the groundwork for what will become to be known later as the “Climate Action Plan,” outlining executive actions to reduce carbon pollution, increase renewable energy, and improve energy efficiency. However, due to the lack of consensus at the time, this plan could not be officially introduced until Obama’s second term in 2013. It included measures to cut emissions from power plants, expand clean energy, and enhance the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate impacts (The White House, 2013).

2. Regulatory Achievements of the Obama Administration

Regardless of the polarized political landscape, the Obama administration continued on the same path and achieved significant progress through regulations and administrative tools related to policymaking—such as executive orders, proclamations, signing statements, and memoranda (Konisky & Woods, 2016, pp. 366–368; Potter et al., 2019). On May 21, 2010, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum instructing the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to collaborate on creating a unified National Program, through a public rulemaking process known as notice and comment, aimed at enhancing fuel efficiency and cutting GHG emissions for light-duty vehicles from model years 2017 to 2025 (NHTSA & EPA, 2012, pp. 62626–62627; Obama, 2010a). This resulted in the first momentous reform in over thirty years to the existing Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, originally established in 1978 (The White House, 2011b). Consequently, an agreement with thirteen renowned automakers—among which were Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler—was reached, enabling the Obama administration to increase fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, targeting an average of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025 (NHTSA & EPA, 2012, pp. 62626–62627; The White House, 2011b).

The revised CAFE standards, which came into effect on October 15, 2012, aimed to drive innovation in the automotive industry and reduce reliance on fossil fuels (NHTSA & EPA, 2012, pp. 62626–62627). This measure was projected to save approximately 12 billion barrels of oil and an estimated \$1.7 trillion dollars in fuel costs to American families by 2025—with an average of over \$8,000 per vehicle—while significantly reducing GHG emissions by eliminating 6 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution over the program’s lifespan (NHTSA & EPA, 2012, pp. 62626–62627; The White House, 2011a).

In 2011, under Obama’s direction and the authority vested in it by the Clean Air Act (CAA) amendments of



1970, the U.S. EPA implemented the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), which set strict limits on mercury, arsenic, and other toxic emissions from 600 coal and oil-fired power plants across the country (Hardin & Lujan, 2018). The EPA (2012) estimated that these standards would protect public health by reducing pollutants that cause respiratory illnesses and other health issues, preventing thousands of premature deaths and illnesses each year.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, it was during Obama's second term that his climate policy was more effective and noteworthy. After being re-elected in 2012, Obama delivered an inaugural address where he reaffirmed his administration's commitment to act on climate change, stating "We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations" (Obama, 2013). He also added:

The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But America cannot resist this transition, we must lead it. We cannot cede to other nations the technology that will power new jobs and new industries, we must claim its promise. That's how we will maintain our economic vitality and our national treasure, our forests and waterways, our crop lands and snow-capped peaks. That is how we will preserve our planet, commanded to our care by God. (Obama, 2013)

Another important regulatory achievement for the Obama administration was the implementation of the Clean Power Plan in 2015, aiming to reduce carbon emissions from power plants by 32% below 2005 levels by 2030 (U.S. EPA, 2017). The CPP was the most ambitious action the U.S. had taken to combat climate change at the time. It set specific targets for each state to reduce carbon emissions and allowed states to choose their methods to meet these targets, giving them the possibility to increase energy efficiency, invest in renewable energy, and improve emissions standards for power plants (U.S. EPA, 2017). By focusing on the power sector, the largest source of carbon emissions in the United States, the CPP aimed to significantly reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions; it was the United States contribution in a much larger global environmental agenda, the Paris Climate Accord.

3. President Obama's International Leadership in Promoting Climate Protections

Globally, Obama played a key role in promoting international cooperation on climate change. His administration was crucial in the negotiations leading to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, 196 countries committed to limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], n.d.). Obama's efforts to rally international action highlighted his commitment to addressing climate change globally (The White House, 2015).

The Paris Agreement was a significant milestone in global climate diplomacy. The Obama administration worked hard to build consensus among nations, bridging gaps between developed and developing countries and securing commitments from major emitters like China and India. The agreement required countries to submit plans for reducing emissions and adapting to climate change impacts, encouraging broad participation and ambitious action.

Obama's diplomatic efforts extended beyond the Paris Agreement. In 2014, he announced a climate deal with China, where both countries committed to significant emissions reductions. The U.S. pledged to cut emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025, while China agreed to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and increase non-fossil fuel energy consumption to around 20% by the same year (The White House, 2014b). This bilateral agreement was the precursor that paved the way to the Paris Agreement and demonstrated that major emitters could find common ground on climate action.

Additionally, the Obama administration provided significant financial support for international climate initiatives, and pledged \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund, which helps developing countries mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts (Davenport & Landler, 2014). This commitment aimed to help vulnerable nations build resilience and transition to clean energy, reinforcing the U.S. leadership role in global climate finance.

