

First Impressions of Biden's Climate Policy

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Overview of Main Points

Overall Outlook: Optimistic

Focus on job creation

1. Main elements of Biden's climate policy

- **Government spending** (infrastructure, regular budget)
- **Regulations**
- **Research**, information, assessments
- (Not carbon tax or emissions trading)

2. Level of ambition

- **High ambition** (more ambitious than Pres. Obama's policies)
- Net zero by 2050, 100% carbon-free power by 2035
- **Real policies, budgets (not just symbolic declarations)**
- (But not clear if policies will achieve net zero, other targets)

Paris Agreement NDC: 50% reduction by 2030?

3. Can they be adopted or implemented?

- **Yes, likely.**
- **Especially: regulations, budgets, research**
- (Carbon tax, emissions trading – difficult)

Climate Is Now Prioritized

* Executive orders on day 1, 7

* US rejoined Paris Agreement on day 1

* Climate declared a national security priority

* Biden's first international summit on climate

* Top climate advisers among first personnel appointments

Reason for optimism:

Whole-of-Government Approach

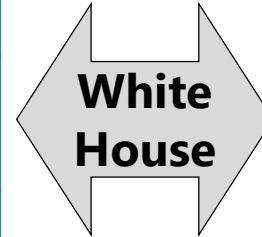
Old approach:

- Climate "silo" separated from other policies

Domestic Policy Coordination

National Climate Advisor
Office of Domestic Climate Policy

➤ Gina McCarthy



International Policy Coordination

Special Envoy for Climate Change

➤ John Kerry

National Climate Task Force
Chair: National Climate Advisor

Cabinet and Agency Heads

Agriculture	Homeland Security
Commerce	Housing & Urban Dev.
Defense	Interior
Energy	Justice
Env. Protection Agency	Labor
General Services Admin.	Transportation
Health & Human Services	Treasury

Top Presidential Advisors

National Security Advisor
Homeland Security Advisor
Economic Policy Advisor
Domestic Policy Advisor
Director, Office of Management & Budget (OMB)
Director, Office of Science & Technology Policy
Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

Reason for optimism:

Key Economy & Energy Related Cabinet Secretaries, Presidential Advisors Are Committed to Climate Action

Treasury Secretary Yellen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports carbon pricing, independent climate policy councils, disclosure requirements• Will appoint climate TF and coordinator
Energy Secretary Granholm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoted renewable energy, clean auto tech as Governor of Michigan
Interior Secretary Haaland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opposes fracking (but will support Biden policy)
Transportation Secretary Buttigieg	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocated strong climate policies in the 2020 election campaign, including net zero by 2050, zero emission electricity by 2035, and green new deal
Agriculture Secretary Vilsack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committed to a pro-climate agenda
National Economic Council Director Deese	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Former head of sustainable investment at BlackRock
US Trade Representative Tai	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• House Ways & Means Committee staff, pushed for stronger labor & environment standards in USMCA.• Suggested trade policy is a legitimate tool for the climate crisis

Reason for optimism:

Biden's Focus on Politically Feasible Policies

- Executive Orders
- Budgets (mainly spending)
- Regulations

Explanation of Types of Policies

Types of Policies	Characteristics
Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Advantages</u>: possible wide scope and direction, difficult to change• <u>Disadvantage</u>: requires 60 vote majority in the Senate. (Need 10 Republican votes)
Budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgets (revenues and spending) are laws• Can pass Senate with a simple majority using "budget reconciliation"
Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laws delegate regulatory authority to departments, agencies• Need to follow strict procedures (e.g. public comments)• <u>Advantages</u>: do not need congressional approval• <u>Disadvantages</u>: scope is limited by law, takes time (about 2 years)
Executive Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply only to executive branch• Often aim to develop new regulations• <u>Advantages</u>: sound impressive, quick• <u>Disadvantages</u>: cannot change laws or regulations, next president can easily reverse

Main Points of Early Executive Orders (Domestic)

Overall prioritization of climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across departments • Including national security, defense
Organizational measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole of government approach • Climate advisors, National Climate Council, etc.
Reverse Trump's executive orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (There were many.)
Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start developing new regulations (various) • Freeze regulations started by Trump
Government procurement, property & asset management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate-friendly procurement, management • Including Defense Department (\$700 bil. budget)
Social cost of carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim \$51/ton, up from \$8 under Trump. • Will revise up by Jan. 2022.
Plans to develop new policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To "empower" workers, rebuild infrastructure, advance conservation, reforestation, etc.
Environmental justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly administrative and procedural measures • 40% of climate investments should go to disadvantaged communities

Executive Orders:

- 20 Jan.
- 27 Jan.

