

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ANDREW WHEELER, HEAD OF THE EPA

Scott Pruitt, Trump's first appointee to head the Environmental Protection Agency, was forced out of office after taxpayers funded months of first-class travel for him.<sup>1</sup> But his replacement, Andrew Wheeler, is just as corrupt.

Andrew Wheeler got his start as an aide for Senator James Inhofe,<sup>2</sup> who once said on the Senate floor that the Earth couldn't possibly be getting warmer, since there was still enough snow during winter for snowball fights.<sup>3</sup> Wheeler then became a lobbyist for Murray Energy, the largest coal corporation in the country. While he was there, the company pushed hard against a rule to reduce miners' exposure to the dust that causes black lung.<sup>4</sup> Wheeler was also President of the secretive Washington Coal Club, an industry group of 300 executives, lobbyists, and lawmakers that met monthly in DC to advance a pro-coal agenda.<sup>5</sup>

## WHEELER AT THE EPA:

The very first thing he did was **loosen the rules about monitoring coal ash in groundwater**. *The Washington Post* reported that this will **save coal companies at least \$28 million a year in compliance costs**.<sup>6</sup> Then in fall 2018, Wheeler fired a panel of experts in charge of checking whether Americans' air was full of pollutants.<sup>7</sup> Later, he slashed the grants state agencies use to make sure drinking water is up to code.<sup>8</sup>

Wheeler is now pushing for **a rule to leave a third of the country's drinking water unprotected**.<sup>9</sup> That's part of his so-called Waters of the United States rule, which slashes safeguards for half of America's wetlands and a fifth of our streams and rivers. That will expose millions of Americans to polluted water in their taps. Before Wheeler was appointed, the biggest mining trade group in the country spent \$3.5 million lobbying on the Waters of the United States rule. Wheeler is fulfilling their wishes, and more: In August, Wheeler signed a new rule to make it far harder for states to push back against oil pipelines on water safety grounds.<sup>10</sup> He isn't letting science stand in the way, either -- within the agency itself, he's eliminated the top science advisor position.<sup>11</sup>

He's also done nothing about bipartisan calls to stop letting certain carcinogens pile up in our water supply.<sup>12</sup> These chemicals **have shown up in the tap water of 110 million Americans across the country**, and Wheeler's EPA has done nothing about it. The simple truth is that millions of Americans are now drinking filthier water and breathing filthier air -- so that coal companies can make a quick buck.

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