

Obama names New Orleans native to lead EPA

by The Associated Press

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CHICAGO -- President-elect Barack Obama today picked a New Orleans native to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

Lisa Jackson, who will be the first black person to lead the EPA, is a former New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection commissioner who worked at the federal agency for 16 years. Jackson is a co-chair of Obama's EPA transition team, and currently serves as chief of staff to New Jersey Gov. Jon S. Corzine.



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Former New Orleans resident and Tulane University graduate Lisa Jackson is nominated Environmental Protection Agency administrator by President-elect Barack Obama

Jackson grew up in the Lower 9th Ward. She holds chemical engineering degrees from Tulane University and Princeton University.

Jackson would take the helm at the agency at a time of record-low morale and when it is still grappling with how to respond to a 2007 Supreme Court decision that said it could regulate the greenhouse gases blamed for global warming.

Jackson also has her detractors.

A small but vocal contingent of environmental advocacy groups asked Obama to drop her as a candidate.

Obama also selected Nobel-prize winning physicist Steven Chu as energy secretary and Carol Browner, a confidant of former vice president Al Gore, to lead a White House council on energy and climate. Browner headed the Environmental Protection Agency in the Clinton administration.

Chu is director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and is an leading advocate of reducing greenhouse gases by developing new energy sources.