

## Trump likely to target climate measures that are making the most difference



Wind turbines are silhouetted against the setting sun at the Spearville Wind Farm, Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024, near Spearville, Kan. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel)

BY JENNIFER MCDERMOTT AND MATTHEW DALY

Updated 7:42 AM GMT+13, November 7, 2024

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The election of Donald Trump as president for a second time and the Republican takeback of the U.S. Senate could undo many of the national climate policies that are most reducing planet-

warming greenhouse gas emissions, according to climate solutions experts.

When they list measures that are making the most difference, it lines up with policies and agencies Trump has said he'll target: President Joe Biden's landmark climate law, which is funneling money to energy measures that combat climate change, plus rules issued by the Environmental Protection Agency to limit leaks of the powerful climate pollutant methane, pollution from coal-fired power plants, and tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks.

The changes come as more lives are being lost in heat waves, record amounts of climate pollution are accumulating in the atmosphere, the United States has been hit with what may be two of the most expensive hurricanes on record and nations, who will meet in Baku, Azerbaijan next week for climate negotiations, have failed to take strong action to change these realities.

Trump, who has cast climate change as a "hoax," withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement during his first term. He has vowed to do so again, calling the global plan to reduce carbon

emissions unenforceable and a gift to China and other big polluters. Trump also vows to end subsidies for wind power that were included in the landmark 2022 climate law. He has said he will eliminate regulations by the Biden administration to increase the energy efficiency of lightbulbs, stoves, dishwashers and shower heads.

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Trump has summed up his energy policy as “drill, baby, drill” and pledged to dismantle what he calls Democrats’ “green new scam” in favor of boosting production of fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas and coal, the main causes of climate change.

Dan Jasper, a senior policy advisor at Project Drawdown, said he also expects to see “significant rollbacks of climate policy at the national level,” but that climate action will continue to move forward at the state and local level. And, he said, repealing parts of the climate law could backfire because most of the investments and jobs are in Republican congressional districts. These were expected to reduce U.S. emissions by about 40% by 2030, if the law was enacted as planned in the coming years.

In a call Wednesday morning, Scott Segal, head of a communications group at the law firm Bracewell LLP, which represents the energy industry, said the climate law is not likely to be repealed.

If Trump does target the climate law, there are provisions that are likely safe. One is a credit given to companies in advanced manufacturing, because it is perceived as “America first and pro-U.S. business,” said David Shephard, partner and energy expert at the global consultant Baringa. These policies will likely

survive even the most extreme shift in climate policy, he added.

Far more vulnerable is a rule from the EPA, announced in April, that would force many coal-fired power plants to capture 90% of their carbon emissions or shut down within eight years, Shepherd said. The EPA analysis projected it would reduce roughly 1.38 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide through 2047, along with tens of thousands of tons of other harmful air pollutants.

Under a Trump presidency, it is unlikely to survive, Shepherd said.

### **What to know about the 2024 election:**

- **The latest:** Kamala Harris is expected to deliver a concession speech Wednesday after Donald Trump's election victory.
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Trump's victory means the Justice Department is unlikely to defend EPA rules restricting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and oil rigs. Industry groups and Republican-controlled states have filed legal challenges to a host of EPA rules.

While it is unclear who will head the EPA under Trump, the agency is considered likely to begin a lengthy process to repeal and replace a host of standards imposed by Biden with looser regulations, including one for tailpipe emissions that Trump falsely calls an electric vehicle "mandate." Trump rolled back more than 100 environmental laws as president and that number is likely to grow in a second term.

Trump is almost certain to reinstate drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, continuing a partisan battle that has persisted for decades. Biden and other Democratic presidents have blocked drilling in the sprawling refuge, which is home to polar bears, caribou

and other wildlife. Trump reinstated the drilling program in a 2017 tax cut law enacted by congressional Republicans. Even so, no drilling has occurred in the refuge.

“Elections have consequences. And in the immediate term, we’re going to see a host of programmatic impacts on climate,” Zara Ahmed, who leads policy analysis and science strategy at Carbon Direct, said Wednesday.

She predicted a rollback of proposed and existing regulations, a retreat from U.S. leadership on climate including withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and changes to the Inflation Reduction Act.

Ahmed added that while there may be an abdication of leadership at the federal level on climate, she’s optimistic that states including California continue to lead on setting standards, pushing for disclosure of emissions and driving decarbonization.

Clean Air Task Force Executive Director Armond Cohen agreed on Wednesday that states, cities, utilities and businesses that have committed to net zero emissions will keep working toward those goals, which will continue to drive record installations of wind and solar

energy. Governors of both parties are also interested in ramping up nuclear energy as a carbon-free source of electricity, Cohen said.

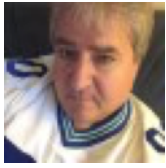
Trump has said he too is interested in developing the next generation of nuclear reactors that are smaller than traditional reactors.

Gina McCarthy, a former EPA administrator who was Biden's first national climate adviser, said Trump will be unable to stop clean energy such as wind, solar and geothermal power.

"No matter what Trump may say, the shift to clean energy is unstoppable and our country is not turning back," McCarthy said. Advocates for clean energy are bipartisan, well-organized "and fully prepared to deliver climate solutions, boost local economies, and drive climate ambition," she said. "We cannot and will not let Trump stand in the way of giving our kids and grandkids the freedom to grow up in safer and healthier communities."

**Trump has vowed to kill US offshore wind projects. Will he succeed?**





BY WAYNE PARRY

Updated 6:13 PM GMT+13, November 10, 2024

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ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Opponents of offshore wind energy projects expect President-elect Donald Trump to kill an industry he has vowed to end on the first day he returns to the White House.

But it might not be that easy.

Many of the largest offshore wind companies put a brave face on the election results, pledging to work with Trump and Congress to build power projects and ignoring the incoming president's oft-stated hostility to them.

In campaign appearances, Trump railed against offshore wind and promised to sign an executive order to block such projects.

“We are going to make sure that that ends on Day 1,” Trump said in a May speech. “I’m going to write it out in an executive order. It’s going to end on Day 1.”

“They destroy everything, they’re horrible, the most expensive energy there is,” Trump said. “They ruin the environment, they kill the birds, they kill the whales.”

Numerous federal and state scientific agencies say there is no evidence linking offshore wind preparation to a spate of whale deaths along the U.S. East Coast in recent years. Turbines have been known to kill shorebirds, but the industry and regulators say there are policies to mitigate harm to the environment.

