

Embattled head of US environment agency resigns

Scott Pruitt provoked controversy over his policies at the Environmental Protection Agency.

Jeff Tollefson



Scott Pruitt, head of the US Environmental Protection Agency, provoked controversy throughout his 16 months at the agency. Credit: Mark Wilson/Getty

Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), resigned on 5 July amid a series of ethical and spending scandals.

Pruitt — a former attorney general for Oklahoma who had repeatedly challenged EPA regulations in court — implemented an aggressive agenda to roll back health and environmental regulations after being confirmed as the EPA administrator by the US Senate in February 2017.

In particular, he sought to reverse a series of rules aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, oil and gas operations and other industries. Pruitt also triggered complaints from scientists and environmental groups when he changed how the agency approached scientific research. In some of his more controversial decisions, Pruitt [banned scientists with EPA funding](#) from serving on agency advisory boards and he proposed [limits on the kinds of scientific research](#) used to justify regulations.

Environmentalists applauded Pruitt's resignation, but warned that efforts to dismantle health and environmental regulations are sure to continue under Andrew Wheeler, the EPA's deputy administrator. The former coal lobbyist will be the agency's acting administrator until the US Senate can confirm a new appointee.

"This is a big victory for public health and for the employees at the Environmental Protection Agency, but the fight isn't done," says Jeremy Symons, vice president for political affairs at the Environmental Defense Fund, an activist group based in New York.

US President Donald Trump confirmed that he had accepted Pruitt's resignation in a [tweet](#) on 5 July. Trump made no mention of the controversies surrounding Pruitt.

The EPA declined to comment on Pruitt's resignation.

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Scott Pruitt quits as head of US environment agency

35 minutes ago



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Image caption

Mr Pruitt is the subject of at least a dozen investigations

Scandal-hit Scott Pruitt has resigned as head of the US Environmental Protection Agency.

President Donald Trump said Mr Pruitt had done "an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him".

But since taking office Mr Pruitt has been mired in series of scandals concerning his spending habits and alleged misuse of office.

His deputy Andrew Wheeler will take over as acting head of the agency, Mr Trump said.

Mr Pruitt is the subject of at least a dozen investigations into his conduct.

He has been under scrutiny for renting an apartment with ties to a fossil fuels lobbyist.

He is also accused of bypassing the White House to secure big pay rises for two long-time staff members.

The long list of Scott Pruitt controversies

Meanwhile he has angered many liberals and environmentalists by severely curtailing the agency's activities and repealing many measures designed to protect the environment.

Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump



Donald J. Trump



@realDonaldTrump

I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this. The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will...

7:37 AM - Jul 6, 2018

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End of Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump
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Donald J. Trump



@realDonaldTrump

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

...on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!

7:37 AM - Jul 6, 2018

11.3K

7,317 people are talking about this

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