

Environment

Trump to sign executive order undoing Obama's clean power plan

EPA head Scott Pruitt, who sued to halt plan as Oklahoma's AG, claims ending restrictions on coal power plants will be 'pro-growth and pro-environment'



4210
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Sunday 26 March 2017
20.59 BST



The EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, said of the executive order: 'The president is keeping his promise to the American people.' Photograph: Joshua Roberts/Reuters

Donald Trump will on Tuesday sign a [controversial](#) executive order to unravel Barack Obama's plan to curb global warming, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency said on Sunday, claiming the move would be "pro-growth and pro-environment".



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"The president is keeping his promise to the American people," said Scott Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general who has [questioned accepted climate science](#), in an appearance on ABC's This Week. During the interview, Pruitt also called the Paris climate accord a "bad deal" and said Obama-era standards on auto emissions were "counter-helpful to the environment".

Pruitt said the Trump order would undo the Obama administration's [clean power plan](#), which restricts greenhouse gas emissions at coal-fired power plants.

"With respect to this executive order that's coming out on Tuesday," he said, "this is about making sure that we have a pro-growth and pro-environment approach to how we do regulation in this country."

Earlier this month, [Pruitt told CNBC](#) he did not believe the release of carbon dioxide, a gas produced by the burning of fossil fuels, was pushing global temperatures upward - as scientists have [known for decades](#).

The clean power plan, which [aims to cut emissions](#) of CO₂ and other substances and was implemented in 2015, has been on hold since last year while a federal appeals court considered a challenge by Republican-led states and more than 100 companies. Pruitt sued to halt the order while in Oklahoma.

Trump's intention, he said, was to bring back coalmining jobs and reduce the cost of electricity.

"For too long, over the last several years, we have accepted a narrative that if you're pro-growth, pro-jobs, you're anti-environment," he said.

"We have made tremendous progress on our environment," Pruitt continued. "We can be both pro-jobs and pro-environment." He argued that the Obama administration "had a very anti-fossil fuel strategy - coal, natural gas and the rest", and that it made "efforts to kill jobs across this country through the clean power plan".

Pruitt also discussed the Trump administration's rollback of Obama-era limits on car pollution, which began this month. Following a meeting with auto executives in Detroit, [Trump directed Pruitt's EPA](#) to review fuel efficiency standards.

"We ought to focus on efficiency, fuel efficiency for cars that people really want to buy," Pruitt said. "You know, this process of building cars that no one purchases in order to meet these standards that were previously set actually is counter-helpful to the environment, because people don't buy the new cars. They keep older cars."



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Pressed on whether the administration would block [a measure by California to tighten its fuel emissions standards](#), Pruitt said only it was "something we're going to be evaluating".

Supporters of the clean power plan, including some Democratic-led states and environmental groups, argue it would promote thousands of clean energy jobs and help the US meet ambitious goals to reduce carbon pollution set by an international agreement reached in Paris in late 2015.

Pruitt criticised the [Paris climate agreement](#), which Trump has [reportedly said](#) he will "cancel" and which Pruitt said was too lenient in its provisions for China and India, which, like the US, are among the world's leading producers of carbon dioxide.

"China and India got away, the largest producers of CO₂ internationally, got away scot-free," he said. "They didn't have to take steps until 2030.

"So we've penalized ourselves through lost jobs while China and India didn't take steps to address the issue internationally."

Pruitt said the [Trump administration](#) was "making sure we operate within the framework of the Clean Air Act". But, he added: "Paris was just a bad deal, in my estimation."

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