



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 28, 2012

Behind EPA Chief Lisa Jackson's Resignation

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson has [announced](#) her resignation after four years at the EPA. Jackson's tenure was marked by controversial policies involving a number of high-profile issues including global warming, the Keystone XL pipeline, and emissions controls on coal-fired plants. And recent scrutiny over Jackson's use of an alias e-mail account has led some to believe that her resignation was inevitable.



Jackson plans to step down after the president gives January's State of the Union speech. In a prepared statement, she said, "I will leave the EPA confident the ship is sailing in the right direction, and ready in my own life for new challenges, time with my family and new opportunities to make a difference."

While Jackson does not provide a specific reason for her resignation, many analysts believe that it is a result of the never-ending controversy surrounding her policies at the EPA.

The *New York Daily News* [reports](#),

Jackson, the agency's first black administrator, constantly found herself caught between administration pledges to solve controversial environmental problems and steady resistance from Republicans and industrial groups who complained that the agency's rules destroyed jobs and made it harder for American companies to compete internationally.

Jackson played a significant role in pushing for a delay in the Keystone XL Pipeline and led the EPA to set new fuel-efficiency standards for American vehicles as well as new rules for power plants.

Under Jackson, the EPA added increases to Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards which require cars and light trucks to reach 34.5 mpg by 2016, and 54.5 mpg by 2025.

Last week, the EPA finalized changes to the Clean Air Act standards for boilers and incinerators and also updated its national air quality standards for fine particle pollution.

According to the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), these changes are examples of [EPA overreach](#) that would ultimately hurt the economy — allegations that have been made a number of times against the agency.

In 2010, the *McCook Daily Gazette* wrote of this EPA's overreach:

Over the last two years, the EPA has proposed burdensome new air and water regulations on everything from irrigation canals to methane from cows. We all know too well how these actions could negatively impact our nation's rural and agricultural economies.

Also, in 2010, the Rural America Solutions Group hosted a forum entitled, "The EPA's Assault on Rural America: How New Regulations and Proposed Legislation Are Stifling Job Creation and Economic Growth." The forum covered the unnecessary and costly regulation of crop protection tools, the proposed zero tolerance standard for pesticide spray drift, attempts to stiffen the current regulatory standard on farm dust, which would make tilling a field, operating a feedlot, or driving a farm vehicle



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nearly impossible, and the unprecedented proposed ban on the popular weed control product Atrazine. Likewise, the forum addressed a proposal by the EPA under consideration to classify lead-based ammunition and fishing tackle as “toxic substances.”

Jackson clashed often with GOP leaders over environmental policies. For example, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton said last year that Jackson would require a parking spot at the Capitol because he planned to bring her in often for questioning, and GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney had repeatedly called for her termination.

However, Fox News reports that there is more to Jackson’s resignation than anger over regulations:

A Washington attorney suing the Obama administration for access to alias emails sent by EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson claims that a recent decision by the Justice Department to release thousands of those emails next month contributed to her resigning Thursday.

Earlier this year, the Competitive Enterprise Institute sued the EPA for documents involving Jackson’s use of alias e-mail accounts, operating under the name “Richard Windsor,” which drew attention from the GOP and an audit by the EPA inspector general.

“While we understand the need for a secondary account for management and communications purposes, your choice to use a false identity remains baffling,” Republicans on the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology wrote to Jackson last week.

The EPA inspector general’s office confirmed earlier this month that it would be opening an audit into the agency’s “electronic records management practices,” and would investigate whether the EPA was encouraging the use of “private or alias email accounts to conduct official government business.”

As a result of the lawsuit, the EPA agreed to release as much as 12,000 e-mails pertaining to the CEI’s request at the rate of approximately 3,000 documents per month, a schedule approved by the court.

CEI’s Chris Horner believes it is that alias account, as well as what the released e-mails will show about the administration’s “war on coal,” that likely prompted Jackson to announce her resignation.

“She, by her action, told us that these are records she doesn’t want the people to see,” Horner stated.

Horner noted, however, that the scandal surrounding the e-mail accounts will not go away with Jackson’s resignation. The CEI reports,

She appears to have illegally evaded deliberative procedures and transparency requirements set in law — as did the federal appointees and career employees with whom she communicated through her alias email account. She must be held to account, as must those others — both to assure the peoples’ business is done in public and to send a signal to other high-level government officials this conduct cannot and will not be tolerated.

Following Jackson’s announcement of resignation, President Obama issued the following statement:

Over the last four years, Lisa Jackson has shown an unwavering commitment to the health of our families and our children. Under her leadership, the EPA has taken sensible and important steps to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink, including implementing the first national standard for harmful mercury pollution, taking important action to combat climate change under the Clean Air Act, and playing a key role in establishing historic fuel economy standards that will save the average American family thousands of dollars at the pump, while also slashing carbon pollution.



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As for Jackson's next move, the *Wall Street Journal* [indicates](#) that there is talk that she may replace Shirley Tilghman as the president of Princeton at the end of the academic year. Some talks indicate that Jackson, a New Jerseyan, may otherwise move into elective politics, challenging New Jersey Governor Chris Christie in 2013, or potentially running for the state's Senate seat.

Meanwhile, analysts are already pondering Jackson's replacement as EPA chief. The *Wall Street Journal* writes that Gina McCarthy is a leading candidate for the position. McCarthy currently serves in EPA's air regulation shop and was one of Governor Romney's environmental advisors during his tenure as Massachusetts governor.

Another consideration is Bob Perciasepe, Jackson's number two at the EPA.

Photo of EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson: AP Images



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