

Donald Trump makes top Republican fear environmental future

By Roger Harrabin
BBC environment analyst

3 hours ago

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"I worry terribly for the future of my family and families round the world"

A leading US Republican says she fears for the future of her seven grandchildren with Donald Trump in the White House.

Christine Todd Whitman, head of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under George W Bush, accused Mr Trump of ignoring compelling science.

And she warned that his threat to scrap climate protection policies puts the world's future at risk.

Trump supporters say rules on climate and energy are stifling business.

But Ms Todd Whitman says the US must find ways of promoting business without unduly harming the planet.



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Image caption

Donald Trump's environmental messages have troubled environmental activists

Details of Mr Trump's climate policy are not yet clear, but his team have talked about boosting coal, opening new oil pipelines, and allowing mining on public wilderness or drilling in the Arctic.

On the political side, they have suggested quitting the global climate deal, scrapping President Obama's clean power plan, and dismantling the US energy department along with the EPA itself.

Trump card

Ms Todd Whitman was interviewed on Trump's likely policies for a documentary - Climate Change: the Trump Card - **which airs on BBC Radio 4 at 20:00 on Tuesday.**

She said: "I find it very worrisome that there seems to be a disdain for the science on protecting the environment.

"I worry terribly for the future of my family and families round the world because Mother Nature has never observed geopolitical boundaries and what one country does really does affect another country.

"To walk away from something where you have 97% of scientists saying this is occurring and people have an impact on it ... it's gotten to the point where we've got to try to slow it down if we're going to survive it."



Image copyright

AP

Image caption

The coal mining industry is hopeful that Trump's White House will support it

She argued that Mr Trump was betraying a Republican heritage of conservation. George Bush Snr signed the UN Framework Convention in Rio in 1992. Abraham Lincoln, she remarked, was the first president to protect public land and Richard Nixon established the EPA.

"Conservation is inherently conservative," she said. "I hope to be proven wrong by Mr Trump but you have so many multi-millionaires from the oil industry in his Cabinet.

"We want to have power and be energy independent but the problem is doing it in a balanced way to protect health and the environment. But from Trump's view it doesn't seem to enter the equation."

Cabinet questions

Mr Trump's picks for Cabinet posts have alarmed scientists. Several of them have cast doubt on climate science - although it is impossible to know exactly how they will act once in office.

The nominee for Energy Secretary is former Texas governor Rick Perry, who has in the past argued for the abolition of the department he is about to lead.

The choice for head of the EPA is Scott Pruitt, who wants to scrap the clean power programme which underpins America's pledge to the UN to curb CO2 emissions.



Image copyright

EPA

Image caption

Mr Pruitt has long been an opponent of the agency he will now lead

Mr Trump's pick for Secretary of State is Rex Tillerson, head of oil giant Exxon Mobil, which is being investigated for allegedly misleading its shareholders over risks to the climate.

Supporters say the EPA has been exceeding its powers and needs to be reined in. Nick Loris from the libertarian Heritage Foundation told BBC News: "Scott Pruitt has led the charge against an overly aggressive EPA - an agency that's run wild, rampantly, with excessive regulations that are devoid of any meaningful environmental benefit.

"He wants to return environmental protection down to the state level where a lot of our environmental challenges can better be solved," he added.

But Ms Todd Whitman said she hoped the new administration did not prove to be as extreme as it appeared at first sight.

"Once he's in office, Pruitt will find it's a lot more complicated than they thought," she said. "Hopefully they'll be able to listen - and then start to moderate.

"Regulation can go too far and there probably are regulations that have outlived their usefulness and need to be cut back to a degree... but to throw it all out..."

The impact of Mr Trump on global climate policy is hard to predict. Immediately after the election result, China, the EU, the UK and Germany - along with many developing nations - reaffirmed their determination to stick to the deal agreed in Paris last year to curb emissions.



