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Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt Nominated to be United States Environmental Protection Agency Administrator

Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

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Scott Pruitt, the Attorney General from our neighboring state of Oklahoma has been nominated by President-Elect Trump to be the next United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") Administrator.

Upon expected confirmation by the United States Senate, Mr. Pruitt will replace current EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy who has served in the position since 2013.

The Administrator heads EPA and is customarily provided cabinet rank by the President.

EPA was established in 1970 by President Nixon when he signed Reorganization Plan No. 3. The federal agency implements most of the federal environmental statutes such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, Resource Conservation Recovery Act, Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, etc. Standards promulgated by the agency pursuant to several of these statutes provide baseline requirements that the states implement.

Mr. Pruitt became Oklahoma Attorney General in 2011. His public service has also included serving several years in the Oklahoma Senate. Other activities have included co-ownership and managing general partner of Oklahoma City's Triple-A minor league baseball affiliate, Oklahoma City Red Hawks and a private law practice which focused on Constitutional Law.

Mr. Pruitt received his Bachelor's degree from Georgetown College and law degree from the University of Tulsa School of Law.

As Oklahoma Attorney General, Mr. Pruitt has been a part of coalitions of state attorney generals that have challenged various EPA rules. He participated in challenges to the:

- Clean Water Act Water of the United States rule
- Clean Power Plan

His office has also been an intervenor in judicial actions involving the EPA Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Clean Air Act Oil and Gas Methane rules.

Mr. Pruitt has some experience with environmental issues involving the State of Arkansas. The Attorney General has been a key participant in discussions between Oklahoma and Arkansas regarding phosphorous issues in the Illinois River.

Besides the Administrator, a number of other EPA positions must be filled by the Trump administration.

Equally important, and of special relevance to the State of Arkansas, will be the selection of the EPA Region 6 Administrator. Arkansas is in EPA Region 6. Despite Arkansas having been delegated basically every federal environmental program, the state has an ongoing relationship (and occasional conflicts) with this EPA region on a number of matters.