

Predictions and Outlook for U.S. Federal and International Chemical Regulatory Policy 2018

Article By:

Lynn L. Bergeson

What a difference a year makes. To some extent, the surprise of 2016 – the election of Donald J. Trump as President -- did make many predicted changes about life in Washington, D.C. for 2017 come true. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) budget proposal reflects serious cuts, climate change policies were radically reversed, rules were withdrawn, several promulgated regulations were Congressionally invalidated, and new leadership positions were filled by appointees who have been harsh critics of past EPA policies. At the same time, much of the anticipated agenda of the new Administration remains unfulfilled, prospective, and fluid at best.

Rancorous and bitter partisan wrangling on Capitol Hill, despite Republican control of the Senate and the House of Representatives (House), has stymied some Administration initiatives and caused nominations to languish, all occurring in the swirl of intensely critical media coverage of EPA actions. Retired EPA staffers are sought out by the media to be profiled as martyred saints who decided to leave rather than stay another day under the new regime. Print and television media outlets openly advertise and invite remaining career staff in agencies to leak documents as part of the "fight" for proper oversight of program activities. Recent punditry has stressed the word "tribalism" to indicate a predictable binary response either for or against the Administration, depending on one's party identification and other political affiliations.

The result has been a mix of wary optimism and fiery opposition by those for or against significant changes to the way EPA has acted in the past and/or the initiatives of the Obama Administration. What new ideas will succeed versus what existing policies will prevail has become less predictable, however. Moreover, despite the difficulties of the first year for the new Administration, there are at least three more years to implement an agenda.

©2025 Bergeson & Campbell, P.C.

National Law Review, Volume VIII, Number 4

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/predictions-and-outlook-us-federal-and-international-chemical-regulatory-policy-2018>