



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

Pruitt as EPA Pick

Item: When President-elect Donald Trump announced Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt as his pick to run the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Los Angeles Times expressed its displeasure in an article for December 7 entitled “Trump names climate change skeptic and oil industry ally to lead the EPA.” Evan Halper wrote:

Pruitt disputes the mainstream scientific consensus that human activity is warming the planet at an alarming rate and that world governments must act aggressively to limit emissions if they are to avoid catastrophic consequences. He has also fought EPA anti-pollution rules.

The Times quoted Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group — a Washington research and advocacy organization — as saying, “Pruitt could be the most hostile EPA administrator toward clean air and safe drinking water in history.” Halper also lamented the fact that — under a Pruitt EPA — environmental rules “would vary considerably from state to state.” Noting that in states “like California that enthusiastically embrace the fight against climate change and have clean air and water rules that exceed federal standards, the fallout may be marginal,” he went on to predict:

Such states will probably resume the role they held during the last Republican administration in Washington, as defiant laboratories for cleaner energy that push other states to follow their lead by reshaping regional energy markets.

Halper’s piece then claims that other states — presumably Republican ones — would be allowed to wreak havoc on the environment because in the absence of “federal pressure,” nothing would hold them in check:

But states like Pruitt’s Oklahoma, which remain heavily invested in fossil fuels, would face far less federal pressure to replace aging power plants and expand their use of renewables. Pruitt’s record of resisting federal regulation also suggests the EPA under him could limit its role in holding state governments to account when their enforcement of anti-pollution rules fall short, as happened in Flint, Mich., where the city’s drinking water supply was contaminated.

Halper then quotes House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) as saying, “For the sake of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the planet we will leave our children, the head of the EPA cannot be a stenographer for the lobbyists of polluters and Big Oil.” In what is a clear attempt to add credibility to Pelosi’s wild claims, Halper wrote:

Pelosi’s comments referred to a 2014 New York Times report that found energy lobbyists drafted letters for Pruitt to send to federal agencies and Obama, outlining the hardships of federal regulations. Several opponents cited the letters in charging that Pruitt is unqualified for the EPA post.

Item: Not to be left out of the Pruitt-bashing party, the New York Times joined the fray with an article under headline, “An Enemy of the E.P.A. to Head It.” In its December 7 opinion piece, the New York Times editorial board sang the same tune as did the Los Angeles Times, writing:

Had Donald Trump spent an entire year scouring the country for someone to weaken clean air and clean water laws and repudiate America’s leadership role in the global battle against climate change, he could not have found a more suitable candidate than Scott Pruitt....

This is an aggressively bad choice, a poke in the eye to a long history of bipartisan cooperation on



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

environmental issues, to a nation that has come to depend on the agency for healthy air and drinkable water, and to 195 countries that agreed in Paris last year to reduce their emissions of climate-changing greenhouse gases in the belief that the United States would show the way.

Correction: Despite the claim of the Los Angeles Times' Halper and other global-warming alarmists, there is no such animal as "mainstream scientific consensus that human activity is warming the planet at an alarming rate and that world governments must act aggressively to limit emissions if they are to avoid catastrophic consequences." In fact, quite the opposite is true. What the alarmists pass off as "consensus" is nothing more than censorship, marginalization, and even attempted criminalization of any scientific opinion on global warming that is outside of the dogma approved by the Left. Moreover, there certainly is no consensus that a world government must act aggressively to do anything. In fact, globalist propaganda from the establishment opinion cartel notwithstanding, most Americans still believe in a sovereign United States, not world government.

Global warming (or climate change or whatever its alarmists are calling it these days) is not a scientific fact — it is a scientific theory. It has not been proved and has — in fact — been largely disproved by the growing gap between alarmist predictions and reality. Time and time again. See, for instance, "Climate Alarmists Have Been Wrong About Virtually Everything" in the January 4, 2016 issue of The New American. (This article is also available at [TheNewAmerican.com](#).)

If there were such a thing as global warming, it would likely be a self-fulfilling prophecy caused by all of the steam coming out of the ears of the alarmists whenever anyone disagrees with their unfounded doomsday theory. The "reporting" of the mainstream media on Pruitt is a prime example.

Rather than act as a watchdog, the media acts as a lapdog for the power elites. What the political powers on the Left attempt to criminalize, the media powers on the Left censor.

Any voice that is raised in disagreement of the global-warming alarmism — even when that voice belongs to a scientist who is an expert on the subject and joins a chorus of other such voices — finds itself shouted down as the insane babbling of a lone wolf.

Pruitt himself addressed this in an article for *National Review* for May 17, 2016. He wrote of the founding era when the United States "was born out of a revolution against, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, an 'arbitrary government' that put men on trial 'for pretended offences' and 'abolish[ed] the Free System of English laws,'" and compared that to today:

Some of our states have forgotten this founding principle and are acting less like Jefferson and Adams and more like George III. A group of Democratic attorneys general has announced it intends to criminally investigate oil and gas companies that have disputed the science behind man-made global warming. Backed by green-energy interests and environmentalist lobbying groups, the coalition has promised to use intrusive investigations, costly litigation, and criminal prosecutions to silence critics of its climate-change agenda. Pretended offenses, indeed.

