



March 28, 2017: President Trump's Executive Orders undoing US progress on climate policies harm Americans' health, economy and jobs

The world stood in shock as President Trump signed executive orders rolling back the Clean Power Plan and promoting outdated fossil fuels. While over 190 countries are moving forward, as they agreed in Paris, towards a clean energy future, President Trump took America backwards by signing executive orders, which attempt to revive the dirty coal industry that has been lagging since 2010. Grassroots movements and market forces have unleashed the clean energy revolution providing the cheaper, healthier option and promises to generate the jobs of the future. The orders also promote oil and gas at a time when other countries abandon them in favor of fast growing renewable energy. CAN members and partners, including former US Vice President Al Gore and former UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres react.

CAN Members

WWF's global Climate & Energy Practice Leader, Manuel-Pulgar Vidal, said:

"Hampering the US' ability to deliver on its international climate commitments will impact the world's climate trajectory, but it will not define its outcome.

"Our ability to achieve the promise of the Paris Agreement does not rest on the actions of one government alone. At COP22 held in Marrakech last year, French President Holland said the Paris Agreement is an 'irreversible' process. We agree.

"The speed and scale of meeting the climate challenge has always required global solutions from all parts of the international community. It is up to all of us to reaffirm our commitment for a clean energy future, and to deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

"Companies and cities are not waiting to act; neither should we. Delivering on the Paris Agreement means more jobs, fewer health problems and increased access to cheaper, cleaner electricity. We have no time to lose: momentum remains on our side and together, we are unstoppable."

President & CEO, World Resources Institute, Dr. Andrew Steer said:

“The Trump administration is failing a test of leadership to protect Americans' health, the environment and the economy. It's been shown time and again that sustained economic growth and national security are intertwined with good environmental stewardship.

“In taking a sledgehammer to U.S. climate action, the administration will push the country backward, making it harder and more expensive to reduce emissions. Climate science is clear and unwavering: mounting greenhouse gas emissions are warming our planet, putting people and business in harm's way.

“The Clean Power Plan is a flexible and commonsense approach to reduce emissions from the power sector. It's already helping to shift markets toward clean energy, which is good for the economy and American competitiveness. The administration should not be rolling back the safeguards that protect our air from methane emissions and limits on coal leasing on public lands. The administration is also wrong to withdraw support for local communities which need to be strong and secure in the face of rising seas, extreme weather events, and other climate impacts.

“The administration is out of step with U.S. companies, investors and consumers who want clean energy that is delivering jobs and revitalizing communities. Many governors and mayors will continue to embrace low-carbon solutions because it's good for jobs, people and the planet. Republican and Democratic officials alike are committed to harnessing energy from the wind and sun because it's good for their constituents. Hundreds of leading businesses are committed to reduce emissions and support climate action because it's in their economic interest to do so.

“Around the globe, countries have committed to transition to a low-carbon economy that will make the world safer and more prosperous.

“Make no mistake: This Executive Order will undermine people's health and the U.S. economy. It hands moral authority and global leadership over to others, leaving America behind.”

Oxfam America climate change manager, Heather Coleman said:

“President Trump's reprehensible move to dismantle US progress in fighting climate change is yet another signal that this administration could not care less about the millions of vulnerable people around the world who live on the front lines of a climate crisis they did not create. These actions cater to the fossil fuel industry and corporate elites, while leaving the most vulnerable high and dry.

“Never before have the impacts of a changing climate felt so severe, with disproportionate impacts on those already living in poverty here at home and across the world. Yet with these actions, the Trump administration is choosing to abandon any claim to the US moral high ground.

“Despite the lack of leadership from the President and Congress in addressing climate change, US businesses, cities, and states are stepping up to commit to climate action and to long-term solutions that create safer, healthier communities and strong economic prosperity. Oxfam will continue to encourage equitable solutions to the climate crisis and hold sectors and government leaders accountable.”

350.org Executive Director, May Boeve said:

“This all-out attack on our climate and communities will be met with historic resistance. Trump is once again propping up the reckless fossil fuel industry while slashing any protections that put people before profits. As concern about global warming reaches a three-decade record high, there’s overwhelming support from the American people for climate action. On April 29th, we’re taking our vision and our resistance to Washington for the Peoples Climate March with people from every corner of the country who are ready to keep fighting for our future.”