4. The Influence of Lobbying on President Obama's Climate Agenda

Environmental lobbying during the Obama presidency played both a supportive and obstructive role. Environmental advocacy groups like the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and Greenpeace pressured the administration to adopt stronger climate policies (Konisky & Woods, 2016, p. 367; Mackinder, 2010; National Geographic Staff, 2019). These groups mobilized public support and provided data and policy recommendations that shaped initiatives like the Clean Power Plan (Eilperin & Bernstein, 2014; U.S. EPA, 2017).

Advocacy organizations worked hard to keep climate change on the political agenda and ensure that the Obama administration prioritizes environmental issues. Through grassroots campaigns, public demonstrations, and strategic lobbying, these groups helped create a favorable political climate for ambitious climate action (Eilperin & Bernstein, 2014; Mackinder, 2010). They also held the administration accountable, pushing for stronger regulations and challenging insufficiently aggressive decisions (Eilperin & Bernstein, 2014; Mackinder, 2010).

Conversely, the fossil fuel industry and other economic interests lobbied heavily against strict climate regulations. Organizations like the American Petroleum Institute (API), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and major energy companies such as Koch industries—a U.S. conglomerate owned by the oil and gas tycoons Koch brothers—ConocoPhillips, and ExxonMobil spent millions on lobbying and political contributions to counteract Obama's environmental agenda (Mackinder, 2010). This opposition was particularly strong and unprecedented during the first two years of Obama's tenure as lobbying spending reached its peak during the debate over the Waxman-Markey Bill of 2009, where industry-funded campaigns played a major role in its defeat in the Senate (Brulle, 2018, p. 295).

Environmental sociologist Robert Brulle (2018, p. 294) obtained the data on U.S. national climate change lobbying expenditures from 2000 to 2016 through the Center for Responsive Politics' OpenSecrets website, which monitors lobbying efforts and activities (Brulle, 2018, p. 294; MacArthur Foundation, n.d.). The CRP is a Washington-based non-profit and non-partisan organization that hosts OpenSecrets.org, a publicly accessible online database of lobbying expenditure reports that must be submitted to the U.S. Senate Office of Public Records (SOPR) under the 1995 Lobbying Disclosure Act, detailing the amounts spent by various sectors and organizations on federal campaign contributions and lobbying spending (Brulle, 2018, p. 294; MacArthur Foundation, n.d.).

In his study published in *Climatic Change* in 2018, Brulle examined this data to shed light on the extent and nature of climate lobbying in the United States. His analysis highlighted spending by key industries as well as environmental advocacy groups to influence legislation in favor of their interests. This included the electrical utilities sector with \$554 million, representing 26.5%. Followed by the fossil fuels with \$370 million or 17.7%, and the transportation sector, at \$252 million which represents 12.0%. The results clearly demonstrate that environmental advocacy groups and the renewable energy sector, with a relatively small contribution of \$48 million and \$78 million respectively, or 2.3 and 3.8% of the total lobbying expenditures, were considerably outspent by the polluting industries by 10 to 1 (Brulle, 2018, pp. 295-298).

In addition to direct lobbying of legislators and other high-ranked public officials, the fossil fuel industry's lobbying efforts involved funding think tanks and advocacy groups promoting pro-industry perspectives, and public relations campaigns shaping public opinion, which aimed to cast doubt on the urgency of climate action and emphasize the economic costs of regulations (Eilperin & Bernstein, 2014). By leveraging their financial resources and political influence, these industries significantly resisted many of Obama's climate initiatives (Lizza, 2010; Mackinder, 2010).

The influence of these competing lobbying efforts created significant conflict of interests as well as a dynamic policy environment where Obama had to balance the demands of environmental advocates and the economic concerns of powerful industry stakeholders (Eilperin & Bernstein, 2014; U.S. EPA, 2017). This balancing act often led to compromises shaping the final form of many of his climate policies. For example, while the Clean Power Plan set ambitious emissions reduction targets, it also included flexibility mechanisms to accommodate concerns from states and industries about the economic impact (U.S. EPA, 2017).

5. Environmental Federalism: Obama's Climate Battle with States

The interaction between federal and state governments, or environmental federalism, also affected the

implementation of Obama's climate agenda. States like California—one of the “Big Three” Democratic strongholds alongside New York and Illinois—led with stringent emissions standards and ambitious renewable energy targets, often serving as models for federal policies (California Air Resources Board [CARB], 2018). However, the federal-state relationship sometimes posed challenges, particularly when states opposed federal mandates (U.S. EPA, 2017).

Even before Obama's first term, California played a crucial role in advancing climate action with its pioneering environmental policies. The state's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, or Assembly Bill (AB) 32, sets a precedent for comprehensive climate legislation, including a cap-and-trade system, renewable energy mandates, and energy efficiency standards (CARB, 2018). California's stringent climate policies provided a blueprint for federal initiatives and showed the feasibility of ambitious climate action.