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**Offshore wind industry says 'misinformation' from foes is a strong headwind it must fight**



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## **New Jersey offshore wind farm clears big federal hurdle amid environmental concerns**

Trump has railed against offshore wind turbines spoiling the view from a golf course he owns in Scotland. But numerous environmental groups say the real reason he opposes offshore wind is his support for the fossil fuel industry.

There is almost 65 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity under development in the U.S., enough to power more than 26 million homes, and some turbines are already

spinning in several states, according to the American Clean Power Association.

Currently operating projects include the Block Island Wind Farm in Rhode Island, the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind pilot project and the South Fork Wind Farm about 35 miles (56 kilometers) east of Montauk Point on New York's Long Island.

Trump is unlikely to end those projects but might have more leverage over ones still in the planning stage, those in the debate say.

Bob Stern, who headed an office in the U.S. Energy Department responsible for environmental protection during the Ford, Carter and Reagan administrations, said Trump can get Congress to reduce or eliminate tax credits for offshore wind that were granted in the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act. Those credits are an integral part of the finances of many offshore wind projects.

Stern, who leads the New Jersey anti-offshore wind group Save LBI, said Trump also could issue executive orders prohibiting further offshore leases and rescinding approval for ones already approved while pushing

Congress to amend federal laws granting more protection for marine mammals.

The president-elect also can appoint leaders of agencies involved in offshore wind regulation who would be hostile to it or less supportive.

Opponents of offshore wind, many of them Republicans, were giddy following the election, saying they fully expect Trump to put an end to the industry.

“I believe this is a tipping point for the offshore wind industry in America,” said Robin Shaffer, president of Protect Our Coast NJ, one of the most vocal groups opposing offshore wind on the East Coast. “They have been given a glidepath by Democrat-run administrations at the federal and state level for many years. For this industry, (Tuesday’s) results will bring headwinds far greater than they have faced previously.”

But Tina Zappile, director of the Hughes Center for Public Policy at New Jersey’s Stockton University, noted that in 2018, Trump Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke voiced strong support for offshore wind. And even though the president-elect has bashed the technology, she predicted he won’t just make it go away.

“Offshore wind might appear to be on the chopping block — Trump’s explicitly said this was something he’d fix on the first day — but when the economics of offshore wind are in alignment with his overall strategies of returning manufacturing to America and becoming energy-independent, his administration is likely to back away slowly from this claim,” she said in an interview. “Offshore wind may be temporarily hampered, but its long-term prospects in the U.S. are unlikely to be hurt.”

Commercial fishermen in Maine said they hope the Trump administration will undo policies designed to help build and approve offshore wind projects, saying regulators attempted to “future-proof” the industry against political change. Jerry Leeman, CEO of the New England Fishermen’s Stewardship Association, called on Trump to reverse a commitment to deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030.

The offshore wind industry is taking an optimistic stance, pledging to work with Trump his political allies. National and New Jersey wind industry groups, and several offshore wind developers including Atlantic Shores and Denmark-based Orsted, issued similarly worded statements highlighting terms likely to appeal to

Republicans including job creation, economic development and national security.

“By combining the strengths of all domestic energy resources, the Trump administration can advance an economy that is dynamic, secure, and clean,” Jason Grumet, CEO of the American Clean Power Association, said in a statement. “We are committed to working with the Trump-Vance administration and the new Congress to continue this great American success story.”

But few Republicans were in a welcoming mood following the election. New Jersey Assemblyman Paul Kanitra listed the major offshore wind companies in a Facebook post, saying, “It’s time to pack your bags and get the hell away from the Jersey Shore, our marine life, fishing industry and beautiful beaches.”

Kanitra said he was looking forward “to your stock prices tanking.” And that was starting to happen.

The stock prices of European offshore wind companies, many of which are planning or building projects on the U.S. East Coast, plunged amid fears the new administration would seek to slow or end such projects. Orsted closed down nearly 14% on Wednesday and was



down 11% over the past five days. Turbine manufacturer Vestas Wind Systems was down nearly 24% over that same period.

Rep. Jeff Van Drew, a New Jersey Republican, hosted Trump at a rally earlier this year at which Trump again vowed to kill offshore wind.

“We are currently working out the specifics of what that will look like once he takes office again this January,” VanDrew said. “President Trump is a good friend of New Jersey, and he understands the devastating impact these projects will have on our communities.”

## As Trump’s win tests the world order, diplomats are fretting over what it means for the planet

By [Angela Dewan](#) and [Ella Nilsen](#), CNN

7 minute read

Updated 1:05 PM EST, Mon November 11, 2024



President-elect Donald Trump at an election results party on November 6, 2024, in West Palm Beach, Florida. Alex Brandon/AP

#### **CNN –**

America's allies and foes alike have spent the past five days speculating about what Donald Trump's re-election will mean for their economies, security and the world's grinding wars.

Similar anxieties are brewing among diplomats gathering in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, on Monday for the COP29 climate talks — and for good reason: Trump has vowed to again pull the United States from the Paris Agreement, which binds nearly all the world's countries to dramatically slash carbon pollution. Instead, he is poised to revive his “drill baby, drill” agenda to cash in on more American oil and gas. As the Biden administration winds down, it is racing to send climate and environment funds to states and buttoning up last-minute regulations aimed at protecting the planet, one of its top climate officials said Monday.

“We still have plenty of work to do, and we have around 72 days, I think, to get it done,” said John Podesta, a senior White House adviser on clean energy who is also leading the US delegation at the UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.

**Speaking to reporters at Baku on Monday, the first official day at COP29, Podesta said the Biden administration is “fully committed” to obligating outstanding funding under Biden's climate law, the Inflation Reduction Act. The current administration has other major things left on its to-do list, including finalizing California's federal waiver to set its own emissions standards and completing a federal review on US exports of liquified natural gas.**

A U-turn on US climate policy could be disastrous for the planet, as it raises the risk of emulation. When America does something on the world stage, at least some countries tend to follow.

“Paris is one of those agreements where you need a critical mass of economic powers and emitters, past and present, to actually be able to address this

challenge,” said Oli Brown, an associate fellow at the London-based think tank Chatham House.

Ahead of Trump’s inauguration, negotiators will ramp down their expectations in terms of what’s possible at the talks, he said.

“And it will allow big emitters to not take the kind of ambitious action that’s needed, because they don’t want to be at a competitive disadvantage to the US, if the US is unburdened by any sense of collective responsibility,” he told CNN.

The sheer amount of extra carbon pollution from an America unbound by any climate agreement is worrying enough. America is the second-biggest polluter of planet-heating carbon and it produces more oil than any other nation.

But the real sting is, that as the world’s biggest economy, the US has more power than any other country to fund climate change action in the developing world. Even if it stays in the Paris Agreement, an “America First” Trump administration is unlikely to be more generous with grants and loans for other countries’ green transition.

