



The Mountain Pact

Former Coal Lobbyist is the Likely New Head of the Environmental Protection Agency

Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, has been officially nominated to run the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Wheeler served under Scott Pruitt as the EPA's number two until Pruitt resigned in July 2018 amidst ethics scandals. Wheeler then took over as acting administrator. On Wednesday, January 16, the Senate Committee on Environment



and Public Works held Wheeler's confirmation hearing. Wheeler is expected to be confirmed, likely once the government shutdown ends, as Republicans hold a majority in the Senate.

Since taking over as acting director of the EPA in July, Wheeler has worked to advance President Trump's deregulation agenda [stating](#); "through our deregulatory actions, the Trump Administration has proven that burdensome federal regulations are not necessary to drive environmental progress." Under Wheeler's leadership, the Clean Power Plan has been replaced with weaker rules, federal protections for streams and wetlands have been relaxed, and controls over mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants have been reduced. Wheeler has also produced a [proposal](#) to reverse Obama era fuel efficiency standards.

If Wheeler is confirmed, he does not intend to slow down on environmental deregulation. When asked if he thought that climate change was one of the greatest crises facing our planet, he [responded](#) by saying that it was not the greatest crisis, but an issue that needed to be addressed globally. This statement is in direct opposition with the [National Climate Assessment](#) released in November by 13 U.S. government agencies, including the EPA, which emphasized the need to take immediate action on climate change. In fact, during his confirmation hearing, Wheeler [claimed](#) to not have formed an opinion on the report.

Wheeler's confirmation will mean a continuation of aggressive deregulation. The Mountain Pact will be following EPA actions closely to keep you informed of any and all opportunities to comment, author op-eds, or make press statements. It is vital that the EPA hears from mountain community voices. Stay tuned for opportunities to take action.

www.themountainpact.org | info@themountainpact.org

