

# ENVIRONMENTAL BUSINESS JOURNAL®

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EBJ Industry Outlook 2025

Environmental Business International Inc.

## OPTIMISM STILL TRUMPS 'TRUMP UNCERTAINTY' IN 2025 OUTLOOK

*Government Downsizing and Trade Deal Posturing Raise Fears of a Recession, But Most Companies Feel Confidence in Their Backlog*

At the end of the first quarter of 2025, 160 executives gathered in San Diego for the 23rd annual Environmental Industry Summit to share perspective on industry trends, and to make sense and build consensus on where the environmental industry was headed in the wake of the unpredictable first few months of the Trump Administration.

While there was not universal agreement with the provocative statement that 'it doesn't really matter to the environmental industry who is president', there was consensus that whether a Democratic or a Republican administration is in the White House, the environmental industry would be resilient enough to identify ample areas of the market with growing demand for its service areas, as well as client sectors ascendant depending on the economic and regulatory conditions presented by the direction of federal policy.

In simple terms, during Democratic or progressive environmental policymaking of a government-favoring administration, new regulations and new financial incentives for environmental improvement or emissions reduction or natural resource preservation or climate change mitigation or adaptation initiatives would create growing demand for environmental engineering, consulting, project management and technology deployment services.

During a more conservative or Republican administration where environmental policy is under emphasized or under funded, the expectation would be that many

markets and sectors of the economy would increase investment, leading to more work for those in planning, permitting, design, engineering and project management, as well as the ancillary services related to resource extraction, production and waste management.

So few environmental industry executives bemoan the arrival of the Trump II Administration with a doom-and-gloom outlook for the future of their business. Many acknowledge the setback of some of their directly funded federal work, and others, the anti-regulatory and anti-

climate change rhetoric coming out of administration spokespeople, but acknowledge the recurring need to pivot to new markets and new service areas with each cycle incoming administrations at the city, county, state or federal level that the environmental industry has become familiar with over 50 years or more,

### TEMPERED OPTIMISM

Also in the first quarter of 2025, EBJ conducted two surveys of environmental industry executives to assess recent and short term forecasts for growth, the impact

## Inside EBJ: Industry Outlook 2025

<b>EBJ's Environmental Industry Outlook 2025</b> takes on the Trump transition head on addressing challenges, uncertainties and opportunities brewing for the environmental industry in 2025-2026. EBJ annual survey results show the changing tides of market drivers and ascendant client sectors, and focus on how companies have modified their strategy, and adjusted their forecasts based on the early days. Long-term scenarios for the energy transition and current AI deployment are also the subject of survey questions and executive commentary .....	1-11
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Average Impact of the Trump Administration on Environmental Company Forecasts

Pre Inauguration	-0.4%
After 1st Month in Office	-4.8%

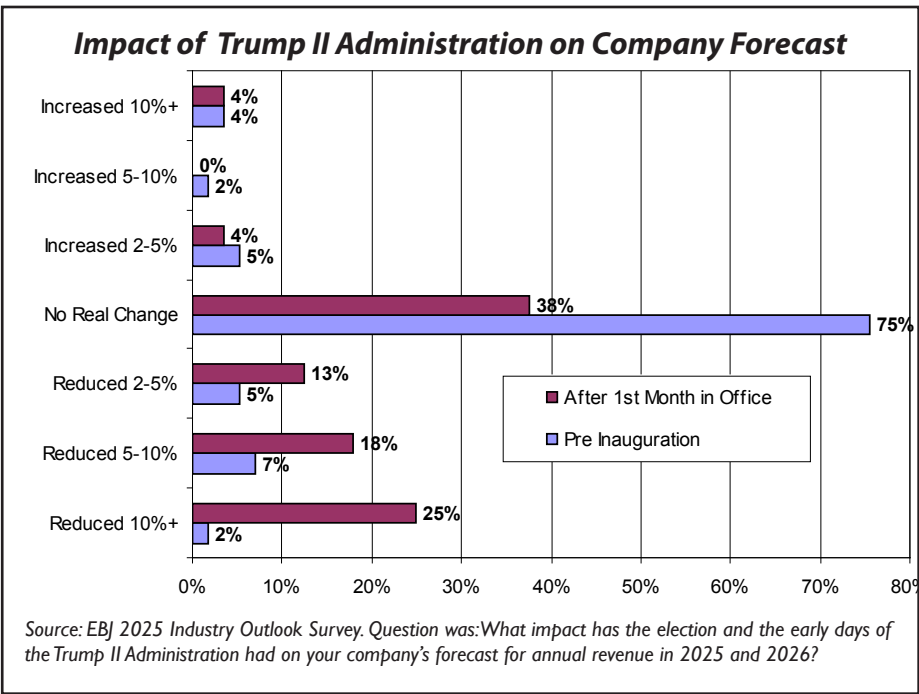
Source: EBJ 2025 Industry Outlook Survey. Question was:What impact has the election and the early days of the Trump II Administration had on your company's forecast for annual revenue in 2025 and 2026?