While the Obama administration pursued ambitious climate policies, not all states supported this agenda. Republican-controlled states with economies heavily reliant on fossil fuels—such as Texas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Louisiana—resisted federal mandates and challenged the EPA's regulatory authority, arguing that rules like the Clean Power Plan exceeded the agency's statutory powers under the Clean Air Act (Texas Attorney General, 2017; U.S. EPA, 2017). Legal battles over the CPP exemplified these federal-state tensions, with 27 states joining lawsuits that gave place to landmark cases such as *West Virginia et al. v. EPA et al.* (2016), which resulted in a Supreme Court stay halting the plan's implementation (Tsang, 2017, pp. 9–15, 2016; *West Virginia et al. v. EPA et al.*, 2016). However, political analysts argued that this opposition to Obama's environmental initiatives came as a result of the close connection between special interest groups of the fossil fuel industry and the political and judicial figures of these states (Jackson, 2016; Venook, 2017). They often pointed to the example of Scott Pruitt—then Oklahoma Attorney General, who was known for his climate change skepticism and antagonism toward the EPA and the Obama administration—who received large donations from oil and gas companies (Jackson, 2016; Venook, 2017).

Even Democratic governors of coal-reliant states, such as West Virginia's Earl Ray Tomblin (2010–2017) and Kentucky's Steve Beshear (2007–2015), alongside Republican-controlled legislatures and federal representatives of both states drove opposition to Obama's climate agenda (Environmental and Energy Study Institute [EESI], 2015; Peterson, 2015; Tsang, 2017, pp. 9–15). This became even more evident when West Virginia's Republican-majority legislature and Attorney General Patrick Morrisey spearheaded the aforementioned litigation against the EPA to repeal the Clean Power Plan, framing it as “economically harmful” and “federal overreach” (EESI, 2015; Hansen, 2015; Tsang, 2017, pp. 9–15; *West Virginia et al. v. EPA et al.*, 2016). Fossil fuel-dependent states often prioritized economic interests tied to coal, oil, and gas industries over federal environmental mandates, a dynamic that deepened partisan divides and reflected broader ideological clashes over federalism (Mayer, 2016, pp. 235–236, 289–290; Stokes & Breetz, 2018, pp. 80–82).

These legal and political conflicts underscored the complexities of implementing national climate policies in a federal system. As Stokes and Breetz (2018, pp. 80–82) observed, the interplay of state politics and federal authority not only shaped Obama's environmental legacy, but also set precedents for future climate governance. For example, the Supreme Court's 2016 stay of the CPP delayed its enforcement and paved the way for subsequent efforts to weaken federal environmental regulations via judicial appointments and funding of conservative candidates and think tanks known for their opposition to federal environmental regulations (Mayer, 2016, pp. 235–236, 289–290, 307–308; *West Virginia et al. v. EPA et al.*, 2016). Such think tanks included the Federalist Society, the Heritage Foundation, and the Koch brothers' Super PAC Americans for Prosperity (AFP), which alongside other oil and gas groups, spent millions of dollars in lobbying against the 2009 Waxman-Markey Bill, and later on spent millions more in funding Trump's and other Republican candidates' electoral campaigns (Basseches et al., 2022; Mackinder, 2010; Mayer, 2016, pp. 235–236, 289–290, 307–308).

6. Environmental Justice Strategy of the Obama Administration

Promoting environmental justice was another key consideration and goal to achieve for the Obama administration. Neighborhoods with low incomes, communities of color, and tribal regions have been unequally affected by climate change related issues as a result of contamination from industrial facilities, air pollution, and excessive heat temperatures due to poor housing conditions (Obama, 2014). These environmental risks exacerbate health inequities and limit opportunities for residents, including children who miss school because of asthma-related issues and adults facing difficulties with medical expenses (Obama, 2014).



Notwithstanding the urgency of the situation due to climate-related disparities, environmental justice only became a federal priority in 1994, when President Bill Clinton issued Executive Order No. 12898 (Clinton, 1994; U.S. EPA, 2016). This order instructed federal agencies to: (1) enhance the enforcement of health and environmental laws in communities with minority and low-income populations; (2) increase public engagement; (3) advance research and data collection concerning the health and environment of these populations; and (4) recognize varying patterns of natural resource consumption among minority and low-income groups (Clinton, 1994; U.S. EPA, 2016). The order also directed the acting EPA administrator to convene an Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice to supervise the execution of the aforementioned tasks (Clinton, 1994; U.S. EPA, 2016).

President Obama revitalized agencies' environmental justice strategies by reviving Executive Order 12898. He reconvened the Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group and introduced new regulations to limit toxic emissions, aiming to address pollution in overburdened communities (Obama, 2014). The Obama administration recognized that marginalized communities often suffer most from environmental degradation and sought to address these disparities through initiatives like the Clean Power Plan, which included provisions to support affected communities (U.S. EPA, 2017). The administration focused on ensuring climate policies benefited all Americans, especially those vulnerable to climate change impacts. The Clean Power Plan included measures to promote equity, such as providing incentives for states to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in low-income communities (U.S. EPA, 2017). Additionally, the EPA established the Environmental Justice Advisory Council to engage with communities, gather input, and incorporate environmental justice into policy development (U.S. EPA, 2016).

Furthermore, the Obama administration launched the "Climate Action Champions" competition, an initiative that was meant to recognize and support local governments in implementing environmental protections and regulations (The White House, 2014a). This program aimed to foster innovation, share best practices, and provide technical assistance to help communities implement sustainable solutions. By empowering local leaders and promoting community-driven approaches, the administration sought to ensure climate policies were flexible and responsive to diverse needs (The White House, 2014a).