That alone sets the talks up for failure — their main aim was to agree to a transfer \$1 trillion a year from wealthy countries and institutions to help developing nations build clean energy systems and to adapt to worsening extreme weather, like heat waves, floods, drought, storms and wildfires.

Leaders snub another petrostate summit

The COP29 talks were already shaping up to be lackluster. It’s the third year in a row that they’ve been held in a petrostate. Mukhtar Babayev, a state-oil company veteran, will preside over the event.

More striking than the list of leaders making opening remarks is the list of those who won’t bother going at all: US President Joe Biden, France’s Emmanuel Macron, European Union chief Ursula Von Der Leyen and even Claudia Sheinbaum, the climate scientist-turned-president of Mexico.

A number of leaders who were scheduled to go have since pulled out. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz canceled his appearance after his fragile three-way coalition government collapsed last week. Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof withdrew to deal with his own domestic crisis, [as violent clashes erupted in Amsterdam](#) around a football match contested by Israeli team Maccabi Tel Aviv. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who will host the climate talks next year in Brazil, bowed out after a head injury. There will be few powerful leaders to send Trump any kind of warning shots on climate.

A surprise presence at the talks will be officials from the Taliban as observers, Reuters reports, marking a rare appearance by the group at a multilateral event since seizing control of Afghanistan in 2021, after the US’ chaotic withdrawal.



The US flag on display at the Wilmington Oil Fields south of Los Angeles, California. Frederic J. Brown/AFP/Getty Images

For the planet, the timing of Trump's win and wider global chaos couldn't be worse. The year 2024 will almost certainly end as the hottest on record. Back-to-back hurricanes supercharged by unprecedented ocean heat have killed more than 300 people in America this season alone.

The worry now is that with so little steam and an absent US, other countries may consider exiting Paris too.

Jonathan Pershing, who served as deputy climate envoy at the start of the Biden administration, however, says the worst outcome is more likely a hit to America's reputation on the global stage for flip-flopping on its promises.

He pointed out that it took a whole year for the Biden administration to regain the trust of its allies on climate after Trump's previous withdrawal from the agreement. "It's a depressing story," he said. "It's a consequence of the United States, which has exercised a leadership role, abdicating that role."

Another concern among climate advocates has been that an absent US climate leader would open the door for China to step in and gain more global influence.

China is rapidly shifting its credentials as a major problem to the climate to one of its biggest solutions. It's building wind and solar farms at a blistering pace – faster than any other country on the planet – and selling them to all corners of the globe. The country is constructing nearly two-thirds of the world's utility-scale solar and wind power.

The European Union will have to step up, too to fill the void left by the US.

"I like to think about global climate politics as a tricycle: the EU, China and the US," said Li Shuo, director of the China climate hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "You need at least two wheels to function at any given time. We just missed one wheel, and we need the other two to roll and carry us on."

That's what happened in Trump's first term. America's traditional allies simply waited it out and reengaged with the US after he lost the 2020 vote. But in 2024, there's a greater sense of urgency, and climate inaction for another four years is a more dangerous prospect in a world with even more instability.

On track to smash through key heating limit

At the end of this year, the world will be at the mid-point of what science shows is a crucial decade for turning the tide on climate change. Fossil fuel pollution must be halved over that 10-year period to have any hope of avoiding crashing through the 1.5-degree warming threshold, beyond which humans will struggle to adapt.

The world is already 1.3 degrees warmer than it was before humans started burning fossil fuels at an industrial scale. Even if all the countries in the Paris Agreement cut carbon pollution by as much as they have pledged, at best they could limit warming to 1.9 degrees, according to a recent UN report. Their actual actions put the world on course for 2.3 degrees of temperature rise.

As climate scientists so often say, every fraction of a degree matters.

Extreme heat waves that occurred once in every 50 years at the start of the 20th century with 1 degree of global warming, for example, now occur once every 10, said Joeri Rogelj, a climate professor at Imperial College London.

At 1.5 degrees, a similar heat wave would happen once every six years, and at 2 degrees, it would be every four.

"So, something that for our great-grandparents was a unique extreme weather event, a once-in-a-lifetime challenge to deal with, will now become pretty much a regular occurrence at 2 degrees of warming," Rogelj told CNN.

That might not be a huge problem for people who work in air-conditioned offices and homes, and who travel around in air-conditioned cars, but for poorer communities and those in developing countries, it's an especially stressful future to imagine.

"If you're working outside, engaged in heavy physical activity, and you live in homes that are poorly insulated, and you don't have necessarily the financial means to pay for the additional energy for cooling, you will experience this heat very differently," Rogelj said. "It's clear that it will hit the poorest and most vulnerable segments of our population the hardest."

6 March 2024 13:45

# Analysis: Trump election win could add

# 4bn tonnes to US emissions by 2030

**MULTIPLE AUTHORS**

06.03.2024 | 1:45pm

**US POLICY**

Analysis: Trump election win could add 4bn tonnes to US emissions by 2030

A victory for Donald Trump in November's presidential election could lead to an additional 4bn tonnes of US emissions by 2030 compared with Joe Biden's plans, Carbon Brief analysis reveals.

This extra 4bn tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) by 2030 would cause global climate damages worth more than \$900bn, based on the latest US government [valuations](#).

For context, 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e is equivalent to the combined annual emissions of the EU and Japan, or the combined annual total of the world's 140 lowest-emitting countries.

Put another way, the extra 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e from a second Trump term would negate – twice over – all of the [savings](#) from deploying wind, solar and other clean technologies around the world over the past five years.

If Trump secures a second term, the US would also very likely miss its global climate pledge by a wide margin, with emissions only falling to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030. The US's current target under the Paris Agreement is to achieve a 50-52% reduction by 2030.

Carbon Brief's analysis is based on an aggregation of [modelling](#) by [various](#) US research groups. It highlights the significant impact of the Biden administration's climate policies. This includes

the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) – which Trump has pledged to reverse – along with several other policies.

The findings are subject to uncertainty around economic growth, fuel and technology prices, the market response to incentives and the extent to which Trump is able to roll back Biden’s policies.

The analysis might overstate the impact Trump could have on US emissions, if some of Biden’s policies prove hard to unpick – or if subnational climate action accelerates.

Equally, it might understate Trump’s impact. For example, his pledge to “[drill, baby, drill](#)” is not included within the analysis and would likely raise US and global emissions further through the increased extraction and burning of oil, gas and coal.



Also not included are the potential for Biden to add new climate policies if he wins a second term, nor the risk that some of his policies will be weakened, delayed or hit by legal challenges.

