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**WHITE HOUSE**
**Top energy aides get to work**

Robin Bravender, E&amp;E News reporter

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Mike Catanzaro and George David Banks will be helping to shape President Trump's domestic and international energy policies. Photo by Tom Williams (Catanzaro), courtesy of LinkedIn (Banks).

Two top energy aides have started work at the White House as the Trump administration is expected to double down on its efforts to repeal Obama-era environmental policies.

Mike Catanzaro, a former lobbyist at CGCN Group, started work today as special assistant to the president for energy and environmental policy in the White House National Economic Council, according to White House spokeswoman Kelly Love.

George David Banks, formerly executive vice president at the nonprofit policy group American Council for Capital Formation, started Feb. 16 as special assistant to the president and senior director for international energy and environment, Love said.

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The new hires in the White House — who have both worked on energy issues on Capitol Hill and the executive branch — are expected to have major roles in guiding the Trump administration's energy policy ([Greenwire](#), Feb. 8).

Scott Segal, an energy lobbyist at Bracewell LLP, called it a "welcome relief" to have staffers with significant experience on energy policy starting work in the White House.

"In a general sense, the White House, I believe, would have a greater range of motion if they've got some dedicated staff to the particular issues," Segal said. "These guys in particular are very good."

Catanzaro and Banks are starting in their new roles as leaders for energy and environmental agencies are getting into place and as the White House is expected to soon roll out executive orders aimed at rolling back Obama administration environmental regulations.

U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt was sworn in Friday, and Interior secretary nominee Ryan Zinke and Energy secretary nominee Rick Perry are expected to win Senate confirmation in the coming weeks.

Observers expect to see executive orders on energy policy come as early as this week, now that key members of Trump's energy team are in place.

President Trump could start signing executive orders as early as today.

*The Washington Post* reported that two directives will likely be coming soon: one that would direct EPA to begin rewriting the Clean Power Plan and another to lift the Obama administration's moratorium on federal coal leasing. The second order would instruct EPA and

the Army Corps of Engineers to redo the so-called Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule.

Although expected, such moves would be fiercely opposed by environmentalists, Democrats and former Obama administration officials who spent years crafting those regulations.

Speculation abounds over the exact content and timing of the looming orders, but they are expected to largely reflect Trump's energy promises on the campaign trail.

Pruitt told *The Wall Street Journal* that he expects to soon withdraw WOTUS and the Clean Power Plan, which was aimed at curbing carbon emissions from power plants ([Greenwire](#), Feb. 20).

"There has been much anticipation of what direction the White House might give after the confirmation of Scott Pruitt," Segal said.

During the campaign, Trump "sounded some particular themes: energy independence, the relationship to security, regulatory reform, the relationship between affordable energy and manufacturing jobs," Segal said. "We are anticipating executive direction" on some of those themes, he added.

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