



The Daily Dish

Whither the Trump Deregulation Agenda?

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | JULY 6, 2020

Eakinomics: Whither the Trump Deregulation Agenda?

The Trump Administration deregulatory juggernaut has been a centerpiece of its economic policy. Indeed, in 2017, 2018, and 2019 the executive agencies racked up [three consecutive declines](#) in regulatory budgets. AAF's Dan Bosch, however, [documents](#) the latest data from the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) may have already passed “peak deregulation.”

Specifically, OIRA released the most recent (“spring” 2020, released on June 30) version of the semiannual [Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions](#) which outlines nearly 2,700 rulemakings expected to be the agency workload over the next year. As Bosch puts it, “What jumps out in the data is that the number of active actions that are tagged as both ‘significant’ (those with economic impacts of at least \$100 million annually or raise novel policy issues) and ‘deregulatory’ (those with net savings) are outnumbered by those tagged as both significant and ‘regulatory’ (those with net costs).”

That raises two possibilities. The first is that the administration has changed its tune and is interested in pursuing more regulation. Or, more likely, the opportunities for finding regulations with net savings must be diminishing. If so, comparing counts of significant deregulatory actions and significant regulatory actions over the past indicates that peak deregulation occurred in the spring of last year. The failure to continue reducing the regulatory burden is not an indictment of the administration's reliance on regulatory budgets. Even in an era of rising regulatory costs, the use of budgets provides the incentive to implement each rule as efficiently as possible.

In light of these facts, it will be interesting to see what role the regulatory agenda plays in the campaign platform. Will deregulation continue to be the plan? If so, in what areas and how? Or, will the president pivot to other economic policies as the centerpiece?