Regardless of the precise impact, a second Trump term that successfully dismantles Biden's climate legacy would likely end any global hopes of keeping global warming below 1.5C.

- [The 'Trump effect' on US emissions](#)
- [How the Biden administration is tackling warming](#)
- [What a second-term Trump might do](#)
- [The global climate implications of the US election](#)
- [How the analysis was carried out](#)

## **The 'Trump effect' on US emissions**

US greenhouse gas emissions have been falling steadily since 2005, due to a [combination](#) of economic shifts,

greater efficiency, the growth of renewables and a shift from coal to gas power.

Since taking office in early 2021, Biden has [pledged](#) under the Paris Agreement to accelerate that trend by cutting US emissions to 50-52% below 2005 levels in 2030 and to net-zero in 2050.

He has implemented a [long list](#) of policies – most notably the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act – to keep those targets within reach. (See: [How the Biden administration is tackling warming.](#))

In the “Biden” scenario in the figure below (blue line), all federal climate policies currently in place or in the process of being finalised are assumed to continue. The scenario does not include any new climate policies that might be adopted after November’s election.

The administration's current climate policies are expected to cut US emissions significantly, bringing the country close to meeting its 2030 target range.

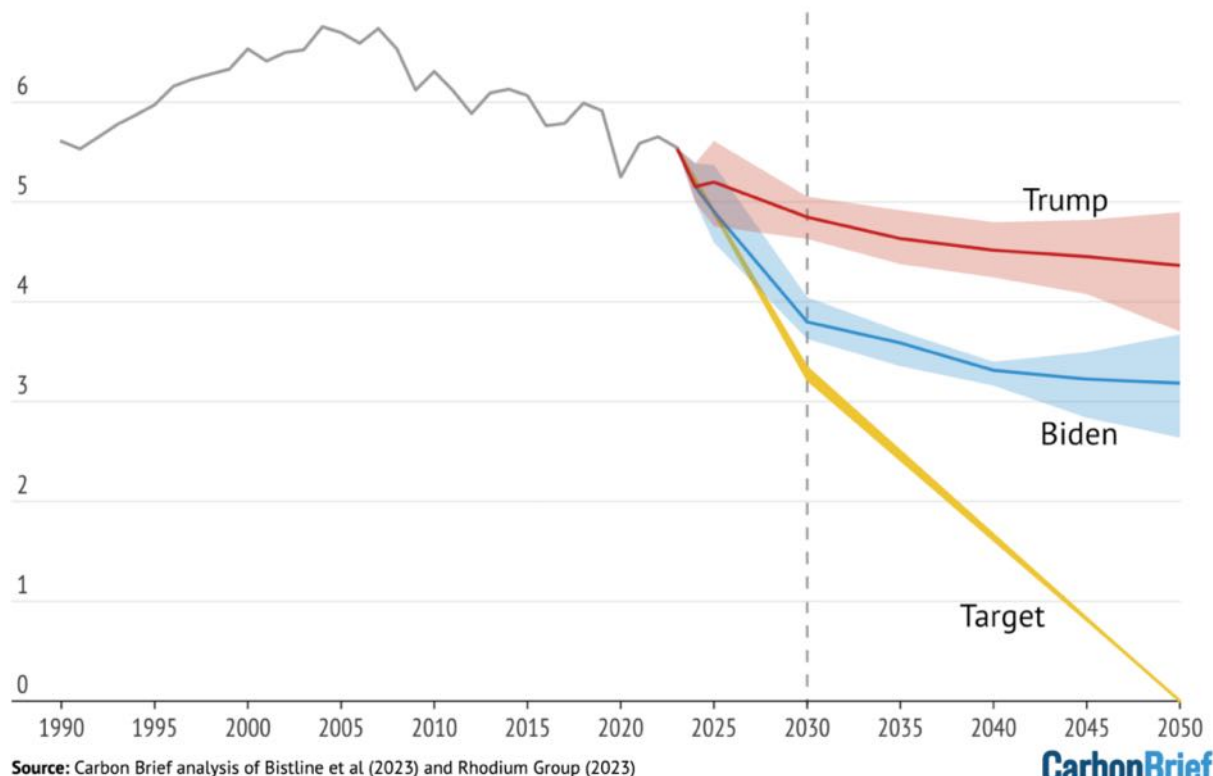
Nevertheless, a gap remains between projected emissions and those needed to meet the 2030 and 2050 targets (green).

The "Trump" scenario (red line) assumes the IRA and other key Biden administration climate policies are rolled back. It does not include further measures that Trump could take to boost fossil fuels or undermine the progress of clean energy. (See: [What a second-term Trump might do.](#))

For both projections, the shaded area shows the range of results from six different models, with varying assumptions on economic growth, fuel costs and the price of low-carbon technologies.

## A Trump election win could add 4bn tonnes to US emissions by 2030

Greenhouse gas emissions, billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e



Black line: Historical US greenhouse gas emissions 1990-2022, billions of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Red line and area: Projected emissions under the “Trump” scenario where Biden’s key climate policies are eliminated. Blue line and area: Projected emissions under the “Biden” scenario with the IRA and other key climate policies. Yellow: US climate target trajectory pledged by the Biden administration (50-52% by 2030). The range for each projection corresponds to results from six different models and uncertainty around economic growth, as well as the costs for low-carbon technologies and fossil fuels. Source: Carbon Brief analysis of modelling in Bistline et al. (2023) and Rhodium Group (Taking stock 2023). Chart by Carbon Brief.

In total, the analysis suggests that US greenhouse gas emissions would fall to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030 if Trump secures a second term and rolls back Biden’s

policies – far short of the 50-52% target. If Biden is reelected, emissions would fall to around 43% below 2005 levels.

In the Trump scenario, annual US greenhouse gas emissions would be around 1GtCO<sub>2</sub>e higher in 2030 than under Biden, resulting in a cumulative addition of around 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e by that year.

Based on the [recently updated](#) central estimate of the [social cost of carbon](#) from the [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) (US EPA) – which stands at some \$230 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2030 – those 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e of extra emissions would cause global climate damages worth more \$900bn.

To put the additional emissions in context, EU greenhouse gas emissions currently stand at around 3GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, while Japan's are another 1GtCO<sub>2</sub>e. If

the EU meets its climate goals, then its emissions **would fall** to 2GtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030 and to below 1GtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2040.

Only eight of the world's nearly 200 countries have **emissions** that exceed 1GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year – and 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e is more than the combined yearly total from the 140 lowest-emitting nations.

Expressed another way, the extra 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e would be equivalent to *double* all of the **emissions savings** secured globally, over the past five years, by deploying wind, solar, electric vehicles, nuclear and heat pumps.