7. The Impact of Trump's Deregulatory Agenda on Obama's Environmental Legacy, 2007–2021

Taking advantage of a Republican-controlled Congress during the first two years of his tenure, the Trump administration and Republican officeholders at all levels adopted a fundamentally different approach to environmental policy, prioritizing fossil fuel-based energy independence and economic deregulation under the slogan of "America First" (Guliyev, 2020; Wentz & Gerrard, 2019, p. 3). This strategy involved a comprehensive effort to roll back and weaken the environmental protections and regulations established by the Obama administration. Key policies such as the Clean Power Plan, the US commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement, vehicle fuel efficiency standards, and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards among many others were directly targeted for repeal or weakening (Baker, 2020; National Geographic Staff, 2019).

Like Obama, the primary mechanisms employed by Trump to advance his policy encompassed expansive use of the administrative tools of the presidency—this included executive orders, regulatory rollbacks, and actions aimed at reducing the statutory authority and capacity of environmental agencies (Baker, 2020; Potter et al., 2019). However, these actions were widely criticized by the scientific community and environmental groups. While the Trump administration argued that these rollbacks would benefit the economy and lower costs for Americans, critics asserted that they would undermine environmental protection and exacerbate the worsening climate crisis (National Geographic Staff, 2019). According to scientists, the anticipated impacts of these changes are significant, with projections of increased greenhouse gas emissions, greater air and water pollution, harm to sensitive ecosystems, and potential negative consequences for public health, particularly among vulnerable communities (National Geographic Staff, 2019).

Environmental organizations, state governments—including California, Massachusetts, and New York—and other advocacy groups mounted strong opposition to these rollbacks, utilizing legal, political, and public engagement strategies (CBS News, 2018; Wheeler, 2018). Many of the Trump administration's deregulatory efforts faced hundreds of substantial litigations, with federal courts frequently ruling against the administration, highlighting the importance of legal frameworks in the implementation of environmental policies (Baker, 2020; Farber, 2018, pp. 104–105; National Geographic Staff, 2019).



Nonetheless, despite lawsuits and fierce opposition from environmental groups and some states (both Democratic- and Republican-controlled) that adopted Obama-era environmental protection standards, fossil fuel lobbies—such as the American Petroleum Institute, the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, and the Texas Oil & Gas Association—have never been so active and successful in thwarting climate actions than during the Trump Presidency (Carter et al., 2020; Davenport, 2020; Reuters, 2020). Additionally, the majority of public figures often point to the strong ties between the Trump administration and the fossil fuel industry, including coal, oil and gas companies, whose owners and CEOs donated millions of dollars to Trump's 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns (Basseches et al., 2022; Stone, 2019). Many of Trump's appointees were lobbyists, executives, or shareholders in fossil fuel firms—such as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, former CEO of ExxonMobil (Venook, 2017); EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, former Oklahoma Attorney General who sued the EPA multiple times (Jackson 2016; Venook 2017); and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft, wife of Joe Craft, the CEO of the United States' third-largest coal company, Alliance Resource Partners (Stone 2019).

Discussion and Conclusion

President Obama's climate legacy represents a major turning point in U.S. environmental policy, characterized by significant achievements in the face of considerable challenges. This was exemplified by legislative success and failure, ambitious regulatory actions, international leadership, and a commitment to equity among all communities in the country. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 represented an unprecedented clean energy investment in United States history, promoting clean energy efficiency and creating over 900,000 renewable energy jobs from 2009 to 2015 (CEA, 2016, pp. 2-24). On the other hand, the subsequent failure of the Waxman-Markey Bill, due to Congressional stalemate, political and partisan divisions—including within the Democratic Party itself—and a fierce opposition from industry stakeholders, compelled the Obama administration to seek alternative methods in order to effectively achieve its environmental policy goals (Konisky & Woods, 2016, pp. 366-368). Regulatory achievements such as the revised CAFE standards, the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, the Clean Power Plan, and the Paris Climate Agreement demonstrated the potential of executive authority and diplomatic skills to drive progress in the face of legislative stagnation. However, the reliance on administrative tools and international diplomacy—rather than durable bipartisan legislation—rendered these policies vulnerable to reversal. This fragility became starkly evident under the Trump administration, which systematically dismantled Obama's environmental commitments (Baker, 2020; National Geographic Staff, 2019).

By withdrawing from the Paris Agreement (Trump, 2017), rolling back the Clean Power Plan (Baker, 2020; U.S. EPA, 2019, pp. 32520-32521), and weakening emissions standards for vehicles and power plants (Baker, 2020; Davenport, 2020; Reuters, 2020), Trump's administration underscored how deeply climate policy and priorities remain subject to changes in presidential administrations and entangled in partisan politics and industry influence. However, the administration's ability to change this framework was limited by existing laws and other factors beyond its control. These restrictions encompassed important rules set by laws like the Clean Air Act—which originally laid the foundation for many of the Obama-era climate regulations that President Trump sought to reverse—as well as the required procedures agencies must follow when changing or canceling regulations. This includes the notice-and-comment rulemaking process, whereby agencies are required to publish proposed changes in the Federal Register and allow the public to submit feedback before finalizing any new rule (Wentz & Gerrard, 2019, p. 7). Because of these limits, deregulation has been a slow process and exposed to challenges and lawsuits (Wentz & Gerrard, 2019, p. 1).

