Environmental Policies During Trump's And Obama's Presidency

When Obama and his team officially launched the Clean Power Plan, there was a lot of push back and resistance from places like Oklahoma who depend deeply on coal. The Clean Power Plan was put in place to decrease the amount of carbon dioxide that was being emitted by power generators. The EPA's overall approach to the power and emissions sectors during Obama's presidency was to implement regulations and market caps for cleaner air and water.

Currently, in the Trump administration, Trump's overarching goal for this industry is to keep jobs open in sectors like the coal and power industry. Trump is much more focused on the economic and trade benefits associated with limiting regulation, rather than Obama's focus on cleaner air and water through regulation. This is seen through Trump's executive order repeal of Obama's Clean Power Plan in 2017.

There are three core approaches to agenda-setting: pluralist, elitist, and state-centric. The pluralist approach has policymaking divided amongst different arenas. Individuals who have power in a certain arena do not always have power in another arena. Also, there is a type of marketplace for the policies where multiple interests are constantly competing for influence and power. Overall, the actors have somewhat equal power and agree on the rules of the game. The elitist approach, on the other hand, does not share the common ground, equal power mentality that the pluralist approach possesses. The elitist approach focuses on a single "power elite" that dominates the policy process. Because of this, the same business, dominantly white, and upper-middle-class interests always win. Lastly, the state-centric approach focuses on pressure groups that are activated by the government and compete for time, money, and attention.

I believe that the situation with the EPA and environmental policy, in general, uses the pluralist approach in its agenda-setting methods. Like explained earlier, Obama and Trump have used vastly different methods to deal with environmental policy and regulation. But there is a similarity between the two, they both deal with several different arenas with a marketplace-like setup where the different interests are competing for influence and power. This is seen with different coal, mining, and energy companies wanting similar outcomes from the policy. With the two administrations, when the new policy initiative was implemented, the groups within these arenas responded both individually and jointly. They realized that they have a very similar level of power when it comes to influencing those in Washington who are enacting policies that affect their own agenda.

Two policy legitimation challenges that were involved with the EPA's involvement of regulation of emissions being emitted by power generators are oversight and the scarcity of resources. Oversight was extremely evident in this policy issue because of the amount of monitoring there was from different regulatory commissions. This not only puts stress on legislatures to make sure that their policies were actually being followed, but it put stress on the companies that were impacted by the regulation. In addition to this, there was a scarcity of resources when it came to the amount of clean air and water available in our country. This was the driving force that leads to this overall policy challenge. If these resources were not scarce, there would be no issue at

hand. Also, when the policy was enacted by Obama to place limitations on emissions, this created a scarce environment for jobs in the coal and energy sectors.