Carbon Brief's analysis highlights several key points.

First, that Biden's climate goals for the US in 2030 and 2050 will not be met, without further policy measures after the next election.

This could include additional state-level action, which **could yield** an additional 4 percentage points of

emissions savings by 2030. Added to the “Biden” pathway, this would take US emissions to 47% below 2005 levels – closer to, but still not in line with the 2030 pledge.

Second, despite this policy gap, Biden’s current climate policies go a significant way towards meeting the 2030 target and could be [added to](#) in the future.

Third, if Trump is able to remove all of Biden’s key climate policies, then the US is all but guaranteed to miss its targets by a wide margin.

Given the scale of US emissions and its influence on the world, this makes the election crucial to hopes of limiting warming to 1.5C. (See: [The global climate implications of the US election.](#))

Finally, there is policy uncertainty around which policies will be finalised, how strong any final rules will

be, what legal challenges they may face and how easy they prove to roll back.

There is also uncertainty – illustrated by the ranges in the chart – around the impact of Biden’s policies, the response of households, business and industry to those measures, and the rate of economic growth, as well as over future prices for fossil fuels and low-carbon technologies.

These uncertainties are partly – but not entirely – captured by the six models underlying the analysis, which have different model structures and input assumptions.

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## **How the Biden administration is tackling warming**



In 2015, the then-president Barack Obama **pledged** a 26-28% reduction in US emissions below 2005 levels by 2025 as an intended “**nationally determined contribution**” (iNDC) to the **Paris Agreement**.

On taking office in 2017, the climate-sceptic president Trump then **pulled the US out** of the Paris Agreement, attracting **global opprobrium**. He then **rolled back** or replaced Obama-era climate policies, **including** the **Clean Power Plan**, while **attempting – unsuccessfully – to prop up coal**.

Trump’s **successor** as president, Joe Biden, **campaigned** in 2020 on a platform of a “clean energy revolution”. On gaining office in 2021, he **immediately** rejoined the Paris Agreement and then **issued** a more ambitious pledge to cut US emissions to 50-52% below 2005 levels by 2030.



**Joe Biden** ✓

@JoeBiden



Today, the Trump Administration officially left the Paris Climate Agreement. And in exactly 77 days, a Biden Administration will rejoin it.



**ABC News** ✓ @ABC · Nov 4, 2020

The U.S. has officially left the Paris Agreement, three years after Pres. Trump announced he would leave the international climate change forum.  
[abcn.ws/2I2fMKq](https://abcn.ws/2I2fMKq)

1:18 AM · Nov 5, 2020



12K



92K



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Biden also pledged to decarbonise the electricity grid by 2035 and joined roughly [150 other countries](#) in committing the US to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 – the [global benchmark](#), if the world is to keep warming below 1.5C.

In order to keep these targets within reach, the Biden administration has ushered in a series of climate policies. Most notable is the [2022 IRA](#), unexpectedly passed by Congress after a 51-50 Senate vote, with the tie broken by the vice president Kamala Harris.

This has been [called](#) the largest package of domestic climate measures in US history. It offers incentives covering a broad swathe of the economy from low-carbon manufacturing to clean energy, electric vehicles, “climate-smart” agriculture and low-carbon hydrogen.

The IRA accounts for the most significant part of the emissions reductions expected as a result of Biden’s climate policies to date and shown by the blue line in the figure above.

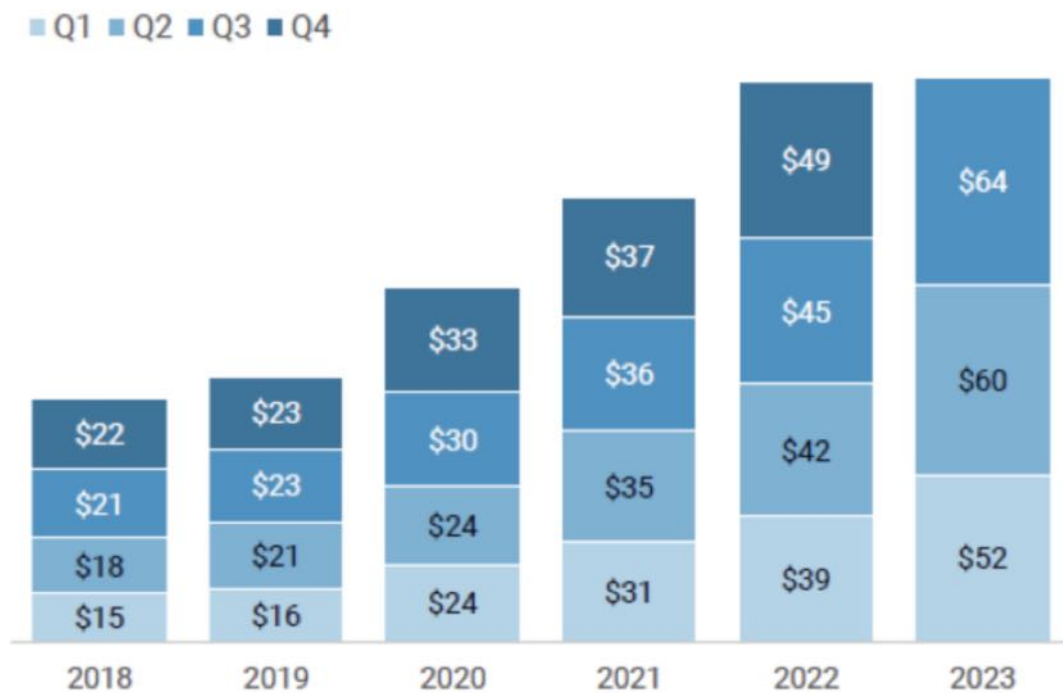
It includes grants, loans and tax credits initially estimated to be worth \$369bn. However, most of the tax credits are not capped, meaning the overall cost and impact on emissions is [uncertain](#).

In general, [cost estimates](#) have risen since its passing, as investments triggered by the bill’s incentives have [rolled in](#), with some now putting its ultimate cost [above \\$1tn](#).



Investment in clean technologies is continuing at record levels in the US, as demonstrated by new data from Q3 2023. Actual clean energy and transport investment in the US reached a record \$64 billion in Q3 2023—an 8% increase from Q2 and a 42% increase year-on-year

FIGURE 1  
**Clean investment by quarter**  
Billion 2022 USD



Source: Rhodium Group/MIT-CEEPR Clean Investment Monitor

4:59 PM · Dec 7, 2023 · 2,188 Views



However, a recent [analysis of progress](#) since the bill passed in 2021 shows that while electric vehicle sales are running at the top end of what was expected in earlier modelling of the IRA's impact, the deployment of

clean electricity – in particular, wind power – is falling slightly behind.

