

Oklahoma AG Nominated As Director Of EPA

President-elect Trump's nominee for Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, has been met with praise and criticism from members of the Senate, who will be voting to confirm him soon after Trump takes office on Jan. 20.

Praise has come from both Senators from Oklahoma, Jim Inhofe and James Lankford, and numerous conservative organizations.

Opposition has been expressed by Democratic members of the Senate, including Chuck Schumer of New York, who will become Senate Minority Leader when the new Congress convenes in January.

Trump said Pruitt's nomination is a sign that the EPA's role will be reconfigured in his administration.

"For too long, the Environmental Protection Agency has spent taxpayer dollars on an out-of-control anti-energy agenda that has destroyed millions of jobs, while also undermining our incredible farmers and many other businesses and industries at every turn," Trump said.

"As my EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, the highly respected attorney general from the state of Oklahoma, will reverse this trend and restore the EPA's essential mission of keeping our air and our water clean and safe."

"I am deeply grateful and honored to serve as President-elect Trump's EPA administrator," Pruitt said. "The American people are tired of seeing billions of dollars drained from our economy due to unnecessary EPA regulations, and I intend to run this agency in a way that fosters both responsible protection of the environment and freedom for American businesses."

Pruitt has been a defender of common sense rules that protect the environment, and he has challenged the legality of overreaching regulations by federal agencies. He strongly supports states' rights.

Pruitt led the charge in 2014 against "an arrangement" between some environmental groups and bureaucrats within EPA and the Fish and Wildlife Service called "sue and settle." Environmental groups would bring a number of petitions to FWS. The law required FWS to respond within 90 days or one year depending on the circumstances. It's often impossible for FWS to respond adequately to the barrage of petitions before the deadline.

The FWS would then go to the environmental groups with an offer to settle the case without any input for other affected groups. The environmental groups collected attorneys' fees out of the federal Judgment Fund and agency budgets. In effect, the environmental groups would get what they wanted, and the federal government would pay their attorneys' fees.

If approved by the Senate, he will be a breath of fresh air at EPA.