ClientEarth CEO of environmental lawyers, James Thornton said:

“This is a monumental and ill-considered mistake by Trump which will have a hugely detrimental impact on American citizens, on jobs and on the environment. The vast majority of Americans understand the need to protect the environment and tackle climate change, yet the Trump administration is seeking to undo the laws which all of us – around the globe – need to protect people, the planet and future generations. We must not allow progress to be turned back.”

Center for Biological Diversity Executive Director, Kieran Suckling said:

“Trump just took his war against our climate to a terrifying new level,” said Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity. “With these massive giveaways to the fossil fuel industry, he proves that his first loyalty is to polluters, not the American public. Anyone who values wildlife, clean air and clean water will be hurt by this plan to let dirty companies pollute our climate and exploit our beautiful public lands.”

Sierra Club Executive Director, Michael Brune said:

“Donald Trump’s executive order would let dirty power plants spew unlimited pollution into our air while ignoring the climate crisis, unraveling protections that are designed to save billions of dollars, and thousands of lives. The safeguards Donald Trump is trying to throw out protect all families in America by curbing dangerous carbon pollution and reducing other dangerous pollutants like mercury, methane, and sulfur dioxide -- but unfortunately Trump would rather pad the fossil fuel industry’s profits.

“Worse, Trump’s attack ignores reality -- not just the reality of the climate crisis, but the reality that the clean energy economy is rapidly growing. The best way to protect workers and the environment is to invest in growing the clean energy economy that is already outpacing fossil fuels, and ensuring no one is left behind. At a time when we can declare independence from dirty fuels by embracing clean energy, this action could only deepen our dependence on fuels that pollute our air, water and climate while making our kids sicker.

“Meanwhile, grassroots advocates have helped push coal to its lowest level in history by retiring nearly 250 plants nationwide, and cities ranging from Salt Lake City, Utah to Georgetown, Texas are committing to 100 percent clean energy. Because of strong local action to replace coal and gas with clean energy we are on track to meet the Clean Power Plan’s 2030 emissions targets as soon as next year, and clean energy growth nationwide will continue unabated.

“The good news is that the safeguards Trump wants to shred -- like the Clean Power Plan -- are on a strong legal footing and the public will have the chance to voice its objections as the Trump administration tries to roll them back. Trump can’t reverse our clean energy and climate progress with the stroke of a pen, and we’ll fight Trump in the courts, in the streets, and at the state and local level across America to protect the health of every community.”

CAN Partners:

Former US Vice President Al Gore said:

“Today’s executive order, directing the Environmental Protection Agency to begin rolling back environmental protections and policies including the Clean Power Plan, is a misguided step away from a sustainable, carbon-free future for ourselves and generations to come. It is essential, not only to our planet, but also to our economic future, that the United States continues to serve as a global leader in solving the climate crisis by transitioning to clean energy, a transition that will continue to gain speed due to the increasing competitiveness of solar and wind.

No matter how discouraging this executive order may be, we must, we can, and we will solve the climate crisis. No one man or group can stop the encouraging and escalating momentum we are experiencing in the fight to protect our planet.”

Former mayor of NYC, Michael Bloomberg said:

“No matter what any elected official says, rescinding commonsense climate change regulations and popular public health protections will not revive the coal industry or put thousands of miners back to work. Market forces, including consumer preferences and technological advancement, are the primary reason for the surge in cleaner forms of energy. In fact, even without the Clean Power Plan, we are likely to hit its emissions targets ahead of schedule -- because consumers, cities, and businesses will continue leading on public health and climate change even when Washington won't.”

Former UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Christiana Figueres said:

“The action by the US to undo important domestic carbon reduction regulation in the face of the enormous momentum building globally toward a low carbon economy risks putting the country on a back-foot at a time when most Americans are looking to lead.”

“This decision will make things harder, not easier for Americans.”

“That's because trying to make fossil fuels remain competitive in the face of a booming clean renewable power sector, with the clean air and plentiful jobs it continues to generate, is going against the flow of economics.”

“I don't know anyone who wants to breathe dirty air, who wants to worry about their water source, or who wants to leave a dangerous world to their children. And because we are all united by these common desires, I am optimistic that Paris will endure, with world leadership remaining resilient in its commitments to Paris.”

“We have already seen an unprecedented upsurge of concern and activism as a result of the recent geopolitical shocks, and I expect we will continue to see that from the American people in response to any proposed weakening of the protections put in place for their health and safety in the form of climate regulations.”

Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of over 1200 NGOs working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. www.climatenetwork.org

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