

E&E News PM

CEQ's No. 2 official heads for the exit

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The second in command at the White House Council on Environmental Quality is leaving the administration at the end of the month to join a Washington, D.C., law firm.

CEQ Deputy Director and General Counsel Gary Guzy will move to Covington & Burling LLP next year, the firm announced today.

Guzy's exit is the latest in a series of departures by White House environmental officials in recent months. Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Heather Zichal left the administration last month, and CEQ chief Nancy Sutley will move on in February.

Guzy was seen as a top candidate to lead CEQ after Sutley's departure. White House watchers expect a low-profile administration insider to get the job ([Greenwire](#), Dec. 4).

It is unclear who is up for the post now that Guzy is leaving. Currently, the third in line at CEQ is Chief of Staff Michael Boots.

Guzy has worked at CEQ since September 2009 and is credited with negotiating the administration's landmark fuel economy standards. During the Clinton administration, Guzy served as U.S. EPA's general counsel. Before that, he had several roles in the administration, including as a senior attorney at the Department of Justice.

He also has worked in the private sector and said he hopes to bring that experience to Covington.

"When companies face an environmental crisis, they need help from those who -- in addition to having a deep understanding of the issues -- also can work closely with regulators and environmental groups," Guzy said in a statement. "They increasingly need someone who will not simply run interference, but who will work to develop creative win-win public policy solutions, understanding the business dimensions of their challenges as well."

At Covington, Guzy will join E. Donald Elliott, an EPA general counsel from President George H.W. Bush's administration.

Environmental groups praised Guzy's work at the White House and, in particular, his work on the fuel standards.

"Gary Guzy has done a fabulous job as deputy director of the Council on Environmental Quality and will be sorely missed," said Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Campaign. "Gary won the trust and respect of auto companies and environmentalists alike -- no mean feat -- in the negotiations that produced the biggest single step any nation has taken to reduce global warming pollution and oil use."

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