

Trump's CEQ Appointee Hartnett-White Would Put Environment, Public Health on Dangerous Footing

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Featured image: Kathleen Hartnett-White

President Trump has nominated Kathleen Hartnett-White to lead the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). A former chair of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Hartnett-White is now affiliated with an oil industry-funded think tank in Austin.

Below is a statement by Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

“The Council on Environmental Quality has a critical role in making sure federal policy is carried out in accordance with laws that protect our health, safety and the environment. Her record and public statements place her far out of the mainstream, and raise grave doubts about her fitness for this position.

“There’s strong evidence that Kathleen Hartnett-White favors private over public interests. At the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Hartnett-White often put industry preferences ahead of public health—pushing for a lax ozone standard, approving pollution-intensive coal plants and lowballing fines for companies that violate state laws. Her work at the Texas Public Policy Foundation is funded by fossil fuel companies, creating potential conflicts of interest for her future work at CEQ.

“Most egregiously, she has been vocal in denying the science of climate change. In fact, she has said that the overwhelming acceptance of the evidence for climate change is ‘more like the dogmatic claims of ideologues and clerics than scientific conclusions,’ that renewable energy is ‘parasitic’ and ‘a false hope,’ and that carbon dioxide ‘has no adverse environmental impacts on people.’

“Nominating Hartnett-White fits a disturbing pattern of this administration: putting people at agencies with responsibilities they have questioned and in jobs they are unwilling to fulfill. Much like Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, Hartnett-White has a clear record of fighting to undermine the very laws she would be charged with overseeing.

“We have already seen the damage that officials such as Pruitt can cause when they are allowed to head agencies whose missions they oppose. We do not need yet another fox to guard the henhouse. It is time for Senators to draw the line and say no to this nominee.”

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