

# What a Donald Trump EPA Will Look Like With Climate Change Skeptic Myron Ebell at the Helm; If Donald Trump gets into the White House, "global warming" could magically disappear

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When the pope wrote in an encyclical last year that the Earth is "among the most abandoned and maltreated of the poor," Myron Ebell immediately saw that as an opportunity to attack. The Vatican "seems to have forgotten" that "putting the world on an energy-starvation diet will consign billions of people to perpetual energy poverty," Ebell wrote in a blog post for the Competitive Enterprise Institute. Global warming might be bad, he added, but "global warming policies--will almost certainly be catastrophic."

Ebell, the director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute and a prominent climate-change skeptic, was chosen at the end of September to head the Environmental Protection Agency's transition team if Donald Trump is elected president. That does not necessarily mean he would have a role in a Trump EPA, but at the very least, he would be able to populate the EPA with officials who share his views and those of Trump, who hasn't made the environment an issue in his campaign but does offer goals and proposals on his campaign website. His plans are listed under a tab that says "Energy." There is no "Environment" tab. And his proposals have far more to do with boosting energy production than with conservation. It says nothing about greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebell's harsh rebuke of the pope--especially this pope, revered as a champion of the poor--and his other writings offer a glimpse of what a Trump EPA might look like--both in substance and in style. It would be vastly different from what the agency has looked like under President Barack Obama and sharply at odds with the scientific consensus.

The appointment of Ebell to head the transition team came as Trump was fumbling to deny a 2012 tweet in which he wrote, "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." In the first presidential debate on September 26, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton accused him of saying climate change was a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese. "I did not. I did not. I do not say that," he replied, later calling the tweet a "joke."

Ebell is sometimes described as climate denier-in-chief, and he revels in it, crowing in his biography that he's been called one of the leading "misleaders" on climate change and "villain of the month" by one environmental group. David Goldston, a policy analyst at the Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund, says Ebell "doesn't believe in climate change and wants to reverse the advances we've

had in environmental protection and decimate--if not utterly destroy--the Environmental Protection Agency." The Competitive Enterprise Institute, Ebell's employer, "has done everything it can politically and through litigation to block any forward movement on climate and to try to harass anybody who is trying to get forward movement," Goldston says.

Ebell is also the chairman of the Cooler Heads Coalition, more than two dozen nonprofit groups "that question global warming alarmism and oppose energy rationing policies," according to the coalition's website. Those positions line up nicely with Trump's goals, which include "saving" the coal industry, reviving the Keystone XL oil pipeline and expanding offshore oil drilling.

Ebell has attacked nearly every aspect of Obama's environmental policies and accomplishments. He has said that the president's decision in September to sign the Paris climate accord--which commits nations to sharp reductions in the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change--was "clearly an unconstitutional usurpation of the Senate's authority" because treaties need approval by two-thirds of the Senate. (The White House argued that it was an agreement, not a treaty.) In a speech in August at the Detroit Economic Club, Trump said he would cancel the agreement and stop all payments of U.S. tax dollars to U.N. climate change programs.

These and other views on climate and climate change policy that Ebell has espoused for decades are entirely at odds with the scientific consensus. Ebell also argues that the potential remedies are worse than the disease, another position supported by few facts. Scientists have compiled mountains of evidence to show quite the opposite--that preventing global warming might be difficult but doing nothing will be far, far worse. Computer models of future climate predict that average surface temperatures on Earth could rise between 2 and 6 degrees Celsius by the end of the 21st century. That's enough to change rainfall patterns, speed coastal erosion, melt ice caps and glaciers and raise sea level by as much as 2 feet.

The Trump campaign also appointed an energy lobbyist, Mike McKenna, to work on transition in the Energy Department, and David Bernhardt, a former Bush Interior Department official, to lead the Interior Department's transition team. McKenna has served in the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the federal government, according to his website. Bernhardt is a lawyer who has represented mining and energy companies.

The Obama administration has taken steps to limit global warming emissions, especially during its second term. In addition to crafting the Clean Air Plan, it has moved to clean up the nation's water, limit mercury emissions from power plants and set tough mileage goals for cars and trucks.

Trump, with the eager assistance of Ebell and other climate change skeptics, could make major changes at the EPA, says Goldston. "A Trump administration can do substantial harm," he says. "We need additional steps, and they would not take those. But they can try to undo all the progress that occurred during the Obama administration."

A central talking point of Trump's campaign is to adopt policies that will lift restrictions on industry and create jobs, which is much easier to do if global warming concerns are dismissed. What Trump and his advisers fail to see is that revamping the fossil fuel industry could both create jobs and ease climate

change.

Trump takes a less nuanced view. His energy policy, his website says, "will unleash an energy revolution that will bring vast new wealth to our country." Provided it isn't underwater.

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