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From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Senate confirms Rao as Trump's regulatory czar

By Alex Guillén

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The Senate today approved George Mason law professor Neomi Rao to serve as President Donald Trump's regulatory czar, giving her oversight of the government-wide effort to rein in rules.

Rao was confirmed 54-41 to be administrator of the White House Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. The post will give her broad powers to oversee regulatory issues under an administration that has decried the "administrative state." Rao will oversee most federal rulemaking, and EPA alone is working to reverse or delay dozens of Obama-era rules.

Rao, who founded the George Mason law school's Center for the Study of the Administrative State, has been with the university since 2006. Before that she spent more than a year as associate White House counsel. She clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas in 2001 and 2002.

She is a noted critic of the Chevron doctrine, which directs judges to defer to an agency's reasonable interpretation of ambiguous laws. Rao has also called for greater White House control of independent rulemaking agencies such as FERC or the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Rao earned plaudits from a bipartisan collection of former OIRA chiefs, including Obama's second-term pick, Howard Shelanski. Meanwhile, a coalition of progressive groups, including some environmental groups, opposed her nomination, saying she "holds views well outside the mainstream."

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