(Another [recent study](#) looks at the behavioural challenges that could affect the success or failure of the IRA, including as a result of political polarisation. Separately, gas power expansion plans from several major US utilities also [pose a challenge](#) to the IRA.)

Other Biden administration initiatives with important implications for US emissions include the 2021 [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), [loans for nuclear power plants](#) and [new standards on appliance efficiency issued](#) by the Department of Energy.

Meanwhile, the [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) (US EPA) has finalised rules on [methane emissions](#) from oil and gas facilities. It has also proposed – but not yet finalised – rules on [vehicle fuel](#)

standards, power plant greenhouse gas standards and power plant air pollution.

The administration is now rushing to finalise these rules within the next couple of months, so that they could not be overturned easily after the election using the Congressional Review Act.

The administration is reportedly planning to weaken its proposed vehicle fuel standards. The final version would retain the original aim of having two-thirds of new sales be all-electric by 2032, but would ease the trajectory to reaching that target, according to the New York Times. This would reduce the emissions-cutting impact, relative to what is assumed in the “Biden” scenario.

Separately, the administration is reported to be exempting existing gas-fired units from its proposed power plant emissions rules, focusing for now on existing coal and future gas-fired units. The New York

[Times](#) quotes EPA administrator Michael Regan saying this will “achieve greater emissions reductions”, but the timescales could also affect the scenario projection.

Meanwhile, Biden has also overseen a rare Senate approval of an international climate treaty, when it [ratified](#) the [Kigali Amendment](#) on tackling climate-warming [hydrofluorocarbons](#) in 2022, with the US EPA [issuing](#) related rules the following year.

In addition, Biden’s time in office has seen further state-level action on emissions. This includes California’s [clean car standards](#), as strengthened in 2022 and adopted by [six other](#) states.

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## **What a second-term Trump might do**

For his part, former president and Republican front-runner Donald Trump has made no secret of his desire

to roll back his predecessor's climate policies, just as he [did](#) during his first term.

For example, in 2018, the Trump administration [lifted](#) Obama-era rules on toxic air pollution from electricity generating and industrial sites – with Biden now moving to reverse the reversal.

Similarly, in 2020, his administration [rolled back](#) an Obama-era EPA rule on methane emissions from the oil and gas industry. The Biden administration's methane rule could face a similar fate under a second Trump term.

Trump also has form when it comes to energy efficiency regulations, which he [rolled back](#) in 2020.

In November 2023, the [Financial Times](#) reported that Trump was “planning to gut” the IRA, increase investment in fossil fuels and roll back regulations to



encourage electric vehicles. The newspaper added that Trump had called the IRA the “biggest tax hike in history”.

It quoted Carla Sands, an adviser to Trump, as saying:

“On the first day of a second Trump administration, the president has committed to rolling back every single one of Joe Biden’s job-killing, industry-killing regulations.”

Indeed, Republicans in the US House of Representatives have already made [multiple attempts](#) to repeal parts of the IRA. While some analysts think a full repeal of the act is [unlikely](#), it is clear that a second-term Trump could – as [Politico](#) put it – “hobble the climate law”.

A February 2024 commentary from investment firm [Trium Capital](#) argues that the impact on IRA will depend not only on whether Trump wins victory in November, but also on whether the Republicans retain control of the House and gain a Senate majority.

Even if the Republicans win all three races, the commentary suggests that some parts of IRA might survive beyond the election. It says that consumer incentives for electric vehicles and home heating are “most at risk”, whereas tax credits for clean energy might only be modified.

Equally, [MIT Technology Review](#) says that clean energy and EV tax credits both “appear especially vulnerable, climate policy experts say”. The publication adds:

“Moreover, Trump’s wide-ranging pledges to weaken international institutions, inflame global trade wars, and throw open the nation’s resources to fossil-fuel extraction could have compounding effects on any changes to the IRA, potentially undermining economic growth, the broader investment climate, and prospects for emerging green industries.”

Meanwhile, Trump has also [criticised](#) Biden’s infrastructure act and previously [revoked](#) California’s

ability to set tougher car emissions standards, which are also adopted by other states.

In 2022, the California “waiver” was [reinstated](#) by Biden, who also [opposed](#) a 2023 Republican bill designed to remove California’s right to regulate. Yet the waiver is now embroiled in legal action brought by Republican states, [expected](#) to end up in the Supreme Court.

If he emerges victorious in November, Trump would also “plan to destroy the EPA”, according to a [Guardian](#) article published earlier this month. It reported:

“Donald Trump and his advisers have made campaign promises to toss crucial environmental regulations and boost the planet-heating fossil fuel sector. Those plans include systematically dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the federal body with the most power to take on the climate emergency and

environmental justice, an array of Trump advisers and allies said.”

The paper cites [Project 2025](#), described as “a presidential agenda put forth by the Heritage Foundation and other conservative organisations”. It also quotes Mandy Gunasekara, Trump’s EPA chief of staff and a contributor to the Project 2025 agenda.

After Trump was [elected](#) for the first time, many scientists, politicians and campaigners [argued](#) that his presidency would only have a relatively short-term effect on emissions and climate goals.

Many of his first-term efforts to rollback climate rules and boost fossil fuels [ended in failure](#).

While some modelling [suggested](#) that his first presidency would delay hitting global emissions targets by a decade, [Carbon Brief](#) analysis found that US states and cities might be able to take sufficient steps to meet

the country's then-current climate goal without federal action.

However, another recent [Guardian](#) article says that a second-term Trump would be “even more extreme for the environment than his first, according to interviews with multiple Trump allies and advisers”. It adds:

“In contrast to a sometimes chaotic first White House term, they outlined a far more methodical second presidency: driving forward fossil fuel production, sidelining mainstream climate scientists and overturning rules that curb planet-heating emissions.” Carbon Brief's “Trump” scenario does not include additional fossil fuel emissions as a result of policies supporting coal, oil and gas production or use, as the success or otherwise of any such efforts are highly uncertain.

In addition, higher US fossil fuel production would not all be consumed domestically and would not increase global demand on a one-for-one basis.

While it would be likely to raise demand and emissions, both domestically and internationally, the precise impact **would depend** on the response of markets and overseas policymakers.

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## **The global climate implications of the US election**

If Biden – or another Democrat – wins the election in November and if his party regains control over the House and Senate, then they could push to implement new climate policies in 2025.

There is a clear need for further policy, if US climate goals are to be met. Moreover, the expiration of a large

number of tax cuts at the end of 2025 could present an opportunity to deploy carbon pricing in support of raising revenues – and cutting emissions – according to a [recent study](#).

