

Trump administration: 'The war on coal is over'

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Associated Press



EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, talks to a reporter after speaking at Wayne Supply in Hazard, Ky, Monday.

HAZARD, Ky. — A coalition of left-leaning states and environmental groups are vowing to fight the Trump administration's move to kill an Obama-era effort to limit carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Speaking Monday in the coal-mining state of Kentucky, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt said he would be issuing a new set of rules overriding the Clean Power Plan, the centerpiece of President Barack Obama's drive to curb global climate change.

"The war on coal is over," Pruitt declared, adding that no federal agency should ever use its authority to "declare war on any sector of our economy."

It was not immediately clear if Pruitt would seek to issue a new rule without congressional approval, which Republicans had criticized the Obama administration for doing. Pruitt's rule wouldn't become final for months, and is then highly

likely to face a raft of legal challenges.

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman was among those who said they will sue.

"The Trump Administration's persistent and indefensible denial of climate change — and their continued assault on actions essential to stemming its increasing devastation — is reprehensible, and I will use every available legal tool to fight their dangerous

agenda," said Schneiderman, a Democrat.

For Pruitt, getting rid of the Clean Power Plan will mark the culmination of a long fight he began as the elected attorney general of Oklahoma. Pruitt was among about two dozen attorney generals who sued to stop Obama's 2014 push to limit carbon emissions, stymieing the limits from ever taking effect.

Closely aligned with the

oil and gas industry in his home state, Pruitt rejects the consensus of scientists that man-made emissions from burning fossil fuels are the primary driver of global climate change.

President Donald Trump, who appointed Pruitt and shares his skepticism of established climate science, promised to kill the Clean Power Plan during the 2016 campaign as part of his broader pledge to revive the nation's struggling coal mines.

In his order Tuesday, Pruitt is expected to declare that the Obama-era rule exceeded federal law by setting emissions standards that power plants could not reasonably meet.

Pruitt appeared at an event with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell at Wayne Supply in Hazard, Kentucky, a company that sells coal mining supplies. The store's owners have been forced to lay off about 60 percent of its workers in recent years.

While cheering the demise of the Clean Power Plan as a way to stop the bleeding, McConnell conceded most of those lost jobs are never

coming back.

"A lot of damage has been done," said McConnell, a Kentucky Republican. "This doesn't immediately bring everything back, but we think it stops further decline of coal fired plants in the United States and that means there will still be some market here."

Obama's plan was designed to cut U.S. carbon dioxide emissions to 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. The rule dictated specific emission targets for states based on power-plant emissions and gave officials broad latitude to decide how to achieve reductions.

The Supreme Court put the plan on hold last year following legal challenges by industry and coal-friendly states. Even so, the plan helped drive a recent wave of retirements of coal-fired plants, which are also being squeezed by low cost natural gas and renewable power. In the absence of stricter federal regulations curbing greenhouse gas emissions, many states have issued their own mandates promoting energy conservation.

The withdrawal of the

Clean Power Plan is the latest in a series of moves by Trump and Pruitt to dismantle Obama's legacy on fighting climate change, including the delay or roll back of rules limiting levels of toxic pollution in smokestack emissions and wastewater discharges from coal-burning power plants.

On Thursday, Trump nominated former coal-industry lobbyist Andrew Wheeler to serve as Pruitt's top deputy at EPA — one of several recent political appointees at the agency with direct ties to the fossil fuel interests.

The president announced earlier this year that he will pull the United States out of the landmark Paris climate agreement. Nearly 200 countries have committed to combat global warming by reducing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

"This president has tremendous courage," Pruitt said Monday. "He put America first and said to the rest of the world we are going to say no and exit the Paris Accord. That was the right thing to do."

BRIEFLY

As Trump challenges Iran nuclear deal, those in Tehran worry

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — As U.S. President Donald Trump threatens the Iran nuclear deal, those living in Tehran feel that an accord they have yet to benefit from may already be doomed, hardening their skepticism about America.

Trump is set to deliver a speech on Iran this week in which he is expected to decline to certify Iran's compliance in the landmark 2015 agreement, referring it to Congress, and perhaps targeting the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard with new sanctions.

In the streets of the Iranian capital on Monday, The Associated Press spoke to a series of people about the nuclear deal: students and teachers, young and old, men in fashionable clothes and women in chadors.

Nearly all had the same concerns: Benefits from the 2015 accord have yet to reach Iran's 80 million people despite its government signing billion-dollar airplane deals. Inflation remains high, job opportunities stay low.