- **First Day**
- **First Week**

Main Points of Early Executive Orders (International)

Climate is a national security priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage enhanced ambition for other countries• Defense Department to assess climate related national security threats
Overall global engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paris Agreement NDC• Climate Leaders' Summit (April)• Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
Develop a climate finance plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "To assist developing countries in implementing ambitious emissions reduction measures, protecting critical ecosystems" etc.
Develop Amazon protection plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amazon and other critical ecosystems• Including through market-based mechanisms
End international financing of fossil fuels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Promote ending international financing of carbon-intensive fossil-fuel based energy"• Advance sustainable development & green recovery
Kigali Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek Senate ratification

From 27 Jan. Executive Order

Budgets: “Infrastructure” Bill (not the regular budget)

“Climate” is not in the title

Biden’s’ Basic Concept: Climate Policy = Job Creation

“American Jobs Plan”

Overview: \$2.3 trillion over 8 years

Announced 31 March 2021

- **1% GDP/year, \$288 billion/year**
- **Climate related: about 25~50%**
- **10 mil. jobs (from the campaign plan)**
- **Budget reconciliation process (probably)**
- **Finish by summer, autumn**
- **Additional “human infrastructure” bill (soon)**
 - Free community college, universal preschool, paid leave, more health care, child care (additional. \$1 or 2 trillion)
 - Probably not climate related

“American Jobs Plan” Budget Allocation¹ (Directly Related)

Transport \$339b

Includes:

- Gov. procurement, school buses, post office, other gov. vehicles.

Includes:

- Grid Deployment Authority (DOE)
- Clean energy tax credits 10 yr. ext.
- Clean abandoned oil & gas wells, coal mines, reduce methane leaks (create jobs) \$16 bil.
- Civilian Climate Corps \$10 bil.
- Carbon capture & storage
- Decarbonized hydrogen

Includes:

- New agency: ARPA-C (Advanced Research Projects Agency-Climate)

Directly climate related	\$bil
Electric vehicles	174
Public transit	85
Rail transport	80
Electric grid, clean energy	100
Clean energy manufacturing	46
Climate technology R&D	35
Disaster resilience*	50
Subtotal:	570
Percent of total:	25%

Mitigation \$485b

Clean Energy \$146b

Adaptation

* Note: some elements might not necessarily be climate-related

“American Jobs Plan” Budget Allocation¹ (Partially Related)

Partly Climate Related

- Infrastructure / buildings construction & repair
- Should include energy efficiency
- Should include climate resilience

Building efficiency	\$bil
Affordable housing	213
Public schools	100
Child-care facilities	25
Veterans' hospitals	18
Community colleges	12
Federal buildings	10
Subtotal:	378

Mitigation (generally)

Climate resilient infrastructure	\$bil
Roads & bridges	115
Water systems	66
Airports	25
Waterways & ports	17
Subtotal:	223

Adaptation (generally)

“American Jobs Plan” (Indirectly Related) Jobs in Less Carbon-Intensive Activities¹

“American Jobs Plan” Spending Categories: Less Carbon Intensive Activities*	\$bil
Home/community care for senior citizens, disabled	400
High speed broadband	100
National Science Foundation (research)	50
Work force development	48
Lead pipe replacement	45
Non-climate R&D	30
Pandemic preparedness	30
Research at Historically Black Colleges & Univ.	25
Road safety	20
Subtotal:	748
Percent of total:	33%

* This classification is more speculative. Jobs in these activities involve comparatively less greenhouse gas emissions compared to air travel, chemicals, etc.