It suggests that a price on emissions, described as a “carbon fee”, could significantly boost US chances of hitting its 2030 target, even if paired with a partial repeal of the IRA.

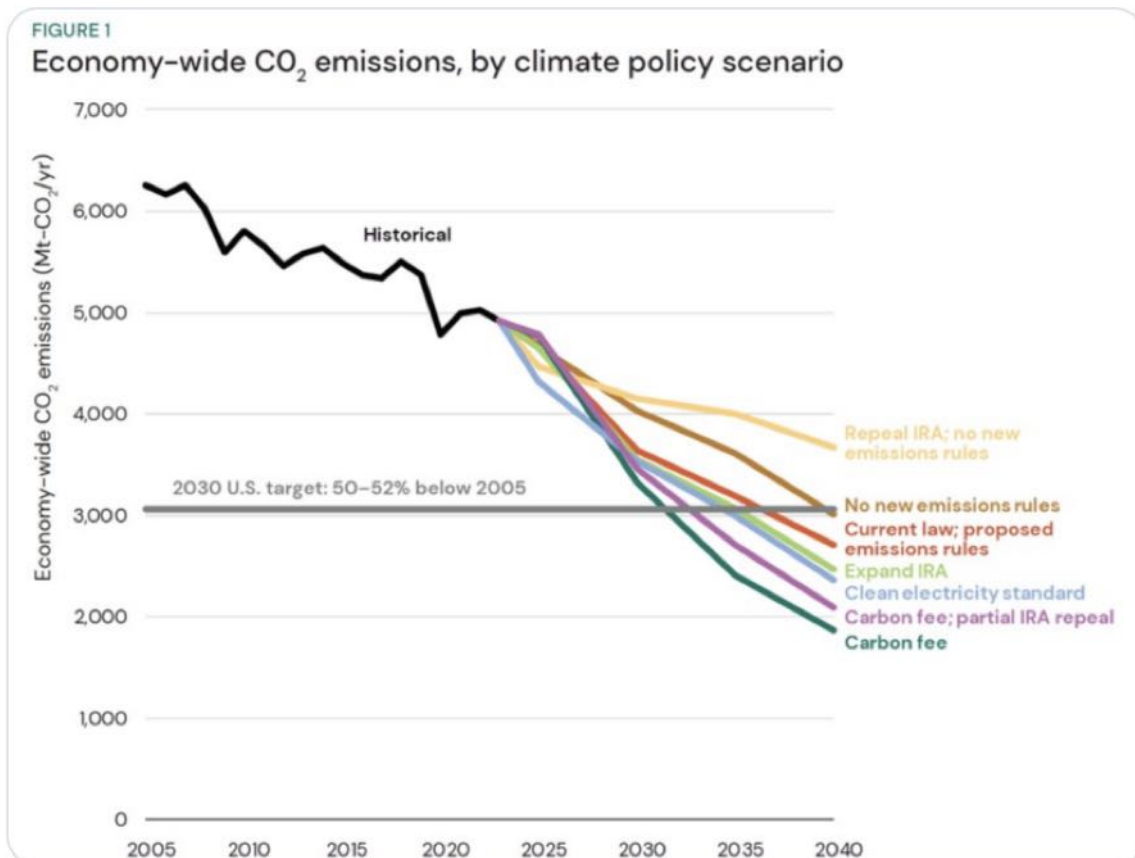


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How could climate policy options in 2025 shape emissions and fiscal outcomes? Our new working paper crunches the numbers across a range of possibilities and highlights differences in CO<sub>2</sub> reductions, fiscal costs/revenues, and household impacts.



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(Note that the “Repeal IRA; no new emissions rules” scenario in this study is similar to the “Trump” scenario in Carbon Brief’s analysis. However, the model used in the study finds a relatively weak 2030 emissions impact



of the IRA compared with most of the [five others](#), with which it is aggregated by Carbon Brief.)

An additional point of leverage is the EU's [carbon border adjustment mechanism](#) (CBAM), which will put a carbon price on US exports unless they face an equivalent price domestically, according to Democratic senator Sheldon Whitehouse, speaking at a [launch event](#) for the study:

“The 2025 opportunity when the Trump tax cuts collapse [creates] huge room for negotiation. Then you’ve got the CBAM happening in Europe that puts enormous pressure to get a price of carbon, if you want to avoid being tariffed at the EU and UK level.”

Whether a second-term Biden administration would attempt to put a price on carbon or not, it would be likely to push forward new policies in pursuit of US climate targets.

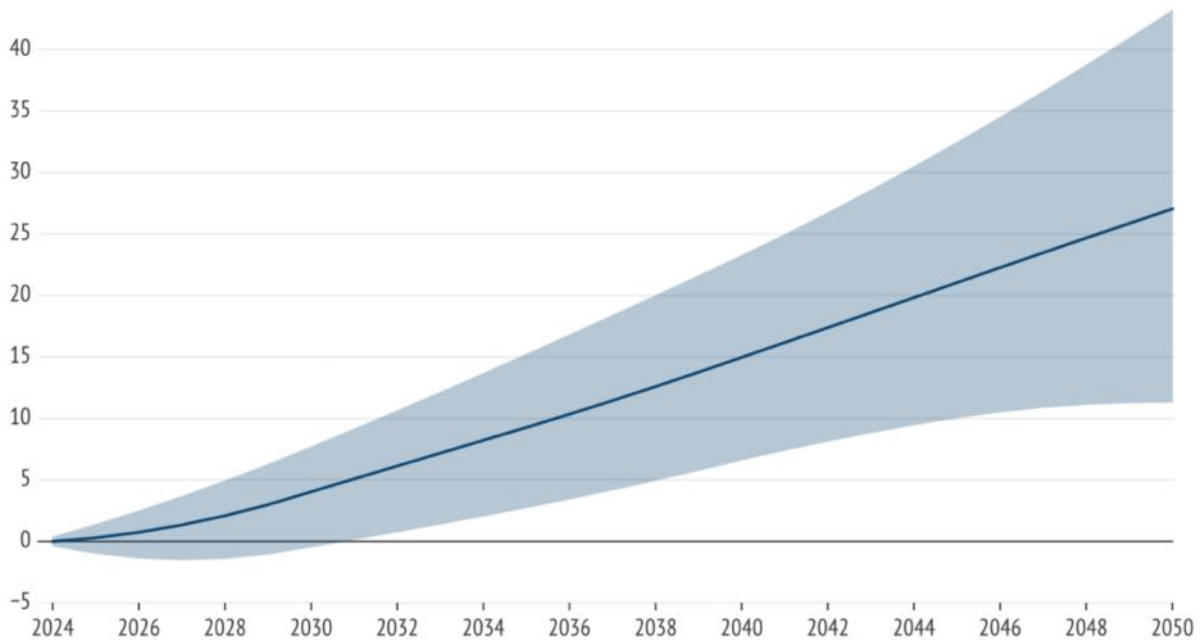
In contrast, a victory for Donald Trump could be expected, at a minimum, to result in full or partial repeal of the IRA and rollbacks of Biden's climate rules, including power plants, cars and methane.

