

EDITORIALS

Lax coal rules are a step back

Coal is a loser. And the nation knows it.

Power plants that burn coal create pollution that warms the planet and harms human health. About half of America's coal-fired plants have shut down or are slated to close, overtaken by cheaper and cleaner natural gas and renewable energy like solar and wind. The percentage of the nation's electricity produced by coal-fired plants had plummeted from 54 percent in 2000 to 24 percent as of April.

Yet the Trump administration persists in promoting coal. It moved last week to weaken regulations on coal-fired power plants by eliminating Obama-era limits on carbon emissions. President Donald Trump's plan would let states set their own standards, or none at all, and would ease rules for plants requiring upgrades, allowing them to run longer and pollute even more.

This is a profoundly bad idea. And you don't have to take our word for it. Just look at the details in the analysis done by the Environmental Protection Agency, which made the proposal.

The EPA admits that carbon emissions would rise, leading to as many as 1,400 premature deaths every year. In releasing the Obama plan in 2014, the EPA cited up to 3,600 such deaths avoided each year and emissions reductions of 32 percent. It also found the plan would significantly increase new cases of exacerbated asthma and missed school and work days. But then there's the trade-off — the \$400 million in annual compliance-cost savings for power companies — even as people in Appalachia face skyrocketing electric bills due to expensive coal-fired plants and the cost of cleaning up toxic messes after those plants close.

Lawsuits against the Trump plan are inevitable. The court battle, whatever its outcome, will mean years lost in the fight against climate change and years of people breathing dirtier air.

And coal-fired plants likely will continue to close as market forces accomplish what the Trump administration would stop resisting if it were truly interested in serving all Americans. — *The editorial board*

Before arming teachers, study shooting causes

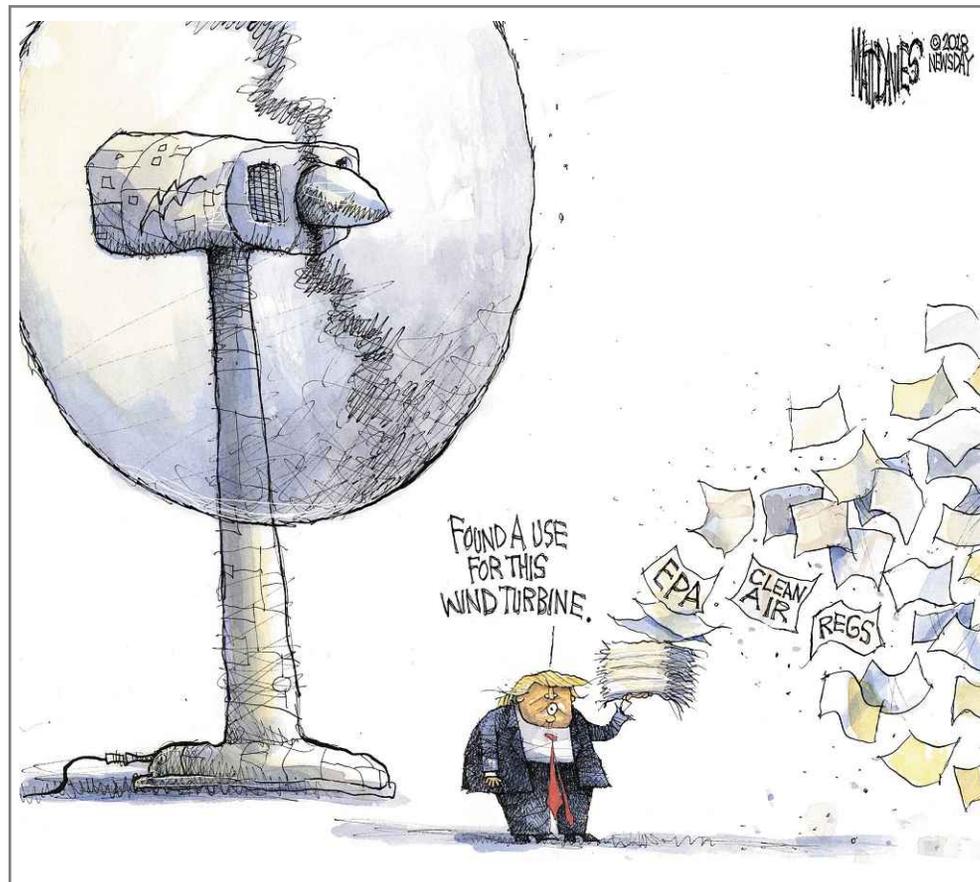
Would having the federal government buy guns to arm and train schoolteachers "improve school conditions for learning"? It doesn't seem likely, even to Congress, which specifically barred gun purchases in a school-safety bill this year that provided \$50 million to local districts. But Education Secretary Nancy DeVos is considering using that loophole in a \$1 billion academic support fund she controls to fund just such a program.

With Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and state Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia vehemently opposed, those gun funds won't be coming to New York. But there are certainly people in the state who believe training and arming teachers would make schools safer. So who's right?

Unfortunately, the NRA has successfully lobbied since 1996 to prevent the Centers for Disease Control from doing research on gun violence, so there is little data on the effect of putting guns into the hands of authorized civilians at vulnerable locations. There are nine states where teachers are allowed to be armed or have access to arms on campus. It would help to have data on how that works out. This year's federal budget gives the CDC authority to research gun violence, but cynically provides no funding.

DeVos' proposal to use federal funds to arm teachers is a purely political move. If we want to make schools safer, first use that money to study gun violence to determine what works to stop it. — *The editorial board*

MATT DAVIES



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LETTERS

Misguided plans for Bel-Aire Cove Motel

I don't think the Town of Southampton or the Hampton Bays school district should react with such great joy that the Bel-Aire Cove Motel, which houses poor families, is expected to be purchased and razed by the town and replaced with luxury condos ["Town aims to buy motel," News, Aug. 20].

Hampton Bays school board president Kevin Springer calls the place "disgusting" and affirms that children shouldn't have to live in such conditions. But I believe that with the demolition of this motel these children would be homeless, and would likely be sheltered out of his school district.

The town and the district don't appear to care about the welfare of these children. If they cared about the children and the poor, they

would build a few affordable rental units on the property.

Harry Katz,
Southold

Trump right to revoke clearance

I disagree with Opinion page writer Heidi Gilchrist, who questions President Donald Trump's decision to revoke former CIA Director John Brennan's security clearance ["Why play politics with security clearances?," Aug. 18].

Brennan is unlike any of his predecessors. They kept their opinions and biases, if any, to themselves. Brennan lost his objectivity. If there was any truth to Brennan's accusations about the 2016 election, he should have expressed them with evidence before Trump was elected. Brennan thought Hillary Clinton was going to win the election, and now he dis-

plays his partisanship and berates President Trump.

Bottom line: No objectivity, no clearance.

John Begley,
Northport

New York should outlaw pet leasing

Thank you for bringing attention to the controversial issue of pet lending in our state ["Financing your furry friend can get hairy," News, Aug. 15]. The practice is unethical for obvious reasons, but what is most upsetting is animals being treated as commodities. Welcoming an animal into your home as a pet should be a lifetime commitment, and businesses that engage in this predatory lending practice do not honor the special bond between people and their pets.

I stand with the New York State Animal Protection Federation in support of a bill