of the Trump Administration on forecasts and market drivers, various trends across client and geographic markets, 'MAGA Markets' or particular areas to focus short-term growth initiatives, and long-term scenarios on the energy transition.

Respondent sets were predominantly environmental service firms, the majority being consulting engineers, and numbered over 60 respondents in early January and 110 respondents in March. There was a notable decrease in forecasted growth rates in March compared to January, Both in comparing the two survey sets, as well as a direct question in the March survey. While many executives have been taken aback by the 'shock-and-awe' strategy of DOGE and tariff threats (and the shock may have worn off a bit by Q2), many companies did adjust their forecast after the first 30 days in office. As the chart illustrates, companies that reduced their forecasted growth from pre-inauguration to after the first month in office went from 14% to 56%, and whereas 75% said the new administration had no impact on their forecast post-election only 38% said so after the first 30 days. But even with some diminished prospects, and don't forget some new opportunities in energy and expedited permitting, overall the industry forecasts continued growth.

A measure of the current tempered optimism can be found in annual growth reported and forecasted by each year's EBJ survey respondents. The table on page 3 illustrates that whereas the most recent year of growth for the last two years was 8% and 8.1%, the forecast for the current year's growth was 7% and is 5.6% in 2025, an almost 1.5 point reduction from the same time in 2024.

continued on page 6



Key factors that impact your forecast

- 2021 and 2022 we suffered from covid; Continued development in Massachusetts;
  - Forecast reflects increased billing rates. reflecting higher multiplier and improvement in utilization rates; Housing starts and interest rates
  - Income when projects come on line; Infrastructure investment increase
  - Negative impacts to the bipartisan infrastructure law and the pulling of federal grant funding.
- New managment since 2021 has changed the company trajectory; New PE partner and focus on internal activities to facilitate growth over next 4-5 years; New product lines and increased BD investment; Pace of economic development;
  - Reduced 2025 projections based on uncertainty of funding for some of our projects; Uncertainty of government funding for public projects;
  - Volatile client industry with players expanding and contracting rapidly.

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## EBI WEBINAR ON MAGA MARKETS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRY

*EBJ's March 21, 2025 live webinar addressed the subject of MAGA Markets or what client and service sectors are expected to benefit during the Trump II Administration in the environmental and energy industries. The panelists were:*

**Grant Ferrier: Founder and editor of Environmental Business Journal (EBJ)** leads industry research and moderates discussions on strategic business and policy trends in the environmental industry.

**Phil Brilliant: Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP)** based in New Jersey with 37 years in site cleanup, environmental consulting, and redevelopment.

**Jack Maserejian: SVP at Envirocon**, a Washington Group company, overseeing corporate strategy, sales, and BD. Brings 35+ years of experience in environmental contracting, including sediment dredging, heavy remediation, and federal contracting.

**Andy Paterson: Senior analyst at EBI.** Tracks infrastructure, energy policy, and market dynamics in renewables, permitting, and utilities; Facilitates DOE loan guarantees.

### Opening Q&A With Phil Brilliant

Phil Brilliant is the founder and principal of **Brilliant Environmental Services**, based in Toms River, New Jersey. With 37 years of experience in environmental due diligence, site investigation, and remediation, Phil is a Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) under New Jersey's privatized remediation program. He has worked across the tri-state area and is widely regarded for his practical insights into the intersection of environmental science, real estate, and policy.