They also said Trump's threats fall in line with what Iranian leaders since the 1979 Islamic Revolution have warned: Americans can't be trusted. That feeling has unified hard-liners supporting Iran's clerically overseen government, as well as reformists seeking to change it.

Sheriff: Vegas gunman aimed at fuel tanks as diversion

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The gunman who killed 58 people in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history targeted aviation fuel tanks, stocked his car with explosives and had personal protection gear as part of an escape plan, authorities said Monday.

Sheriff Joe Lombardo again expressed frustration with the pace of the investigation, but not with the investigators who have yet to pinpoint the motive behind the shooter's decision to fire from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel casino on a Las Vegas Strip concert crowd of 22,000 on Oct. 1.

"It's because this individual purposely hid his actions leading up to this event, and it is difficult for us to find the answers to those actions," Lombardo said. "We believe he decided to take the lives he did and he had a very purposeful plan that he carried out."

There is still no evidence Stephen Craig Paddock was motivated by ideology, or that there was another shooter, he said. Investigators have found 200 incidents of Paddock moving through the city, and at no time was he with anyone else, Lombardo said.

Lombardo said police and FBI agents, including behavioral profilers, still haven't found a particular event in Paddock's life that might have triggered the shooting. The sheriff added that a complete evaluation of Paddock's mental condition was not yet done. Authorities didn't find a note in his room, only a paper with numbers, he said.



President Donald Trump (left) and Sen. Bob Corker (R-Iowa, right) traded barbs on Sunday.

Corker's attacks on Trump highlight broader concerns in GOP

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bob Corker is hardly the only Republican lawmaker raising dark concerns about harm President Donald Trump might cause the U.S. and the world. But he's one of the few willing to air those worries in public.

Most GOP senators were silent Monday, a day after Corker charged that the White House was an "adult day care" and Trump could set the nation "on the path to World War III."

The only senator who publicly hinted at similar concerns was Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, who said both Trump and Corker should "cool it."

"And I think it would help if the president would be the first to cool it," he added.

Tennessee's Corker, with his Twitter broadsides and an explosive weekend New York Times interview, gave voice to concerns that circulate widely on Capitol Hill about an unpredictable president whose tendency to personalize every issue creates risks for the GOP agenda. But Trump's enduring popularity with a segment of the GOP base serves as a political muzzle that keeps most elected Republicans from saying anything similar, even those who believe it to be true.

Grassley, who won't be up for re-election until 2022, responded bluntly when asked about the situation. "I don't see how it's productive, and I think that two words would kind of answer your question from my point of view: Cool it," he said. "I think it would be better if we stuck to the issues and leave personalities out of it."

A few other Republican senators who provided public views Monday avoided aligning themselves with Corker. "You'll have to ask Sen. Corker what led him to make that statement. I haven't made that statement," Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida said of Corker's suggestion that Trump could take the country into another world war.

Sen. Jeff Flake has been outspoken in his criticism of Trump, who's attacked him in return. But the Arizona

Republican was restrained during a joint interview with Rubio after a re-election fundraiser in Scottsdale.

"Any of us who've worked with Sen. Corker know that he speaks his mind," Flake said, demurring on whether he shares Corker's view that the White House has become an "adult day care center."

"I agree with him on some things, I've supported a lot of his agenda, some things I've disagreed with and continue to do so," Flake said of Trump.

In Weinstein's downfall, a moment of reckoning for Hollywood

NEW YORK (AP) — If in a movie, Harvey Weinstein would probably cut the scenes of sexual harassment that have been described against him. They're too cliché.

The hotel room seductions, the massage requests, the coercive suggestions. They are, as the *Los Angeles Times* editorial board called them, "classics of the genre." The encounters depict a Hollywood culture immediately recognizable, one where power-broker sleaziness is an accepted and acknowledged part of the business.

Hollywood now finds itself in a crisis not just because one of its most prominent moguls has been disgraced and fired from the company he co-founded, but because the allegations against him describe a dark underbelly of the movie business rarely scrutinized outside the industry. It's a moment of reckoning for a Hollywood that has faced increasing scrutiny over its treatment of women, from pay equality to fair employment opportunity behind the camera.

Weinstein's ouster may have been a long time coming, with allegations going back to 1990. (Weinstein is yet to respond to directly though on Thursday he apologized for the pain he's caused.) But by apparently bringing down such a pivotal figure — the kind that has long been considered untouchable because of industry and legal might — many see a watershed moment for the industry.

"There is a tectonic shift going on with people having the courage to say, 'No more,'" said Melissa Silverstein, the founder and publisher of *Women and Hollywood*.

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