



A denier, a twitter troll and a Trump campaign staffer are the three newest Trump hires for NOAA

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The first hire was David Legates, a U-Delaware professor who's been something of a low-profile denier ever since he was asked to step down from a State Climatologist role nearly a decade ago. After that, his credibility took another major hit when he co-authored (debunked) studies with Willie Soon, the denier whose extensive fossil fuel funding was revealed in 2015 in the New York Times.

After so many years of sloppy science on behalf of oil interests, and working with questionable (and corrupt) co-authors like Soon, this is quite a big step up to NOAA for Legates. It's basically the definition of "failing up."

In other undeserved promotions news, it seems the Trump team wants to install meteorologist Ryan Maue as NOAA's Chief Scientist. If, like actual climate scientist Andrew Dessler, you're wondering "who this guy is" because you "only know him as someone who says wrong things about climate on social media," don't worry, you're not missing anything.

Like Legates, Ryan Maue isn't exactly central to the organized denial network, but he has been a recurring character. The Koch-founded Cato Institute counted Maue as one of its adjunct scholars, where he worked with Pat Michaels on things like WSJ op-eds that blatantly misrepresented the science of James Hansen's early projections of warming.

Mostly though, Maue tweets. Mostly pretty maps and visualizations of weather data, but also, as one person familiar with his history explained, he "spent years pretending to be apolitical" before he "finally became a Trump cheerleader." That spirit has even gone beyond Twitter, with a piece for a pro-Trump blog that the conservative Washington Examiner eviscerated, writing, "at least the Daily Stormer is honest about its neo-Nazi intentions. American Greatness, the self-styled Trumpist journal and blog, lacks even this virtue."

As we've mentioned before, Maue also interacts with misogynist alt-right trolls like Mike Cernovich and Jack Posobiec, in now-deleted tweets. In an apparent purge of potentially embarrassing content, including his "Sharpiegate" commentary, Maue has also deleted tweets criticizing climate reporter Emily Atkin, while his tweets criticizing AOC have been featured on Tucker Carlson and The Blaze. Of course, we're not in any way saying that Maue's pattern of hostility towards women online and his palling around with a misogynist who's tweeted date rape denial are in any way related. But we also are not not saying that...

Rounding out this trifecta of totally cool hires who are definitely qualified to lead federal science efforts is Erik Noble, who has been moved from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to be NOAA's Chief of Staff. Details on him are thin, beyond the fact that he once worked at NASA's Goddard Institute, before leaving for other research projects then

joining Trump's 2016 campaign as a data analyst, after which he took a political position in NASA.

The latest hires, then, are a washed-up and disgraced former state climatologist (Legates), a young Trump loyalist with a scant research record (Noble), and an alt-right-adjacent twitter troll (Maue).

It's far from clear why the Trump administration has made these moves now, but what is clear is that it doesn't take much actual expertise to score once-coveted high level government positions...