Nevertheless, political commentators tend to argue that Obama's and the Democrats' environmental agenda or Trump's and the Republicans' efforts to reverse it, were in fact dictated by lobbies and special interest groups, which donated huge sums of money to political candidates' electoral campaigns in order to influence the lawmaking process and ensuing laws and regulations in their favor. Even so, lobbying is constitutionally protected as the right to petition the government for redress of grievances (U.S. Const. amend. I, 1791). On the other hand, many argue that it is in fact a legalized form of bribery that hinders the people's will by interfering in the democratic process (Wall et al., 2019). This allows corporations and wealthy individuals to manipulate the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities (at both the state and federal level) by exerting a corrupting influence on politicians, legislators, and legal officials such as judges and attorney generals to fulfill their agendas (Wall et al., 2019).

The political, legal, and lobbying dynamics that came as a result of the transition from Obama's proactive climate agenda to Trump's deregulatory stance highlight a broader tension in U.S. environmental governance and

policymaking: executive actions, while necessary under certain circumstances and effective in the short term, lack the permanence and resilience of codified laws. Trump's reliance on fossil fuel lobbyists—illustrated by the appointment of former industry advocates to key regulatory roles—reinvigorated the influence of polluting sectors (Mayer, 2016, pp. 235–236; Stone, 2019). Meanwhile, states like California and New York resisted federal rollbacks by strengthening their own climate mandates (CARB 2018; Svoboda, 2017; Wheeler, 2018). These states demonstrated a commitment to preserving progress on climate and environmental issues, even if federal policies shifted, illustrating how environmental federalism can both enable and obstruct progress at the national level (CARB 2018; Svoboda, 2017; Stokes & Breetz, 2018, p. 82).

Additionally, while the Trump administration argued that its deregulatory agenda would stimulate economic growth and reduce costs, the long-term economic consequences of environmental degradation and climate change are likely to outweigh any short-term benefits. The rollback of fuel efficiency standards, for instance, while potentially lowering the initial cost of vehicles, will probably lead to higher fuel costs for consumers over the lifespan of those same vehicles. Furthermore, reduced support for clean energy technologies could certainly hinder innovation and investment in a growing and job-creating sector of the economy that is already facing fierce competition from other developed countries such as China, Germany, and Singapore, among many others.

This analysis offers valuable lessons in promoting democracy and future climate policymaking. It also sheds light on the role and prerogatives of U.S. institutions, legal system, and elected and appointed officeholders. The notice-and-comment procedure exemplified the democratic rulemaking process by inviting all interested parties—citizens, industry groups, and civil-society organizations—to submit evidence and arguments, thereby enhancing agency responsiveness and legitimacy. Notice and comment also allows individuals and organizations to influence policy outside electoral cycles, giving their opinions and filling gaps that Congress and the President cannot anticipate. Especially in high-stakes rules, broad participation from various components of the society affirms the foundational democratic principle that those governed should have a voice in lawmaking. Moreover, in case of opposition and lawsuits, courts are more likely to uphold rules where agencies have adhered to robust public-participation procedures.

The examination of Obama's climate record and Trump's numerous attempts to roll it back also highlights the critical role of public engagement and advocacy in driving policy change. The efforts of environmental groups, community organizations, and concerned citizens—mainly through protests, awareness campaigns, and litigations—were instrumental in pushing for stronger climate action and holding the administration accountable. This dynamic interaction between government, civil society, and industry underscores the complexity of environmental policymaking and the need for continued vigilance and advocacy to ensure progress. Yet the enduring power of lobbying, political and partisan alignment and divides—even within the same political parties—and federal-state conflicts remain decisive key factors in shaping environmental outcomes. The study also considers the broader implications of these political contestations on the energy sector, arguing that the structure of U.S. energy policy is not solely a matter of technological capability but is deeply intertwined with political power, advocacy efforts, and ideological commitments.

The legacy of the Obama administration's efforts continues to influence U.S. and international climate policy and serves as a foundation upon which future leaders can build. The dismantling of Obama's environmental initiatives through administrative means has been a time-consuming and dynamic process that invited legal challenge as well as subsequent efforts to reverse these changes and restore Obama-era status quo. Ultimately, the lasting consequences of these policy shifts and the future direction of environmental protection in the United States remain uncertain and subject to ongoing debates as well as political and legal developments. For durable progress, U.S. policy makers must anticipate and consider long-term implications of neglecting the environment and make some concessions, even if it has to be done at the expenses of economic or political interests. This can only be achieved by overcoming partisan disagreements and reliance on shifting executive priorities to reach consensus and secure bipartisan and resilient legislation like the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1970—a challenge that remains as urgent as the crisis it seeks to address.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres strictly to academic research ethics, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and intellectual integrity. All data utilized in this article are derived from publicly accessible governmental reports, academic publications, and verified institutional sources. No human participants, animals, or confidential data were involved in this

research. Proper attribution and citation have been maintained in accordance with the APA 7 Publication Manual.