Image copyright [redacted]

AP

Image caption [redacted]

Emissions from coal plants are just one part of a complex energy industry

At home, it is thought unlikely that Mr Trump will be able to make good his promise to resurrect the US coal industry because investors have turned away from coal towards gas and ever-cheaper renewables.

But if Mr Trump succeeds in making US energy prices even cheaper (they are already much cheaper than in China), other nations may feel pressure to compete on energy cost from their own heavy industries.

And when governments next meet to fulfil their promise of ratcheting up what they all agree is an inadequate climate policy, the absence of the USA at the table could prove very disruptive.

But it's too soon to judge. China, for instance, may attempt to seize the moral high ground by stepping up its efforts to protect the climate - effectively taking over as world leader in the bid to protect the planet. That might not suit the future president.

Eric Holthaus: Trump is serious about declaring war on science

By Eric Holthaus comment

11:59 AM Wednesday Dec 14, 2016

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A San Francisco rally to call attention to what scientists believe are unwarranted attacks by the incoming Trump administration against climate change researchers. Photo / AP

When it comes to climate science, President-elect Donald Trump has been a purveyor of conspiracy theories for years.

He's called human-caused climate change a Chinese hoax and refused to acknowledge the existence of the California drought, promising farmers there that, as president, he would "open up the water".

He's vowed to eliminate the EPA and the Energy Department and "cancel" the Paris Agreement.

Since the election, Trump has been relentlessly converting those anti-science messages into action, wrongly believing that doubling down on fossil fuel production will help boost long-term economic growth. That Trump's pick for secretary of state - ExxonMobil chief executive Rex Tillerson - is among the least extreme of his appointments is chilling.

According to a Sierra Club report, when he assumes the presidency on January 20, Trump will be the only head of state in the world to deny mainstream climate science - and yes, that includes even Kim Jong Un of North Korea.

In recent weeks, by surrounding himself with outspoken allies of the fossil fuel industry, promising cuts to Nasa's earth science research and sending a threatening questionnaire to Energy Department staff, there is no remaining doubt that Trump is serious about overtly declaring war on science. This isn't a presidential transition. It's an Inquisition. It's a 21st-century book burning.

The incoming administration is likely to be willfully hostile towards the scientific process, with far-reaching implications. One of the most tangible consequences of sharp cutbacks in federal funding for climate science is the potential loss of critical data - whether by neglect or malice - that underlie global efforts to understand our climate system. By all accounts, that's exactly what Trump and his team want: Ignorance of how human actions are affecting our

planet makes it easier to maintain the status quo.

As a scientist and a journalist focusing on climate (and the parent of two toddlers who will one day have to live in the world Trump seems eager to destroy), I can't sit by and watch this happen.

Continued below.

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At the weekend, after news broke of Tillerson's nomination, I began an effort to systematically catalogue and preserve as much of the federal government's publicly available climate science data as possible in the next five weeks. I tweeted: "Scientists: Do you have a US .gov climate database that you don't want to see disappear?" and linked to docs.google.com.

Within two days, more than 50 key data sets had been identified, and six of them have already been archived on publicly available nongovernment servers. Complementary efforts at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Toronto are merging resources to attempt to avoid duplication of effort, and the Penn Programme in the Environmental Humanities put the data refuge online today.

I've received offers of support from computer scientists, private data storage companies, investors and lawyers. On Twitter, the most common response to the project was, "I can't believe it's come to this". It's an extraordinary step to have to take, but we live in an extraordinary moment.

If you believe, as I do, that climate change is among the most serious problems we face as a global society and that, on our current path, climate science dictates a time scale of years, not decades, before truly catastrophic long-term planetary change is irreversibly locked in, then alarm is an appropriate response.

Even conservative-leaning scientists, such as meteorologist Ryan Maue, an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, are opposed to a potential Trump administration purge of government data. On Twitter, Maue had a suggestion for the incoming president: "an executive order to ensure

all data is maintained and all scientists are transparent and cooperative". Simply, this data belongs to the public. Trump cannot and should not hold it hostage.

