



# Trump Political Appointee Removes Climate Agency's Chief Scientist for Emphasizing Its Scientific Integrity Policy

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The Trump administration's assault on science, particularly climate science, is not only evident at the presidential podium, but also in the Trump administration's politicization of instruments of American government, like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In addition to hurricane warnings that pop into the public's consciousness each summer, the NOAA is among the country's top scientific agencies, providing surveys and assessments of the America's waterways, the oceans, and atmosphere. While that was not a particularly controversial line of inquiry when the agency was founded 50 years ago, that changed with the explosion of Republican-denialism as a form of public policy just as climate change was crystalizing as an existential threat. The Trump administration, however, is having none of it and, as the New York Times [reports](#), is placing political appointees within the NOAA to try to undercut the agency's scientific research and monitoring of our changing climate.

Last month, it became clear that the White House was [actively recruiting](#) climate change skeptics to install at the agency that oversees the National Climate Assessment, a sprawling interagency report issued every four years that becomes the baseline of American climate science understanding and subsequent policymaking. The New York Times [added](#) additional, maddening details this week, reporting on how the agency's chief scientist Craig McLean was ousted last month by a newly installed Trump appointee, Erik Noble. From the Times:

Mr. McLean had sent some of the new political appointees a message that asked them to acknowledge the agency's scientific integrity policy, which prohibits manipulating research or presenting ideologically driven findings. The request prompted a sharp response from Dr. Noble. "Respectfully, by what authority are you sending this to me?" he wrote, according to a person who received a copy of the exchange after it was circulated within NOAA. Mr. McLean answered that his role as acting chief scientist made him responsible for ensuring that the agency's rules on scientific integrity were followed. The following morning, Dr. Noble responded. "You no longer serve as the acting chief scientist for NOAA," he informed Mr. McLean, adding that a new chief scientist had already been appointed. "Thank you for your service."

McLean was replaced with climate science critic Ryan Maue from the libertarian Cato Institute. A new job was created—that of deputy assistant secretary—for fellow climate skeptic David Legates. According to the Times, both hires were made without consultation with the head of the agency, NOAA acting Administrator Neil Jacobs.