This is reflected in Carbon Brief's "Trump" scenario, which would add a cumulative 4GtCO<sub>2</sub>e to US emissions by 2030, as shown in the figure below.

Moreover, assuming no further policy changes, this cumulative total would continue to climb beyond 2030, reaching 15GtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2040 and a huge 27GtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2050.

## Higher emissions from a Trump win would keep on climbing after 2030

Cumulative increase in emissions under Trump relative to Biden, GtCO<sub>2</sub>e



Source: Carbon Brief analysis of Bistline et al (2023) and Rhodium Group (2023)

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CLEAR ON CLIMATE

Cumulative increase in US emissions, GtCO<sub>2</sub>e, under the “Trump” scenario relative to the “Biden” scenario, assuming no further policy changes beyond rolling back the IRA and key Biden administration climate rules. The range corresponds to results from six different models and uncertainty around economic growth, as well as the costs for low-carbon technologies and fossil fuels. Source: Carbon Brief analysis of modelling in Bistline et al. (2023) and Rhodium Group (Taking stock 2023). Chart by Carbon Brief.

The increases in cumulative emissions under the “Trump” scenario are so large that they would imperil not only the US climate targets, but also global climate goals. (Under the 22nd amendment of the US constitution, Trump would not be allowed to run for a third term.)

In 2022, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) sixth assessment report (AR6) said that it would be “impossible” to stay below 1.5C without strengthening current pledges:

“[F]ollowing current NDCs until 2030...[would make] it impossible to limit warming to 1.5C with no or limited overshoot and strongly increas[e] the challenge to likely limit warming to 2C.”

The corollary of this is that if the US – the world’s second-largest emitter – misses its 2030 target by a wide margin, then it would be likely to end any hope of keeping global warming below 1.5C.

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## **How the analysis was carried out**

The two scenarios set out in this analysis are based on an aggregation of modelling published by Bistline et al. (2023) and the Rhodium Group (2023).

The first study was explained by the authors in a [Carbon Brief](#) guest post. It compares the impact of the IRA using results from 11 separate models, some of which only cover the power sector. Carbon Brief's analysis uses [results](#) from the six models that cover the entire US economy.

The “Trump” scenario is based on the “reference” pathway in this study, corresponding to the average of the six models. The only modification is that the Trump scenario is set to match the Biden scenario below until 2024.

The “Biden” scenario is based on the average IRA pathway from this study, extended using modelling from the Rhodium Group to include the impact of further Biden administration policies.

Carbon Brief's analysis uses the “mid-emissions” pathway from the Rhodium study's “federal-only”

scenario, which includes the impact of vehicle fuel standards, power plant greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions rules, and energy efficiency regulations.

This additional Rhodium Group modelling is based on draft rules which have not yet been finalised and are subject to change, as well as to potential legal challenge, as discussed above.

The uncertainty shown for the “Trump” and “Biden” scenarios corresponds to the range in the six economy-wide models from Bistline et al. (2023).

Carbon Brief’s analysis does not include any additional post-2025 climate policies that could be adopted by a second Biden administration. Nor does it include the potential impact of pro-fossil fuel policies that could be introduced by a second Trump administration.

Finally, it also does not include additional subnational climate policies that could be introduced, nor does it consider the risk that current or future state action could be hit by federal or legal challenge.

Historical US greenhouse gas emissions are taken from the [US EPA inventory](#) through to 2021. Figures for 2022 and 2023 are based on estimated annual changes from the [Rhodium Group](#).

12/11/2024

## Activists and leaders react to climate-sceptic Trump winning power – again

During his first term, Trump rolled back dozens of environmental regulations and pulled the US from the Paris climate agreement. His second term could be even more destructive, experts say.

One analysis warned that Trump's forthcoming rollbacks could add 4bn additional metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere by 2030 when compared with a continuation of policies under Biden. That "would be a death sentence to our planet," said Jamie Minden, the acting executive director of the US-based youth-led climate nonprofit Zero Hour, at a press conference in Baku on Monday about the election result.

Todd Stern was the US special envoy for climate change, and the country's chief negotiator at the 2015 Paris climate agreement. He said that Trump's looming presidency could also place a damper on other countries' climate action plans, especially China, which is the top global contributor to planet-warming emissions.

"The two biggest players in the ring are the US and China, and China is extremely aware of that. It has just got a guarantee that the US president won't be bringing up climate change with them for the next four years and that means something," Stern said. "It will make things easier on China, and that can't help but have some impact."

The issues, though, can't be resolved over a four-year term in office. "The fight is bigger than one election, one political cycle in one country," said Podesta. The UN climate conference in Baku represents a "critical opportunity to cement our progress". At Cop29, activists are pushing the Biden administration to file a bold climate plan under the Paris climate agreement – known as a nationally determined contribution – and to make big



pledges to support global climate finance efforts.

The president “still has critical opportunities to cement his climate legacy”, said Allie Rosenbluth, co-manager of the climate research and advocacy group Oil Change International. “Biden must use his remaining months in office to reject pending fossil fuel permits.”

As Damian Carrington explained in last week’s newsletter, at least \$1tn is needed to help poor nations reduce emissions, shift to a low-carbon economy and adapt to the impacts of climate disasters. If the US fails to meaningfully contribute, other countries can fill the climate finance gap left by the US, noted Teresa Anderson, the global climate justice lead at ActionAid, at another press conference. “This is a test for rich countries,” she said. “If they believe in the climate emergency, then they should be willing to pay more than their fair share, not less.”

US senator Sheldon Whitehouse, a climate enthusiast who will arrive at Cop29 later this week, said Trump and other US Republicans are “aiming a torpedo” at climate progress, but the pressure to slash US emissions will stay strong. “I’m heading to Baku to reassure the international community that large swaths of the US remain committed to steering the planet away from climate catastrophe, a catastrophe that is already doing massive economic harm and driving up prices for insurance, food and other goods and services,” he said.

However, the Paris accord has 195 signatories and “will not collapse in the face of a single election result,” said Tina Stege, climate envoy for the Marshall Islands. “The Paris agreement has survived one Trump presidency and it will survive another.”