One of the first people to respond to my call was Drew Volpe, a Boston-based investor whose personal business model revolves around using publicly available data - often weather data - to increase economic efficiency. "So much of the innovation in the US happens on the shoulders of publicly funded research," Volpe told me. "If you really want to grow the economy, if you want to create the next Tesla, the next Google . . . companies large and small are really built on that innovation."

Scientists are actively preparing for Trump to whitewash all climate change research from government websites <https://t.co/HM16huPFyM>

— Jason Koebler (@jason_koebler) [December 13, 2016](#)

Fears of a Trump-led climate science purge are not without precedent. Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper attempted to silence scientists, and in a few cases took unique data sets offline.

In Australia, which flirted with its own scientific purge earlier this year, scientists are worried that global climate science may grind to a halt if Trump's administration carries out a full-scale assault on data. David Karoly, a climate scientist at Melbourne University, told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that in the worst-case scenario, the forthcoming Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report may be delayed due to the unavailability of unique climate model output that only exists on US government servers and that underpins efforts at universities around the world. That, Karoly said, "would be an enormous setback for climate science".

Of course, preserving existing data is only the first step. Ensuring the continuous collection of data requires scientists to keep their jobs - something a bunch of volunteers with a Google Doc and a few hundred terabytes of hard drive space in Iceland can't control. Another task beyond the scope of simply archiving existing data is ensuring that the data archive is constantly maintained as new research is conducted.

I genuinely don't think the Trump administration will intentionally delete data - such an act would be illegal, as well as unforgivable. However, I do anticipate budget cuts that will likely put data in jeopardy.

I see our efforts as a firewall against a hostile administration: The more we can preserve before Trump takes power, the less incentive he has to stand in the way of science.

- Holthaus is a meteorologist and journalist focused on weather and climate. He lives in Tucson, Arizona.

- [Washington Post](#)

Climate scientists fear witch hunt with

Trump in power

5:00 AM Saturday Dec 17, 2016

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When Trump takes office, he will be the only world leader to believe that climate change isn't real, the Sierra Club has pointed out. Photo / AP

Climate scientists tend to be a hardy bunch, accustomed to hate mail, vicious online attacks, lawmakers who deny that global warming is real and, for some, even death threats.

But their mood has darkened as President-elect Donald Trump tapped a series of climate change deniers and fossil fuel supporters for key posts in his Administration.

That gloom turned to panic when Trump's transition team sought the names of Department of Energy scientists who have worked on climate programmes, raising concerns of a political witch hunt.

"The thing that is palpable among scientists is fear," said John Abraham, a professor at the University of St Thomas in Minnesota who works on thermal science, ocean warming and renewable energy - "fear that there will be either funding cuts to really critical climate science work, or retribution for their work on climate change".

The Energy Department plays a major regulatory role in overseeing nuclear power and natural gas. It also manages 17 national labs charged with developing science and technology to further the energy sector and spur innovation. It also maintains and secures US nuclear weapons.

Rick Perry, Trump's choice to lead the department, has close ties to the Texas oil industry and has corporate roles in two petroleum companies pushing to get government approval for a proposed pipeline that has stoked mass protests in North Dakota.

The former Texas Governor's close relations with energy executives and his longtime dependence on them for political contributions signal an abrupt change of course at the Energy Department.

During his unsuccessful 2012 run for the presidency, Perry proposed eliminating the department.

On Saturday, meteorologist Eric Holthaus issued an appeal on Twitter, asking if any scientists had a US Government database that "you don't want to see disappear".

He linked to a Google spreadsheet where scientists could add links to data sets on sea level rise, snow and ice, carbon emissions and more.

Soon, it turned into a massive effort to archive key data sets on nongovernment servers. By midweek, the endeavour was taken over by staffers at the University of Pennsylvania.

Climate scientists admit they have no evidence that Trump is planning any moves to erase scientific data.

But scientists - even in Western democracies - have encountered hostile actions by

government leaders before, including under former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who cut thousands of government science positions, set strict rules for scientists engaging with the media, burned books and eliminated certain research programmes.

The Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin and Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler led purges of scientists, and in the United States in the 1940s and 50s, scientists were often targeted or suspended as part of Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade.

When Trump takes office, he will be the only world leader to believe that climate change isn't real, the Sierra Club has pointed out.

"Assaults on science are characteristic of non-democratic, authoritarian, fascist governments," said Peter Gleick, a hydroclimatologist and co-founder of the Pacific Institute, a nonpartisan thinktank. "We worry it is going to get worse."

Trump's transition team appeared to distance itself on Thursday from the controversial email seeking names of scientists who worked on President Barack Obama's climate change initiatives.

"The questionnaire was not authorised or part of our standard protocol," a Trump transition official said in an email. "The person who sent it has been properly counselled."

A day earlier, the Department of Energy said the questions "left many in our work force unsettled" and vowed not to provide "any individual names to the transition team".

The Union of Concerned Scientists' Andrew Rosenberg said it was "great to see that the Trump transition team is admitting that demanding a list of employees was a mistake". However, the Trump team must do more, by clearly committing "to respect the independence of government scientists [and] refrain from targeting civil servants for working on climate issues," he added.

Meanwhile, the rising vitriol online has made scientists jittery.

For Gleick, one such moment came this week when he saw a tweet from the far-right Breitbart News site, adapting a Nazi-era expression and referencing a firearm.

"When you hear a scientist talk about peer-review, you should reach for your Browning," it said.

Gleick tweeted about it, and soon a Twitter user sent him a picture of a Browning pistol.

Gleick retweeted the picture, and commented, "#climate scientists start getting pictures of guns in their Twitter feed." Then, the man who sent the picture claimed he meant "no hostility", and said he was merely trying to show Gleick the kind of gun mentioned.

For Michael Mann, a well-known author on climate change who has received plenty of death threats for his work in recent years, "the current political climate in Washington is the worst we have seen". "To say that scientists are worried about what the next four years might hold in store would be an understatement."

- AFP

Trump says 'nobody really knows' if climate change is real

By Juliet Eilperin

7:42 AM Monday Dec 12, 2016

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A plane lands during sunrise at the airport in Duesseldorf, Germany. Donald Trump said that "nobody really knows" whether climate change is real. Photo / AP

US President-elect Donald Trump said that "nobody really knows" whether climate change is real and that he is "studying" whether the United States should withdraw from the global warming agreement struck in Paris a year ago.

In an interview with Fox News host Chris Wallace, Trump said he's "very open-minded" on whether climate change is underway but has serious concerns about how President Barack Obama's efforts to cut carbon emissions have undercut America's global competitiveness.

"I'm still open-minded. Nobody really knows," Trump said. "Look, I'm somebody that gets it, and nobody really knows. It's not something that's so hard and fast. I do know this: Other countries are eating our lunch."

During the presidential campaign, Trump referred to climate change as a "hoax" perpetrated by the Chinese, a comment he later described as a joke. But during a town hall in New Hampshire, he also mocked the idea of global warming.

At that event, Meghan Andrade, a volunteer for the League of Conservation Voters, asked Trump what he would do to address the issue, to which he replied: "Let me ask you this - take it easy, fellas - how many people here believe in global warming? Do you believe in global warming?"

After asking three times "Who believes in global warming?" and soliciting a show of hands, Trump concluded that "nobody" believed climate change was underway except for Andrade.

During today's interview with Wallace, Trump said he needed to balance any environmental regulation against the fact that manufacturers and other businesses in China and elsewhere are able to operate without the kind of restrictions faced by their US competitors.

"If you look at what - I could name country after country. You look at what's happening in Mexico, where our people are just - plants are being built, and they don't wait 10 years to get an approval to build a plant, OK?" he said. "They build it like the following day or the following week. We can't let all of these permits that take forever to get stop our jobs."

The New York businessman made the same critique of the Environmental Protection Agency, to which he has nominated Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt - a climate change sceptic - as the head. Wallace asked whether he was "going to take a wrecking ball to the Obama legacy," to which Trump replied, "No. No. No. I don't want to do that at all. I just want what's right."