**EBJ: Phil, let's start with your firm. What services does Brilliant Environmental provide, and in what geographies do you operate?**

Phil Brilliant: We specialize strictly in site remediation consulting—from environmental due diligence to site investigation, cleanup, and regulatory closure. We're based in Toms River, New Jersey, but also operate in New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. Our work is focused on helping clients manage contaminated properties, often in urban areas or properties with redevelopment potential.

**EBJ: You've been in this business for 37 years. What's changed the most?**

Phil: Honestly, I thought I'd only been doing this for 17 years until my bones told

me otherwise! One of the biggest changes has been New Jersey's privatization of remediation oversight. Since 2009, the state has used Licensed Site Remediation Professionals (LSRPs)—individuals, not agencies—to oversee and sign off on cleanups. It gives firms like mine more responsibility and authority, but also more liability.

**EBJ: How would you describe the current remediation climate in New Jersey?**

Phil: Challenging. New Jersey is a health-based standard state, meaning we don't do risk-based remediation like some others. That makes cleanup more expensive and time-consuming—especially in urban areas with dense historical contamination. The NJDEP is under a hiring freeze, and while demand for cleanup is steady, the bureaucracy is slow, and the permitting process is a bottleneck for redevelopment.

**EBJ: What is your view on the potential for deregulation under the current federal administration? Could that help or hurt the remediation business?**

Phil: It's a double-edged sword. On one hand, easing permitting timelines for air, water, or remedial actions could accelerate economic development, especially on brownfield sites. On the other hand, state-level capacity is shrinking. If the federal government reduces oversight but the state can't keep up due to staffing or

budget constraints, we may not see much improvement on the ground.

**EBJ: What are some examples of projects that could benefit from reduced permitting timelines?**

Phil: Affordable housing projects on brownfields are a big one. These often take years to move forward because of environmental reviews. If DEP or HUD funding could move faster, and if permitting were more predictable, you'd see an uptick in urban redevelopment. But New Jersey, like other states, has strict rules that sometimes exceed federal guidance—even though there's a law on the books saying they can't.

**EBJ: Is PFAS still a priority in New Jersey?**

Phil: Absolutely. New Jersey has been a national leader in PFAS regulation. The standards are in the parts per trillion, and we've seen proposed rules for GenX and other emerging contaminants just in the past few months. The state is constantly rolling out new detection and reporting requirements, many of which are ahead of what the EPA is doing. It's not uncommon for it to take two years before labs can even detect at the state-required levels.

**EBJ: Are those PFAS rules likely to be affected by federal changes under the Trump administration?**

Phil: Not in the short term. PFAS is a state-driven market right now. New Jersey isn't waiting on EPA—if anything, they're moving faster. But federal funding could be a pressure point. If EPA cuts off funding to states that don't align with federal policy, that could chill state-level enforcement. So while we're mostly shielded today, the future could look different.

**EBJ: What impact do you think PFAS policy will have on developers?**

Phil: If the new proposed reporting rules go through, it will create a chilling effect on development. Under these rules, anyone discovering contamination—not just the owner—would be required to report it. That could spook lenders and developers, especially in areas targeted for affordable housing or urban renewal. It's an example of how well-intentioned environ-



mental policy can conflict with redevelopment goals.

**EBJ: More broadly, how do you see the market for remediation work in the Mid-Atlantic?**

Phil: There's a huge inventory of sites—tens of thousands of potential brownfields just in the Mid-Atlantic region. States like New Jersey have invested heavily in open space preservation, so if you want to build, you need to build on brownfields. Site cleanup is an economic development issue, and if regulators can move faster and coordinate better with federal programs, we could unlock a lot of redevelopment potential.

**EBJ: So, despite all the challenges, remediation is still a growth industry?**

Phil: Yes—but it's driven by liability, not enthusiasm. Most of our clients don't want to do the work—they have to do it. So anything that makes that process clearer, faster, or cheaper will drive growth. At the same time, emerging contaminants like PFAS and tightened reporting obligations will create new work, whether people want it or not. That's both the opportunity and the burden in this business.