Acknowledgments

The authors express sincere gratitude to the Department of Letters and English Language and the ISILC Laboratory at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra for their academic guidance and research support. Special thanks are extended to colleagues and mentors in the fields of American Studies and Environmental Policy whose constructive feedback strengthened the analytical framework of this article.

Funding Statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency, public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The study was conducted independently as part of the authors' ongoing academic research projects within their institutional affiliations.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no financial, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this article. All interpretations and conclusions presented herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of their affiliated institutions.

References

1. ABC News. (2008, June 3). *Full speech: Obama declares victory*. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/story?id=4988344&page=1>
2. Baker, C. (2020, December 15). The Trump administration major environmental deregulations.
3. *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-trump-administrations-major-environmental-deregulations/>
4. Basseches, J. A., Bromley-Trujillo, R., Boykoff, M. T., Culhane, T., Hall, G., Healy, N., Hess, D. J., Hsu, D., Krause, R. M., Prechel, H., Roberts, J. T., & Stephens, J. C. (2022, February 16). Climate policy conflict in the U.S. states: a critical review and way forward. *Climatic Change*, 170(3-4), 32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-022-03319-w>
5. Brulle, R. J. (2018). The climate lobby: A sectoral analysis of lobbying spending on climate change in the United States, 2000–2016. *Climatic Change*, 149(3-4), 289–303. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-018-2241-z>
6. Broder, J. M. (2009, June 26). House passes bill to address threat of climate change. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/27/us/politics/27climate.html?_r=1&hp
7. California Air Resources Board. (2018, September 28). AB 32 Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/fact-sheets/ab-32-global-warming-solutions-act-2006?keywords=2025>
8. Calmes, J. (2009, January 28). House passes stimulus plan with no G.O.P. votes. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/29/us/politics/29obama.html?hp>
9. Carter, L., Boren, Z., & Kaufman, A. (2020, September 28). Revealed: BP and Shell back anti-climate lobby groups despite pledges. *Unearthed*. <https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/2020/09/28/bp-shell-climate-lobby-groups/>
10. CBS News. (2018, May 2). *California, 16 other states sue EPA over auto emissions rollbacks*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/california-16-other-states-sue-epa-over-auto-emissions-rollbacks/>
11. Clinton, W. J. (1994, February 11). Executive Order 12898—Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations [PDF file]. *Federal Register*, 59(32), 7629–7633. <https://www.archives.gov/files/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf>
12. Council of Economic Advisers. (2010). *Recovery Act third quarterly report—Supplement: The economic impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – The ARRA and the clean energy transformation* [Supplement]. The White House. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/cea/factsheets-reports/economic-impact-arra-3rd-quarterly-report/supplement_greenjobs

13. Council of Economic Advisers. (2016, February 25). *CEA Final clean energy report—A retrospective assessment of clean energy investments in the Recovery Act* [PDF file]. The White House. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/page/files/20160225_cea_final_clean_energy_report.pdf
14. Davenport, C., & Landler, M. (2014, November 14). U.S. to give \$3 billion to climate fund to help poor nations, and spur rich ones. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/15/us/politics/obama-climate-change-fund-3-billion-announcement.html>
15. Davenport, C. (2020, March 30). U.S. to announce rollback of auto pollution rules, a key effort to fight climate change. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/climate/trump-fuel-economy.html#>
16. Eilperin, J., & Bernstein, L. (2014, January 16). Environmental groups say Obama needs to address climate change more aggressively. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/environmental-groups-say-obama-needs-to-address-climate-change-more-aggressively/2014/01/16/1e891608-7ebd-11e3-93c1-0e888170b723_story.html
17. Environmental and Energy Study Institute. (2015, November 2). West Virginia plans to submit Clean Power Plan compliance strategy, while filing suit. *Climate Change News*. <https://www.eesi.org/newsletters/view/climate-change-news-november-2-2015#6>
18. Farber, D. (2018, October 31). U.S. climate policy: Obama, Trump, and beyond. *Revista de Estudos Constitucionais, Hermenêutica e Teoria do Direito (RECHTD)*, 10(2), 95–108. <https://doi.org/10.4013/rechtd.2018.102.01>
19. GovTrack.us. (2009, June 26). *H.R. 2454 (111th): American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009*. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/111-2009/h477>
20. Guliyev, F. (2020, March 19). Trump's "America first" energy policy, contingency and the reconfiguration of the global energy order. *Energy Policy*, 140, 111435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2020.111435>
21. Hansen, M. (2015, October 31). As state pols resist Obama's climate plan, West Virginians build renewables anyway. *Yes! Magazine*. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/environment/2015/10/31/as-state-pols-resist-obama-s-climate-plan-west-virginians-renewables>
22. Hardin, S., & Lujan, A. (2018, December 18). Trump's EPA poised to undo progress on mercury pollution reduction. *The Center for American Progress*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/trumps-epa-poised-undo-progress-mercury-pollution-reduction/>
23. Jackson, D. (2016, December 7). Scott Pruitt, Trump's pick to head the EPA, has sued the EPA. *USA TODAY*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/2016/12/07/donald-trump-scott-pruitt-environmental-protection-agency/95104512/>
24. Konisky, D. M., & Woods, N. D. (2016, March 22). Environmental policy, federalism, and the Obama presidency. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 46(3), pp. 366–391. <https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjw004>
25. Lizza, R. (2010). As the world burns. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/11/as-the-world-burns>
26. MacArthur Foundation. (n.d.). *Center for Responsive Politics*. <https://www.macfound.org/grantee/center-for-responsive-politics-2003/>
27. Mackinder, E. (2010, August 23). Pro-environment groups outmatched, outspent in battle over climate legislation. *OpenSecrets*. https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2010/08/pro-environment-groups-were-outmatc/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
28. Mayer, J. (2016). *Dark money: The hidden history of the billionaires behind the rise of the radical right*. Doubleday.
29. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, & Environmental Protection Agency. (2012, October 15). 2017 and later model year light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emissions and corporate average fuel economy standards [PDF file]. *Federal Register*, 77(199), 62623–63200. https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2017-25_cafe_final_rule.pdf
30. National Geographic Staff. (2019, May 3). *A running list of how President Trump is changing environmental policy*. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/how-trump-is-changing-science-environment>

