

An Inconvenient Administration

I did not think we would be at this place in time, but here we are, with one of the potentially most challenging United States administrations to our scientific field in years. However, it is not only President-elect Donald Trump or his appointees who are likely to repress or remove U.S. environmental regulations that will be the biggest future challenge. Our biggest challenge is an apparent lack of concern for scientific evidence. What does this mean for environmental scientists and engineers publishing in *Environmental Science & Technology* (ES&T) and *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* (ES&TL), and what can we do about it?

We Will Not Back Down from Skeptics of Scientific Evidence. My view is that many U.S. environmental scientists and engineers are already feeling threatened by the Trump administration's nominees. This may be particularly true for environmental scientists and engineers employed by the federal government. Federal employees, and other scientists, should feel confident that they have the support of their research community and collaborators to do the research that needs to be done, and that they will still have opportunities to communicate their research to a global audience. ES&T and ES&TL will continue to help meet this need for global communication of our research findings.

We Are a Clever, Global Community, so We Will Continue Our Research. It is clear from President-elect Trump's cabinet picks that the U.S. will likely no longer play a leadership role in climate change negotiations and will sit in the back row (if at all), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) will be restricted, and the oil industry will have a front row seat in the administration. Does this mean that U.S. research on climate change, environmental health and chemical alternatives, and renewable energy will stop? Absolutely not. The problems we work on, as a global community, are multifaceted enough that we know how to obtain funding from many different sources to do research that needs to be done. As a global community, our research has been, and will continue to be, funded by a wide variety of sources, including international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). With regard to U.S.-funded research, the National Science Foundation is a top funding source highly cited by ES&T and ES&TL authors (based on a Web of Science funding agency data analysis). The USEPA has a relatively small impact on research in the environmental community, as shown by only a few percent of recent ES&T and ES&TL publications citing the USEPA as a source of funding. As with prior administrations, we must speak up for the importance of federally funded research, which sustains not only important knowledge development but also technological solutions to environmental problems and grows our next generation of STEM workforce.

We Will Support Each Other and Will Be Strengthened by Our Research Community. I have been a part of the ES&T and ES&TL community for the past 25 years. In that time, I've witnessed a variety of U.S. administrations come and go, along with changing administrations in the countries of my international research collaborators (<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/>

[pdf/10.1021/acs.est.5b05653](http://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/acs.est.5b05653)). It is my experience that, when part of the ES&T and ES&TL community is particularly hard hit, such as with restricted travel and/or reduced research funding, we find ways to reach out to our collaborators to help keep their research programs alive. Global environmental problems are best solved by global, multidisciplinary teams of environmental scientists and engineers.

We Will Reach Out and Find Support beyond Our Community. There are enough forward-thinking countries, U.S. states, cities, companies, and consumers that are setting policy, designing products, and making purchases with climate change and the environment in mind that our research and publications in ES&T and ES&TL will continue to have an impact. These countries, states, cities, companies, and consumers are our true allies for the next four years.

In reality, this inconvenient U.S. administration may slow our progress, but it will not halt progress in environmentally related research because the environmental problems we work to solve will persist longer than any one administration will.



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Notes

Views expressed in this editorial are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the ACS.

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