"EPA, you can't get things approved. I mean, people are waiting in line for 15 years before they get rejected, OK?" he said. "That's why people don't want to invest in this country."

It is unclear which permit application Trump was referring to, but he has repeatedly criticised EPA rules. And though he has given mixed signals on whether he would back out of the US' voluntary commitments under the Paris climate agreement, it would take several years for the next administration to withdraw now that the agreement has entered into force.

At the urging of daughter Ivanka, Trump has met in the past week with former Vice-President Al Gore and actor Leonardo DiCaprio, both environmental activists. Trump described the sessions as "good meetings" but did not elaborate.

- [Washington Post](#)

Leonardo DiCaprio talks environment and jobs with Donald Trump

Meeting at New York Trump Tower comes as US president-elect picks climate change sceptic to head Environmental Protection Agency

Leonardo DiCaprio gave Ivanka Trump a copy of documentary film Before the Flood. Photograph: Christophe Archambault/Pool/EPA

Guardian staff and Associated Press

Thursday 8 December 2016 05.12 GMT



[Leonardo DiCaprio](#) and the head of his foundation met on Wednesday with US president-elect Donald Trump to discuss how jobs centring on preserving the environment can boost the economy.



Climate change sceptic Scott Pruitt to lead Environmental Protection Agency

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In a statement to the Associated Press, Terry Tamminen, the CEO of the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF), confirmed the meeting at Trump Tower in New York.

Tamminen said the pair gave a presentation to Trump, daughter Ivanka, and other

members of Trump's team on how focusing on renewable, clean energy could create millions of jobs.

It came as Trump chose Scott Pruitt, attorney general of Oklahoma and a sceptic of climate science, [as the next administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), in what was widely viewed as a signal of Republicans' desire to dismantle Obama's climate legacy.

Pruitt has called the EPA's rule "unlawful and overreaching" and has cast doubt on the overwhelming scientific evidence that human activity is causing the planet to warm.

The appointment comes hot on the heels of claims by Trump that [global warming was a hoax masterminded by China](#) and his [promise to pull the US out of the Paris climate agreement](#).

Tamminen said of Wednesday's DiCaprio meeting: "Today, we presented the president-elect and his advisors with a framework – which LDF developed in consultation with leading voices in the fields of economics and environmentalism – that details how to unleash a major economic revival across the United States that is centred on investments in sustainable infrastructure.

"Our conversation focused on how to create millions of secure, American jobs in the construction and operation of commercial and residential clean, renewable energy generation."



Donald Trump presidency a 'disaster for the planet', warn climate scientists

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The Oscar-winning actor has been a strong advocate of fighting climate change and

preserving wildlife, and [his recent documentary Before the Flood](#) addresses the peril the world faces because of climate change.

DiCaprio met with Ivanka Trump a few days ago and presented her with a copy of the film.

On Monday, former vice-president turned environmental campaigner [Al Gore met with the president-elect and Ivanka Trump](#), who reportedly plans to speak out on climate change despite her father's scepticism.

"I had a lengthy and very productive session with the president-elect," Gore said after the meeting. "It was a sincere search for areas of common ground." He said the conversation between them was "to be continued".

Tamminen, who was secretary of California's Environmental Protection Agency under former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, also said Trump was receptive and suggested they meet again next month.

"The president-elect expressed his desire for a follow-up meeting in January, and we look forward to continuing the conversation with the incoming administration as we work to stop the dangerous march of climate change, while putting millions of people to work at the same time," said Tamminen.

Trump's Meeting With Al Gore Gives Environmental Activists Hope

By CORAL DAVENPORT DEC. 5, 2016



Gore Calls Trump Meeting 'Extremely Interesting'

Al Gore, the former vice president and a prominent climate activist, met with President-elect Donald J. Trump on Monday. By REUTERS. Photo by Hilary Swift for The New York Times. [Watch in Times Video »](#)

Embed

WASHINGTON — President-elect [Donald J. Trump](#), who has called [climate change](#) a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese, met on Monday with the climate-activist extraordinaire [Al Gore](#), offering environmental activists a glimmer of hope that the Trump administration’s policies will moderate from his campaign pledges to scrap all efforts to stem the warming of the planet.

