



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 12, 2017

Trump: Opening of New Pennsylvania Coal Mine Is Due to “Less Regulation”

In a videotaped message played during the opening ceremony of a new coal mine in Friedens, Pennsylvania, on June 1 President Trump celebrated the opening as an example of what can be accomplished when government eliminates the regulations that have stifled the coal industry. 

“One by one, we’re eliminating the regulations that threaten your jobs, and that’s one of the big reasons you’re opening today: Less regulation,” Trump said. “We have withdrawn the United States from the horrendous Paris Climate Accord, something that would have put our country back decades and decades; we would have never allowed ourselves to be great again.”

“The war on coal is over,” the company’s chief executive, George Dethlefsen asserted. “Easing the regulatory burden, lowering taxes, stimulating infrastructure spending, balancing out the interest of economic growth versus environmental policy — it’s very good for coal.”

The Associated Press reported that the mine opening was attended by business leaders and about 200 miners whose “mining headgear lay atop red, white, and blue tablecloths labeled ‘Make Coal Great Again’ ” — a play on Trump’s 2016 campaign slogan: “make America Great Again.”

Pennsylvania’s Democratic Governor Tom Wolf, who endorsed Hillary Clinton in last year’s presidential election, said the mine was part of an effort to bring back jobs and industry to the state. Pennsylvania awarded a \$3 million grant for the project.

“We have not always capitalized on our standing as one of the world’s leaders in these resources, but we’re changing that,” Wolf said.

An article posted on the industry website Mining.com noted:

Trump made the revitalization of the U.S. coal industry — which had been targeted by the Obama Administration including tighter restrictions on coal-fired power plants — a central plank of his election campaign. He has made good on deregulating the coal industry through legislation signed in February to end the regulation protecting waterways from coal mining waste. The Surface Mining’s Stream Protection Rule enacted by Obama was resisted by coal miners.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump promised to “put our miners back to work.”

In contrast, his rival, Hillary Clinton, at a West Virginia town hall in March, pledged to “Put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business” in pursuit of transitioning America to what she described as clean, renewable energy.

One of Trump’s earliest actions after he assumed the presidency was to sign a bill on February 16 that eliminated the Obama administration’s Office of Surface Mining’s Stream Protection Rule. Two days earlier, he signed a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution undoing a financial disclosure requirement for energy companies.

At the signing, Trump called the regulation “another terrible job killing rule” and said ending it would



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save “many thousands of American jobs, especially in the mines, which, I have been promising you — the mines are a big deal.”

The Hill reported on February 16 that both the mining and financial disclosure bills were at the forefront of a Republican effort to undo a slate of regulations instituted in the closing days of the Obama administration.

An [article in *The New American* on January 26](#), shortly after the new Congress was sworn in, cited House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who explained in an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* two days earlier just how Congress is planning to roll back numerous harmful rules promulgated by the Obama administration.

McCarthy said that the Republican-majority Congress would utilize the Congressional Review Act (CRA), which was included in the “Contract With America Advancement Act of 1996.” CRA allows Congress to review, and to cancel by majority rule, new federal regulations issued by federal agencies. There’s a window of 60 “legislative” days to disapprove, which explains some of the Trump administration’s haste in pushing to repeal them. Once passed by both houses, repeals then become effective with President Trump’s signature.

Though there are plenty of targets, noted the article, McCarthy focused on just three: the Interior Department’s Stream Protection Rule impacting the coal-mining industry, new methane gas regulations that would cost up to \$1 billion and force many small energy developers out of business, and the Social Security Administration’s new rule that states that if a S.S. recipient needs a third party to manage his finances, he will be added to the gun background check list.

The New American’s Bob Adelman wrote about the use by Congress of the CRA: “[It] will be equivalent to hacking off some of the branches of the Fourth Branch’s tree, but leaves the trunk and the root intact. It’s a start, but only a start.”

Though the rollback of regulations on the coal industry and other energy industries by the Trump administration and Congress has barely started, Corsa Coal’s George Dethlefsen nevertheless said that the administration has made the mining industry more optimistic.

Photo of new coal mine in Friedens, Pa.: AP Images

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