**Opening Q&A with Jack Maserejian**

Jack Maserejian is Senior Vice President at Envirocon, responsible for corporate strategy, business development, marketing, and proposal development. With over 35 years in the environmental industry, Jack has held leadership roles on both the contracting and consulting sides of the industry. He rejoined Envirocon two years ago after five years in environmental consulting and previously spent seven years with the company in various executive positions. Envirocon is a national remediation and environmental construction firm and part of the Washington Companies group.

**EBJ: Jack, can you give us a quick overview of Envirocon and your focus areas?**

Jack Maserejian: Envirocon is a heavy remediation contractor providing services nationwide, including sediment dredging, earthmoving, industrial demolition, and ecological restoration. We're 85% focused on private-sector clients, with the remain-

ing 15% serving EPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and limited federal markets. I oversee strategy, sales, and development, and work closely with clients across energy, manufacturing, and infrastructure.

**EBJ: Has the political shift in Washington over the past 60 days had any impact on your business strategy?**

Jack: Not significantly—construction demand remains strong. A big part of that is the lingering impact of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the general optimism around domestic industrial expansion. Whether it's manufacturing reshoring, AI-driven data center development, or aerospace and automotive growth, we see a strong project pipeline in both commercial and public infrastructure sectors.

**EBJ: Where do you see the most opportunity in the next 12–18 months?**

Jack: We expect continued momentum across multiple sectors:

- Energy and petrochemical redevelopment
- Manufacturing expansions
- Brownfield-to-industrial redevelopments
- Dredging and sediment cleanup for legacy liability management

As these sectors grow, environmental services—especially remediation—become embedded in the construction and redevelopment cycle.

**EBJ: How would you describe the current federal funding landscape?**

Jack: The first wave of federal infrastructure funding is still flowing, and projects already funded are moving forward. We're currently tracking and bidding on multiple federally funded projects. However, new funding appears to be slowing, with a potential shift in federal dollars from EPA and USACE to other departments like the Department of Defense (DoD).

For example, a \$13 billion increase in DoD spending could translate into more environmental and construction work—but EPA and Corps may lose jurisdiction

and funding in areas like Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS), especially following the Sackett v. EPA Supreme Court decision.

**EBJ: So what does that mean for remediation contractors?**

Jack: It depends. With deregulation, some clients may hit pause on voluntary cleanups, especially if they face cash flow issues. But others—particularly public companies or firms preparing for M&A—may view this as a strategic window to resolve legacy liabilities at a lower cost. So it's not a downturn—it's a reshuffling. Who spends and why may change, but remediation remains a critical enabling service in redevelopment and permitting.

**EBJ: What are you hearing from clients on commercial development?**

Jack: Some clients are bullish, especially in manufacturing and logistics. Site readiness is a big issue—whether brownfields or underused industrial land—and all that involves remediation, environmental permitting, and compliance support. On the visual and political side, cleanups aren't "sexy" on their own. But when they result in new developments, like mixed-use campuses or modern industrial parks, they become powerful photo ops and political wins. That drives public-private collaboration in many markets.

**EBJ: Any final thoughts on the market outlook for 2025 and beyond?**

Jack: I think we'll continue to see robust demand in the environmental contracting space. The real story will be in how funding is distributed, how regulations evolve, and how strategic clients respond. Some will pull back. Others will seize the moment to clean up and redevelop. Our role is to be ready for both.

**Panel Q&A Summary**

Summary of the discussion between the four main participants—Grant Ferrier (moderator, EBI), Phil Brilliant (Brilliant Environmental), Jack Maserejian (Envirocon), and Andy Paterson (EBI)—focused on how the environmental and remediation industries are reacting to the Trump 2.0 administration, the implications for MAGA policy on energy, infrastructure,

and environmental markets.

**EBJ: How has the new administration affected your near-term forecast?**

Phil: Early days were uncertain; environmental policy wasn't initially prioritized. Many clients are reactive—compliance-driven, not voluntarily proactive. Economic development may eventually drive more work.

Jack: Envirocon hasn't changed forecasts. Private sector remains steady. Federal infrastructure money is still flowing, but new funds are unlikely. Confidence remains high; most contractors are still planning to grow staff.

