

Climate investor Jim Coulter calls Trump's approach to environmental policy a 'large mistake'

Private equity investor Jim Coulter, of the firm Texas Pacific Group, told a group of reporters Monday he's concerned about the rapid and sweeping changes President Trump has made to U.S. environmental policy, which in just five months includes dropping out of the Paris Climate Agreement, firing federal workers from environmental agencies and freezing funds for renewable energy projects.

"The idea that we're going to use fossil fuels 100 years from now as our primary source seems questionable to me," he said.

Coulter is executive director of the firm Texas Pacific Group, worth about \$18 billion. He started TPG's Climate Rise Fund that invests in green companies. Coulter has long defended Rise's record of environmental progress, but he said Monday that Trump "made a pretty large mistake not supporting solar and renewables earlier."

In January, Trump issued an executive order preventing federal land and water from being used for wind farms — a significant blow to the nation's largest renewable energy source, which generates about 10 percent of U.S. electricity. At the same time, Trump declared a national energy emergency, fast-tracking oil and gas projects. According to The New York Times, the fossil fuel industry contributed over [\\$75 million](#) to Trump's campaign.

"Right now, we're in this odd situation where all pieces of data show that climate change has gotten substantially worse over the last couple of years," Coulter said, "and people's perception of its importance have gone down."

According to a [report](#) from The Guardian last month, Trump launched more environmental rollbacks in his first 100 days as president this year than he did in his entire first term. He's come after electric vehicles and fired thousands of employees at offices like the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Washington Post [reported](#) Trump has also purged federal websites of references to climate change, instead replacing the term with "climate resilience."

"We're going to drill, baby, drill and do all of the things that we wanted to," Trump told his supporters after taking office.

Coulter's remarks on Monday are echoed by environmental officials and activists who have said Trump's actions have pushed the limit of presidential power.

But his concerns also mark a subtle shift from the environmental optimism he's projected. When asked about China's advances in clean energy, Coulter argued the U.S. isn't as far behind as it may seem.

He also criticized environmentalists for spewing what he called a “paradox of pessimism.” He used the same phrase in an [interview](#) with Bloomberg’s Jason Kelly last year, contrasting the concerns discussed at climate summits versus the optimism promoted at tech conferences.

Coulter started TPG Rise in 2016 with former U.S. Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson. The fund has since invested in over 85 companies, most recently acquiring Aurora Energy Research on Wednesday. The company analyzes energy markets.

“I am very worried that we're going to miss it,” Coulter said, referring to Trump’s aggressive reliance on fossil fuels. “But I'm not worried only as someone who's worried about climate change — I'm worried as a U.S. investor that we're going to miss one of the most important energy supply chain changes.”