“American Jobs Plan” Budget Allocation¹ (Summary)

A significant amount might not be climate-related

Indirectly Related	\$bil	%
Jobs in less carbon intensive activities	748	33
Building efficiency	378	17
Resilient infrastructure	223	10
Total:	1,349	60

Summary	\$bil	%
Directly related	570	25
Indirectly related	1349	60
Total:	1,919	85

“American Jobs Plan” Funding

1. Corporate tax measures

- Increase corporate tax rate to 28%
- Increase corporate minimum tax on foreign profits, book income
- International cooperation to adopt minimum corporate tax rates
- Regulations to discourage inversions, job offshoring

2. End tax preferences for fossil fuels

- Very important
- Not a large percent of total funding

3. Enforce industry payment for environmental cleanup, Superfund trust fund

- Very environmentally beneficial
- Will not contribute to infra. funding

4. Stronger tax enforcement

- Easy, straightforward to implement
- Revenue could be significant

Mainly focused on general corporate taxes (Not carbon taxes)

Regular “Discretionary” Federal Government Budget

Overview:

- “Discretionary budget” proposal 9 April 2021
- Climate items: increase \$14 bil. In 2022 compared to 2021
- Overall priorities
 - Jobs, communities left behind
 - Economic competitiveness
 - Research
 - Includes spending for international cooperation
- Various similarities & differences with the “infrastructure” bill
 - Infrastructure bill has more funds (budget is less impressive)
- Generally in line with the initial executive orders

Discretionary Budget: Climate-Related Items (1)

Building Clean Energy Projects and Investing in Resilience	New (\$mil.)	Total (\$mil.)
Energy saving retrofits to homes, schools, federal buildings	1,200	1,700
Federal procurement of zero emission vehicles (US made)	Not clear	600*
Create good paying jobs building clean energy projects	Not clear	2,000*
Incorporate climate impacts into pre-disaster planning and projects	540	815
Increase resilience of ecosystems & communities to wildfires, flooding, drought	1,2000	Not clear
CDC's Climate and Health Program	100	Not clear
Helping Communities Left Behind	New (\$mil.)	Total (\$mil.)
Investment in environmental justice	Not clear	1,400*
Create 250,000 jobs remediating abandoned wells & mines	Not clear	550*
Create jobs improving critical water infrastructure	Not clear	3,600*
Investments in next generation of agriculture & conservation, renewable energy grants & loans, creation of Civilian Conservation Corps.	300	Not clear
Loans for clean energy, energy storage, and transmission projects in rural communities	Not clear	6,500*

* Not clear whether the amount is total or new

Discretionary Budget: Climate-Related Items (2)

Increasing Competitiveness Through Investments in Innovation & Science	New (\$mil.)	Total (\$mil.)
Climate & sustainability research across multiple agencies	Not clear	4,000*
Invest in clean energy innovation across non-defense agencies	+35%	10,000
Create Advanced Research Projects Agency for Climate; also funds ARPA-E (energy)	1,000	Not clear
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research & activities	1,400	6,900

State Dep't. budget for international climate programs: \$2.5 bil. (4x 2021 level)

Research funding is significant

Support for Global Emission Reductions	New (\$mil.)	Total (\$mil.)
Contribution to the Green Climate Fund	1,200	1,200
Other multilateral climate initiatives (\$100 mil. for adaptation programs)	Not clear	485*
Assistance for developing countries for adaptation, clean energy, reducing landscape emissions (State Department & USAID)	Not clear	691*

* Not clear whether the amount is total or new

Regulation: Climate-Related

Major Areas of Regulation

- **Electric power plant emissions**
- **Automobile emissions, efficiency standards**
- **Energy efficiency standards for buildings, consumer products**
- **Air pollution standards**
- **Methane emissions**
- **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions**
- **Electric grid regulations for clean energy**

**Potential
large impact**

Obama CPP replaced by Trump's ACE.* DC Court struck down ACE, affirmed EPA's authority to regulate GHGs

GM agreed on shift to EV, will cooperate with new Biden standards.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) already has regulatory authority

Scientific & legal justification

- New rule on social cost of carbon by Jan. 2022
- Various new climate assessments
- Will provide support for court challenges

Possible Timeline

- Need to start preparations immediately
- Many procedures required.
- Usually, finish in 1 or 2 years.
- **EPA expects to propose regulations in July 2021 on autos, power plants, oil wells** (*Bloomberg*, 7 April 2021)²

