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From: EPA Press Office
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Coal Makes A Comeback

Trump's policies and exports to Europe are helping the industry.

Wall Street Journal

Editorial Board

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Not long ago liberals hailed the demise of coal as inevitable while the Obama Administration strangled the industry with regulation. But don't look now, Tom Steyer, because coal is showing signs of a revival and breathing economic life into West Virginia and other coal states.

Former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy proclaimed in 2015 that coal "is no longer marketable." She planned to be the lead undertaker. The Obama Administration worked tirelessly to fulfill her mission and may have succeeded had Hillary Clinton become President. "We're going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of work," the 2016 Democratic nominee famously promised.

Yet the Trump Presidency seems to have lifted animal spirits and coal. Weekly coal production has increased by 14.5% nationwide over last year with even bigger bumps in West Virginia (19%), Pennsylvania (19.7%) and Wyoming (19.8%). Exports were up 58% during the first quarter from last year. Apparently coal can be marketable if regulators let it be.

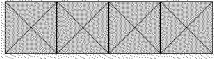
The Obama Administration first targeted coal consumption with rules on mercury emissions and ash disposal that would have made it next to impossible to build a new coal-burning power plant. Then came the 2015 Clean Power Plan that would have forced the existing fleet of coal plants into early retirement.

Finally, the Obama anti-coal warriors sought to shut down coal's export potential. Thick-seamed coal on federal land in the Powder River Basin overlying Wyoming and Montana is relatively clean-burning and inexpensive to mine. The Obama Interior Department suspended new coal leases on federal land last winter and then reassessed royalty payments—thereby reducing investment and profitability. In December came the *coup de grâce*: Interior's stream rule usurping state authority over permitting.

President Trump has called a cease fire to his predecessor's "war on coal." In February he signed a resolution repealing the stream rule under the Congressional Review Act. The Supreme Court stayed the Clean Power Plan in February 2016, and [EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt](#) is dismantling the power rule as well as the ash and mercury rules.

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