31. Natural Resources Defense Council. (2017, March 30). Holding the line against Trump in the Golden State. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/holding-line-against-trump-golden-state>
32. Obama, B. (2008a, September 16). An economic proposal [Speech transcript]. Golden, Colorado. In Speeches from the 2008 Presidential Campaign—Barack Obama Campaign Speeches. PresidentialRhetoric.com. <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/obama/09.16.08.html>
33. Obama, B. (2008b, October 8). Campaign stop in Indiana [Speech transcript]. Indianapolis, Indiana. In Speeches from the 2008 Presidential Campaign—Barack Obama Campaign Speeches. PresidentialRhetoric.com. <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/obama/10.08.08.html>
34. Obama, B. (2008c, October 2). Campaign stop in Michigan [Speech transcript]. Grand Rapids, Michigan. In Speeches from the 2008 Presidential Campaign—Barack Obama Campaign Speeches. PresidentialRhetoric.com. <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/obama/10.02.08.html>
35. Obama, B. (2008d, August 28). Democratic presidential nomination acceptance address [Speech transcript]. Denver, Colorado. In Speeches from the 2008 Presidential Campaign—Barack Obama Campaign Speeches. PresidentialRhetoric.com. <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/dnc2008/speeches/obama.html>
36. Obama, B. (2008e, October 27). One week to go: Speech in Ohio [Speech transcript]. Canton, Ohio. In Speeches from the 2008 Presidential Campaign—Barack Obama Campaign Speeches. PresidentialRhetoric.com. <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/obama/10.27.08.html>
37. Obama, B. (2008f, June 3). Remarks after the final Democratic primary [Speech transcript]. St. Paul, Minnesota. In Speeches from the 2008 Presidential Campaign—Barack Obama Campaign Speeches. PresidentialRhetoric.com. <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/obama/06.03.08.html>
38. Obama, B. (2009, February 24). Remarks of President Barack Obama - Address to joint session of Congress [Speech transcript]. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-address-joint-session-congress>
39. Obama, B. (2010a, May 21). *Presidential memorandum regarding fuel efficiency standards* [Memorandum]. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/presidential-memorandum-regarding-fuel-efficiency-standards>
40. Obama, B. (2010b, January 27). Remarks by the President in State of the Union address [Speech transcript]. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address>
41. Obama, B. (2013, January 21). Inaugural address by President Barack Obama [Speech transcript]. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama>
42. Obama, B. (2014, February 10). *Proclamation 9082 - 20th anniversary of Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice* [Presidential proclamation]. The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-9082-20th-anniversary-executive-order-12898-environmental-justice>
43. Obama, B. (2016, January 13). Remarks of President Barack Obama - State of the Union address as delivered [Speech transcript]. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama-%E2%80%93-prepared-delivery-state-union-address>
44. Peterson, E. (2015, August 5). Beshear supports suit against EPA, unclear on future of state carbon plan. *Louisville Public Media*. <https://www.lpm.org/news/2015-08-05/beshear-supports-suit-against-epa-unclear-on-future-of-state-carbon-plan>
45. Potter, R. A., Rudalevige, A., Thrower, S., & Warber, A. L. (2019, May 3). Continuity Trumps Change: The First Year of Trump's Administrative Presidency. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 52(4), 613-619. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519000520>
46. Reilly, A., & Bogardus, K. (2016, June 27). 7 years later, failed Waxman-Markey bill still makes waves. *E&E News*. <https://www.eenews.net/articles/7-years-later-failed-waxman-markey-bill-still-makes-waves/>
47. Romer, C. (2010, April 22). Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on the Clean Energy Transformation [Blog post]. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2010/04/21/impact-american-recovery-and-reinvestment-act-clean-energy-transformation>
48. Reuters. (2020, March 31). *Trump administration completes rollback of Obama-era fuel efficiency rules*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/business/trump-administration-completes-rollback-of-obama-era-fuel-efficiency-rules-idUSL1N2BO0QH/>
49. Svoboda, E. (2017, March 30). *Holding the line against Trump in the Golden State*. Natural Resources Defense Council. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/holding-line-against-trump-golden-state>