We won't be joining this coalition, and we hope that those attorneys general who have joined will disavow it. Healthy debate is the lifeblood of American democracy [sic], and global warming has inspired one of the major policy debates of our time. That debate is far from settled. Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind. That debate should be encouraged — in classrooms, public forums, and the halls of Congress. It should not be silenced with threats of prosecution. Dissent is not a crime.



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

Pruitt is correct; dissent is not a crime. And the alarmists are wrong; censorship is not consensus.

Following the cardinal doctrine of liberalism — that big government is good and bigger government is better — Halper arrives at the mistaken conclusion that it is a bad thing to allow each state to make its own rules in those areas where those powers are not expressly granted to the federal government by the Constitution. He is joined in his error by the *New York Times* editorial board. Citing the Paris Agreement, the *New York Times* skips right past the federal government and brings the weight of internationalism to bear in what is a matter for the individual states to handle.

In reality, if Halper is correct about the damage that will be done to clean air and water by a relaxing of these overbearing federal regulations and if he is correct that states such as California “will probably resume the role they held during the last Republican administration in Washington, as defiant laboratories for cleaner energy that push other states to follow their lead by reshaping regional energy markets,” then he and his fellow alarmists have nothing to fear. After all, if those states that did not practice a balance of economics and ecology suffered the catastrophic impact on clean air and water Halper predicts, and they looked at their healthier, happier neighbors who were practicing that balance, it would naturally follow that they would mend their ways and get on board the environmental train (a train, of course, not powered by coal or petroleum products).

Of course, even having laid those dots out, Halper seems to have a hard time connecting them.

And while Halper quotes Ken Cook as saying, “Pruitt could be the most hostile EPA administrator toward clean air and safe drinking water in history,” and the *New York Times* editorial board writes that Pruitt will undoubtedly “weaken clean air and clean water laws,” neither offers any evidence to support these accusations, because there is none. Is Oklahoma a barren wasteland of unbreathable air and undrinkable water?

Halper’s indictment of “Pruitt’s record of resisting federal regulation” is actually based in truth, but to conservatives it misses the mark of serving as an indictment and lands squarely in the bull’s eye of an endorsement. And there’s the rub. In this case — as in almost all cases dealing with the radical environmental lobby — the real battle has nothing to do with protecting the environment and everything to do with controlling the states and the people. The endgame is the realization of that cardinal doctrine of liberalism: bigger and bigger government leading eventually to total government. The liberal media hates Pruitt for reasons that have nothing to do with the environment and everything to do with the real agenda of radical environmentalism. They hate him for the same reasons many conservatives like him: He has taken on the federal government in favor of the states. To the religion of Statism (of which radical environmentalism is a major denomination), Pruitt is a recalcitrant heretic.

Halper is scraping the bottom of the barrel when he quotes Nancy Pelosi’s condemnation of Pruitt as a “stenographer for the lobbyists of polluters and Big Oil” as she begs “for the sake of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the planet we will leave our children” that he not be confirmed. Furthermore, he seems to know it, and so he attempts to bolster her remarks by giving credit to “a 2014 *New York Times* report that found energy lobbyists drafted letters for Pruitt to send to federal agencies and Obama, outlining the hardships of federal regulations.” It would make sense if Pruitt had representatives of the energy companies draft those letters. Who better to address the hardships created by federal regulations than those who bear the brunt of them? This belongs in the so-what column. Besides, where were the complaints from Halper and others in the liberal mainstream media



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

when representatives of the environmental lobby were drafting the very U.S. regulations which he now bemoans having Pruitt set aside? Consistency, it appears, is not a hallmark of the liberal agenda.

However, for Halper to quote Nancy Pelosi paraphrasing the *New York Times* on the issue of the proper role of the EPA is more than a little like the old story of the bank employee in a small manufacturing town. Every day at 4:45 p.m., he would answer the phone. The same voice would ask him the time of day and the bank employee would look at the clock over the safe and tell the man the time. This went on for months. One day he asked the mysterious caller who he was and why he called at the same time every day to get the time. The caller said he worked at the factory and had the responsibility of blowing the 5 o'clock whistle and wanted to make sure he blew it at the correct time. The bank employee laughed and told the man that the bank set its clocks by the factory whistle.

In reality, neither the bank nor the factory could know for sure that they knew the correct time. And it is certain that by vouching for each other and quoting each other in support of their ideas about the proper role of the EPA (or for that matter, the justification of its very existence), neither the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, nor Nancy Pelosi knows anything for certain, either.

— C. Mitchell Shaw



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.