But even as the president-elect was sitting down with the former vice president, his transition team continued to court ardent opponents of climate control policies to fill key posts in the government. Many transition officials question or deny the established science of human-caused climate change and have worked aggressively to undo President Obama’s climate change policies.

Mr. Gore, who starred in the Academy Award-winning documentary “[An Inconvenient Truth](#),” projected optimism in the lobby of Trump Tower, telling reporters that his meeting with Mr. Trump was “lengthy and very productive,” and calling it “a sincere search for areas of common ground.”

“I found it an extremely interesting conversation, and to be continued,” he said.

Environmental activists looking for straws to grasp pointed to Mr. Trump’s daughter Ivanka, who met separately with Mr. Gore on Monday and who is reportedly seeking to use her platform as first daughter to speak out on climate change.

Ms. Trump has also met recently with the movie star and environmental advocate Leonardo DiCaprio, who gave her a copy of his documentary “Before the Flood,” which warns of the perils of climate change.

GRAPHIC

20 Things Donald Trump Said He Wanted to Get Rid of as

President

Some of the parts of the government that Mr. Trump promised to dismantle if he was elected.

OPEN GRAPHIC

But as celebrities parade into Ms. Trump's offices, a different cast is preparing to populate the government. Overseeing the transition at the Environmental Protection Agency is Myron Ebell, an internationally prominent skeptic of climate science and opponent of climate policy who directs environmental and energy policy at the [Competitive Enterprise Institute](#), a business advocacy group in Washington partially funded by the coal industry.

Among Mr. Trump's current top candidates for E.P.A. administrator are Jeffrey Holmstead, a lead lawyer representing states and fossil fuel companies suing to overturn Mr. Obama's climate change regulations; Attorney General Scott Pruitt of Oklahoma, who has been a key architect of that legal fight; and Kathleen Hartnett White, the director of a Texas think tank who served as a top environmental official under the former Texas governors Rick Perry and George W. Bush. Ms. White has denounced "global warming alarmism" and called last year's international Paris Agreement on climate change a "tragedy."

Among the leading candidates for Mr. Trump's interior secretary is Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, an enthusiastic supporter of [oil](#) and gas drilling and a fierce opponent of climate change policy. Ms. Fallin was the first governor to announce that she would refuse to enact the Obama administration's climate-change regulations. She signed an executive order that barred Oklahoma's state agencies from submitting a compliance plan for the rules.

"There is a huge disconnect between where she appears to be and what's happening here in Washington," Carol Browner, a former climate change adviser to President Obama, said of Ms. Trump. "She appears to be a lone voice on this — although she's an important voice. But her concern for climate is certainly not

reflected in the people he appears to be thinking about.”

Carl Paladino, the New York State co-chairman of Mr. Trump’s presidential campaign and an outspoken conservative, said on Monday that he was unconcerned by Mr. Gore’s visit.

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“You know, if we’re going through climate change, it doesn’t necessarily mean that it was man-made. Climate change may be a natural thing,” he told reporters at Trump Tower not long after Mr. Gore left the building. “Our world goes in cycles.”

On the campaign trail, Mr. Trump vowed to “cancel” the Paris climate change accord committing nearly every country on earth to take action to combat climate change, and to undo the Clean Power Plan, Mr. Obama’s signature climate change policy. He pledged to “get rid of” the E.P.A., which is charged with carrying the climate change rules.

Still, as he has done on many other issues, including abortion and support for United States invasion of Iraq, Mr. Trump has demonstrated an occasional flexibility on his climate positions. In 2009, Mr. Trump and three of his children — Ivanka, Donald Jr. and Eric — joined dozens of other business leaders in signing on to a letter published as an advertisement in The New York Times ahead of a United Nations climate change summit in Copenhagen, urging Mr. Obama and Congress to enact “meaningful” [climate legislation](#).