*Note: CPP: Clean Power Plan; ACE: Affordable Clean Energy

Regulation: Climate & Finance-Related

Overview

- US financial regulators will study climate related financial risks
- Financial disclosure requirements likely for companies and financial institutions

Regulator	Actions
Federal Reserve Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New climate supervision committee• Assess implications of climate change on the financial system☐ FRB under Powell seems willing to consider climate despite 5 Republicans (4 appointed by Trump). (Now 1 vacancy on 7-member board)
Treasury Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New department climate coordinator• New department climate task force• Financial Stability Oversight Council (interagency TF) will consider climate
Securities and Exchange Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate experts being added to the staff• Likely to consider stronger corporate reporting requirements☐ Democrats will have 3 / 2 majority

International Cooperation on Financial Regulation

Overview

- Substantially strengthen US participation in international cooperation on climate related financial issues.

Regulator	Actions
Federal Reserve Board (FRB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Stability Board's Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (FSB/TCFD)• FRB joined the Network of Central Banks and Supervisors for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) in Dec. 2019 (before Biden)
Treasury Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• G7, G20 meetings of finance ministers and central bankers will discuss climate issues including financial disclosures• US (Treasury Department) and China will co-chair relaunched G20 sustainable finance group

Carbon Tax/ Emissions Trading

- Carbon tax, emissions trading are not likely
- Not likely to gain enough Democratic support in Congress
- Treasury Secretary Yellen and other top advisors support carbon pricing (but no legal authority)
- Biden's political strategy: climate is about jobs, not taxes
- Carbon pricing does not match "infrastructure" policy

- Business is starting to support a carbon tax
 - American Petroleum Institute
 - But a carbon tax may enable continued fossil fuel production

Carbon Border Adjustment (CBA)

- CBA was an important element of Biden's election campaign plan.
 - "carbon adjustment fees or quotas on carbon-intensive goods from countries that are failing to meet their climate and environmental obligations"
- CBA will probably not be taken up soon (maybe 2022)
 - Wait to see EU CBA, results of COP26, WTO negotiations
- Can be implemented unilaterally by the President
 - Section 232 (national security justification) and/or
 - Section 301 (against foreign actions which are "unreasonable" "unjustified" or a "burden" on US commerce)
- President Trump set a new precedent
 - Section 232 national security justification
 - Supreme court, Congressional Republicans supported Presidential discretion
- President Biden declared climate a national security priority
 - Election plan highlights need to maintain competitiveness of US industry
- Will probably not be linked to a carbon tax or emissions trading
- USTR Tai: US no longer supports trade liberalization for its own sake
- Note: All G7 countries except Japan are considering CBA



Energy Sector

Policies: Regulation

➤ EPA regulation	• Replace CPP, ACE
➤ FERC regulation	• Facilitate/ prioritize RE on the grid
➤ Financial regulation (disclosure)	• Reduce insurance, investment in fossil fuels
➤ Energy Efficiency & Clean Energy Standard	• In the infrastructure bill (new law?)

Policies: Government Spending/ Investment/ Tax

➤ Grid upgrade (investment)	• Infrastructure bill (\$100 b for grid, clean energy)
➤ Government procurement	• Executive orders, budget
➤ Tax policy	• 10-year clean energy tax credits • End fossil fuel tax preferences
➤ Building efficiency investment	• Infrastructure bill (part of \$378b), regular budget

➤ **Renewable energy is already cost competitive**

Private Investment
(Power companies already have investment funds)

JOBS

Transport Sector: EVs + Public Transportation

Policies: Regulation

➤ EPA regulation	• Emissions/ pollution standards
➤ Department of Transportation regulation	• Fuel efficiency standards
➤ Financial regulation (disclosure)	• Reduce insurance, investment in fossil fuels
➤ Restore California's regulatory position	• California's regulations stronger than federal

Policies: Government Spending/ Investment

➤ Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure	• Infrastructure bill (\$174 bil.)
➤ Government procurement	• Executive orders, budget
➤ Tax policy	• Tax preferences
➤ Expand Clean Electricity	• Supported by regulation, government investment
➤ Public Transport & Rail	• Infrastructure bill (\$85 bil. + 80 bil.)

