



Lisa Jackson can expect to be chained to a witness chair if the GOP wins either chamber.

## **EPA in the crosshairs**

By ROBIN BRAVENDER | 10/19/10 07:09 PM EDT | Updated 10/20/10 06:36 PM EDT

Congressional Republicans planning an assault on the Obama administration's environmental record aim to turn Lisa Jackson into public enemy No. 1.

On the campaign trail, Republicans have adopted the Environmental Protection Agency as a favorite symbol of the White House's regulatory overreach. And behind the scenes in Washington, GOP staffers and K Street lobbyists who say they've been dissed by the EPA administrator are looking forward to getting some revenge.

Like other senior administration officials, Jackson can expect to be chained to a witness chair on

Capitol Hill if Republicans win either chamber. There, they hope to make her defend policies the GOP contends are unpopular and anti-business.

“I think she’ll be very much in demand on the Hill, at times not of her choosing,” said a former staffer on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. “It will diminish her free time, shall we say.”

With Democrats holding the reins in Congress, and White House energy and climate adviser Carol Browner taking many of the arrows from the GOP, Jackson has had enough of a political buffer zone to issue some of the strictest environmental rules in history. Republicans have decried the EPA at each step along the way but have been unable to do much about it.

Some of the animosity is personal: Republicans in both chambers and K Street attorneys say Jackson and her staff are too dismissive of opposing views and other stakeholders.

“When we write a letter to them, we’ll get a form letter back,” said a Republican aide. “We have seen no real indication that they hear or understand our concerns. She’s loyal to the White House, and beyond that, they’re just totally in sync with the view that we need a lot more regulations.”

Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas), ranking member of the energy committee, said Jackson isn’t “rude or uncivil” but appears to be “on some sort of a mission, come heck or high water.”

“Mrs. Jackson does not appear to be overly concerned about a cooperative relationship with the Congress or, at least, with the minority members of the Energy and Commerce Committee,” Barton told POLITICO.

Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) complained earlier this year after a contentious meeting with Jackson over coal mining. Jackson told her that “the EPA is not required, and they do not consider, jobs or economic impact when evaluating permits,” Capito told the Charleston Daily Mail.

“We had a good give and take. It wasn’t adversarial,” Capito said. “But there was no door opening where she said she might consider something. There was no door opening for me to say, ‘Are you open to some change? Maybe you could come down to the coal fields.’ I kept trying to, but there wasn’t that possibility.”

The showdown on Capitol Hill could be reminiscent of 1995, when Republicans reclaimed both chambers of Congress in the middle of President Bill Clinton’s first term.

“The impact on EPA was significant,” said a former agency official who worked under then-Administrator Browner. “There was more oversight, and it was more intense.”

Republicans will try to use hearings to discredit the administration and the EPA, that person said. "It can have its nastier side."

Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), the favorite to chair the Energy and Commerce Committee if Democrats lose the House, hopes to investigate the Obama administration's "poisonous regulations" and the role of policy "czars" in the White House, including energy adviser Browner.