Grant: EBJ survey showed ~25% of companies reduced their forecast by 5–25% from pre-inauguration to after the first 30 days in office, but that may have been short-term reaction to the early days of DOGE.

**EBJ: What sectors do you see rising or falling under MAGA policy?**

Andy: Offshore wind is falling fast. Focus shifting to onshore renewables, hydro repowering, and domestic energy production (LNG, pipelines). Expect rollback in offshore renewables and more drilling.

Jack: I was surprised mining wasn't listed higher in EBJ's MAGA Markets list—it will boom under deregulation (especially copper, much needed for grid upgrades).

Phil: New Jersey's aggressive PFAS rules continue regardless of federal deregulation. State enforcement is still strong.

Grant: EV mandates (like New Jersey's 2030 rule) may be weakened if federal push lessens and gas prices drop.

**EBJ: What impact do you expect on remediation markets and client behavior?**

Phil: Cleanup isn't recession-proof—clients clean up only when they must. Lower enforcement may cause delays.

Jack: Split response. Some clients will delay remediation under deregulation; others will expedite cleanup to lower long-term liabilities or prepare for M&A.

**EBJ: Any comment on energy policy and our history of 'all of the above'?**

Andy: The new line is “All of the below” as energy resource development will rise—coal, gas, nuclear, fracking. Some new growth areas include geothermal and SMRs (small modular reactors).

**EBJ: What happens to federal programs like FEMA and EPA enforcement?**

Jack: Disaster response will remain necessary. Industry (e.g., Clean Harbors) is prepared, but red tape must be reduced.

Phil: FEMA in New Jersey post-Sandy was ineffective. The AG's office is pushing aggressive NRD cases, but that could change with political shifts.

Andy: Insurance pressure (e.g., in California and Florida) will escalate disaster response needs, even if Feds pull back. Expect a shift in how climate adaptation is funded—more municipal climate bonds or PPPs.

**EBJ: What's the outlook for oil, gas, and energy dominance?**

Andy: Predicts the US may join OPEC+ to maintain global influence. Trump may push prices lower to support consumers.

Jack: Lower oil prices hurt producers—expect pivot back to renewables if profits fall. Major oil companies may continue to rebrand or rebalance toward “energy” not just fossil fuels.

Phil: Refinery expansion in NJ unlikely due to space limits and strict environmental justice laws—but political shifts could influence this.

**BJ: What's the future of permitting and NEPA under MAGA?**

Andy: Calls for industry to define the “New NEPA.” Time-to-permit is a business priority. Suggests writing white papers to proactively shape reforms.

Grant: Skeptical of industry influence, noting past difficulty getting government attention on the balanced perspective of what should be the constituency of the environmental industry, despite the industry's size and employment numbers.

**EBJ: Final thoughts on climate adaptation and infrastructure planning?**

Andy: Cities and ports may lead with their own climate adaptation bonds (e.g., Massport). Utilities are planning for reliability with more distributed power and AI/data center loads.

Jack: Look out for 'brownfields to data centers' opportunities.

Phil: Local officials prioritize economic development and tax revenue. Climate resilience will only happen if aligned with economic goals. ▣

**EBJ's MAGA Markets List**

**WINNERS**

- Fossil Energy development
- Fracking and LNG exports
- Hybrid vehicle manufacturing/supply
- Micro-grids. Transmission upgrades; Permitting work for expansion of manufacturing; NEPA reform and the need for speed
- High priority infrastructure – could be water projects, if “critical”
- Federal lands projects... Drill!
- Data Centers & AI: Energy & Water
- Nuclear SMRs for Data Centers and Industrial Applications
- More CO2 emissions means more urban adaptation and coastal resilience

**LOSERS**

- Off-shore wind (Trump ban)
- Mandated EVs, charging stations
- US AID funding (shut down)
- Imports suffering tariffs; China PVs
- Blue “Sanctuary Cities” & states
- Arguments loom over IRA 2022 funding and renewables
- Fuel cells & Hydrogen Hubs: methane is cheap
- Migration dependent functions
- Department of Education
- Anything ‘climate change’ or DEI

Source: EBJ's March 2025 webinar MAGA Markets in the Environmental Industry