➤ **Auto makers now shifting to EVs**

Private Investment
(Private companies already have investment funds)

JOBS

Sustainability of Biden's Climate Policies?

1. Trump's efforts to undercut climate action were not very successful

- US GHG emissions still declined
- Coal industry still in a death spiral
- Deregulation efforts mostly stopped by courts

2. Reversing Biden's policies would be difficult, time consuming

- Many policies; a lot of work to reverse them
- Biden will follow procedures
- Biden's policies have strong scientific justification
- Easy to survive court challenges

3. Climate technology, infrastructure "lock-in," fossil tech/infra "lock-out"

- After companies invest in RE, disinvest in fossil fuels, it will be difficult to change

4. Increasing political support for climate action

- Climate impacts now clearer, costlier
- More jobs are related to climate action

5. Increasing RE cost advantage, technology advancement

- RE cost will continue declining
- RE technology will continue advancing

6. Expanding ESG trend

- Fossil fuel industries losing financing, insurance
- Will be reinforced by Biden financial regulations

Conclusion

Ambitious

- Compared to past presidents
- Not clear if it will achieve net-zero

Politically Feasible

- Republican support not needed
- Executive branch can implement
- Focus on jobs, improving lives

**“Green New Deal”
in substance
(not officially)**

Optimistic

Overall Timeline

**Many policies
adopted or
nearly adopted**

Event

New President

Biden Leaders
Summit (Apr.)

COP 26

E. Order

Set agenda

Budget

Start planning

Infrastructure
proposal (Mar.)

Regular budget
proposal (April)

Infrastructure
budget passed

Regular budget
passed

Regulation

Start process

NDC

Concrete
proposals (Jul)

Public comment,
revision

Finalize(?)

2021

Jan.

March

April

July

Nov.

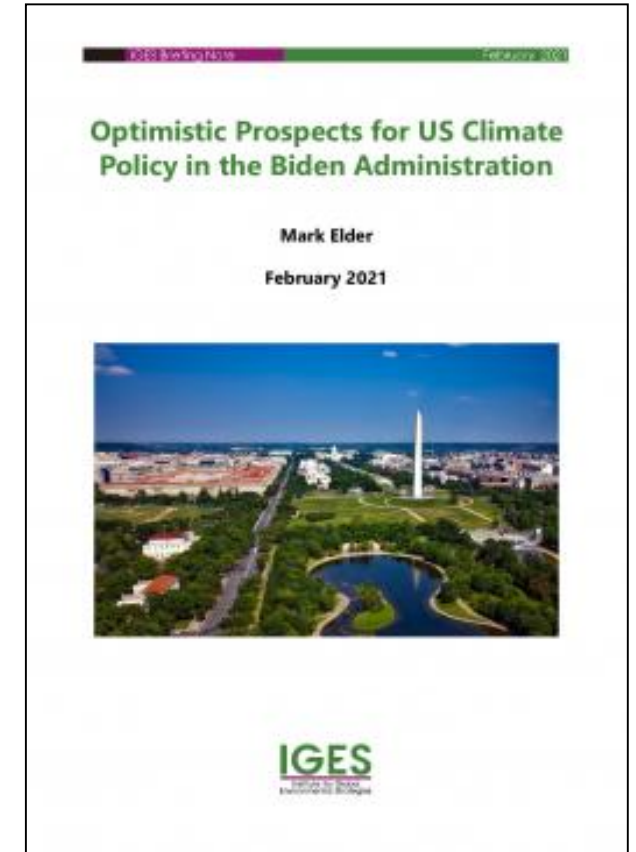
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For Further Reference

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Notes

1. Adapted from: Parlapiano, Alicia, and Jim Tankersley. 2021. "What's In Biden's Infrastructure Plan." *New York Times*, March 31, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/31/upshot/whats-in-bidens-infrastructure-plan.html>.
2. Dlouhy, Jennifer A., and Stephen Lee. 2021. "EPA Chief Vows Tougher Tailpipe Rules by July, Unwinding Trump's." *Bloomberg*, April 7, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-06/epa-chief-vows-tougher-tailpipe-rules-by-july-unwinding-trump-s?sref=R0y3izZe>.



Thank you!

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