50. Stokes, L. C., & Breetz, H. L. (2018). Politics in the U.S. energy transition: Case studies of solar, wind, biofuels, and electric vehicles policy. *Energy Policy*, 113, 76–86.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2017.10.057>
51. Stone, P. (2019, September 27). 'Swampy symbiosis': Fossil fuel industry has more clout than ever under Trump. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/27/fossil-fuel-industry-clout-trump-era>
52. Texas Attorney General. (2017, April 28). AG Paxton Applauds Court Decision Suspending EPA's Unlawful Clean Power Plan [Press release]. <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-applauds-court-decision-suspending-epas-unlawful-clean-power-plan>
53. Tsang, L. (2017, March 8). *Clean Power Plan: Legal background and pending litigation in West Virginia v. EPA* (CRS Report No. R44480). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R44480>
54. Trump, D. J. (2017, June 1). *Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord*. The White House. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/>
55. The White House. (2011a, July 29). *Fuel economy report—Driving efficiency: Cutting costs for families at the pump and slashing dependence on oil* [PDF file].
https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/fuel_economy_report.pdf
56. The White House. (2011b, July 29). *President Obama announces historic 54.5 mpg fuel efficiency standard* [Press release]. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/07/29/president-obama-announces-historic-545-mpg-Fuel-Efficiency-Standard>
57. The White House. (2013, June 25). *Fact sheet: President Obama's climate action plan* [Press release]. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/25/fact-sheet-president-obama-s-climate-action-plan>
58. The White House. (2014a, October 1). *Obama administration announces climate action champions competition to recognize climate leaders across the United States* [Press release].
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/01/obama-administration-announces-climate-action-champions-competition-reco>
59. The White House. (2014b, November 11). *U.S.-China joint announcement on climate change* [Press release]. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/11/us-china-joint-announcement-climate-change>
60. The White House. (2015, December 12). *U.S. Leadership and the historic Paris Agreement to combat climate change* [Press release]. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/12/us-leadership-and-historic-paris-agreement-combat-climate-change>
61. U.S. Const. (1791). amend. I.
62. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2012, February 16). *EPA announces final mercury and air toxics standards for power plants* [Federal Register notice]. Retrieved from
<https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/mercury-and-air-toxics-standards#rule-summary>
63. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2016, October 17). *Summary of Executive Order 12898—Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations* [Web page]. https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-executive-order-12898-federal-actions-address-environmental-justice_.html
64. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2017, May 9). *Clean Power Plan for Existing Power Plants: Regulatory Actions*. <https://archive.epa.gov/epa/cleanpowerplan/clean-power-plan-existing-power-plants-regulatory-actions.html>
65. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2019, July 8). *Repeal of the Clean Power Plan; emission guidelines for greenhouse gas emissions from existing electric utility generating units; revisions to emission guidelines implementing regulations* [PDF file]. *Federal Register*, 84(130), 32520–32584.
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-07-08/pdf/2019-13507.pdf>
66. U.S. House of Representatives. (2009, May 15). American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 [H.R. 2454, 111th Cong.]. congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-bill/2454>
67. U.S. Senate. (2009, February 9). Roll call vote 111th Congress - 1st session—Vote no. 59: On the cloture motion (Motion to invoke cloture on Collins-Nelson (NE) Amendment No. 570 to H.R. 1).
https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_votes/vote111/vote_111_1_00059.htm
68. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). *The Paris Agreement*.
<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>



69. Venook, J. (2017, January 18). The Trump administration's conflicts of interest: A crib sheet. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/01/trumps-appointees-conflicts-of-interest-a-crib-sheet/512711/>
70. Wents, G., & Gerrard, M. B. (2019, June). Persistent regulations: A detailed assessment of the Trump administration's efforts to repeal federal climate protections [PDF file]. *Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, Columbia Law School*. <https://climate.law.columbia.edu/sites/climate.law.columbia.edu/files/content/docs/Wentz-and-Gerrard-2019-06-Persistent-Regulations.pdf>
71. Wall, M., Root D., & Schwartz, A. (2019, July 22). Corruption consultants: Conservative special interests and corporations hurt state economies and democratic processes. *Center for American Progress*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/corruption-consultants/>
72. Wheeler, L. (2018, May 1). 17 states sue Trump administration over rolling back vehicle emissions standards. *The Hill*. <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/385671-16-states-sue-trump-administration-over-plan-to-rollback-vehicle>
73. *West Virginia et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency et al.*, 577 U.S. 1126 (2016). <https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/boundvolumes/577BV.pdf>