Beyond that letter, there is almost no public record of Ms. Trump’s views on climate change. In May 2008, she co-hosted an awards

gala at the United Nations co-sponsored by a group called Friends of Climate Change.

But in 2010, she wrote a Twitter post echoing remarks of Senator James M. Inhofe of Oklahoma, chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee — and Congress’s most prominent denier of climate change.

“Ironic tidbit of the day ... Senate global warming hearing canceled due to the blizzard,” Ms. Trump wrote, linking to the Senate Environment Committee’s webpage. Mr. Inhofe has often cited the occurrence of blizzards as evidence that human-caused climate change is not occurring.

Kitty Bennett contributed reporting.

Trump picks climate sceptic Pruitt for environment chief

23 minutes ago

From the section

[US & Canada](#)

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EPA

Image caption

Scott Pruitt says the "debate is far from settled" on climate science

US President-elect Donald Trump will name an outspoken critic of President Obama's climate change policies to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, 48, is seen as an ally of the fossil fuel industry.

He has been a key player in legal challenges against EPA regulations on greenhouse gas emissions.

Democrats and environmentalists in the US have expressed dismay, calling Mr Pruitt a climate change denier.

Mr Pruitt's appointment has not yet been formally announced, but Mr Trump's senior adviser Kellyanne Conway appeared to confirm it on Wednesday evening.

"Attorney General Pruitt has great qualifications and a good record... We look forward to the confirmation hearings," she said.

What Scott Pruitt believes

Mr Pruitt has sued the EPA on several occasions, most recently over Mr Obama's **Clean Power Plan**, which aims to reduce carbon emissions from power plants.

He **called the move** "an unlawful attempt to expand federal bureaucrats' authority over states' energy economies in order to shutter coal-fired power plants".

And, **writing in the National Review in May**, Mr Pruitt said of climate change: "That debate is far from settled. Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind."



Image copyright

AP

Image caption

Mr Pruitt has challenged Barack Obama's plan to reduce power plant emissions

There is consensus among the majority of scientists in the field that carbon emissions from human activities are a key driver of rising temperatures and that the impact of climate change will be severe.

Mr Trump, **in a speech on energy on the campaign trail in May**, castigated the Obama administration's environmental initiatives. He promised to scrap "any regulation that is outdated, unnecessary, bad for workers, or contrary to the national interest".

He also pledged to "cancel" the Paris climate deal, which came into force in November. The landmark agreement commits governments to moving their economies away from fossil fuels and reducing carbon emissions in a bid to contain global temperature rise.

But last month, in an apparent softening, he acknowledged in a meeting with the New York Times that there was "some connectivity" between human activity and climate change.

What his critics say

The news of his selection for EPA head comes as a blow to Democrats and environmentalists.



Bernie Sanders 
@SenSanders



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Trump's nominee to lead EPA, Scott Pruitt, is a climate denier who's worked closely with the fossil fuel industry. That's sad and dangerous.

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"Attorney General Pruitt's reluctance to accept the facts or science on climate change couldn't make him any more out of touch with the American people, and with reality," said Chuck Schumer, the incoming leader of the Senate Democrats.

"President-elect Trump promised to break the special interests' grip on Washington, but his nomination of Mr Pruitt - who has a troubling history of advocating on behalf of big oil at the expense of public health - only tightens it."

Democrat Senator Bernie Sanders called the move "sad and dangerous", while Fred Krupp of the Environmental Defense Fund called Mr Pruitt "a deeply troubling choice to head the agency that protects the clean air all Americans breathe and the clean water we drink".

But Jim Inhofe, a Republican senator from Oklahoma who called global warming a "hoax", said Mr Pruitt had "fought back against unconstitutional and overzealous environmental regulations... he has proven that being a good steward of the

environment does not mean burdening tax payers and businesses with red tape".