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The US Climate Policy In The Paris Agreement Era : Achievements,Challenges, and Prospects

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Master's Degree In Literature and Civilization

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Dedication

We dedicate this work to our families for their unwavering support, our esteemed teachers for their invaluable guidance, and to one another for the collaboration and perseverance throughout this academic journey.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the university administration for their continuous support, and to all our professors for their valuable guidance throughout our studies.

Our deepest gratitude goes to our supervisor, SAID Tarek, for his insightful advice and unwavering support, which greatly contributed to the completion of this thesis.

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General Introduction

1. Background

The Paris Agreement is a historic agreement to voluntarily limit global warming at or below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. As one of world's the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, the U.S.'s success or failure to meet this commitment will have a monumental impact on whether the world achieves that goal. American climate policy has undergone significant changes over the last decade, not least in the change in US government from the Trump administration, which withdrew from the agreement, to the Biden administration, which has made climate action a priority again and rejoined the accord. This flux and uncertainty in politics has given both of impetus and uncertainty to global climate governance.

2. Aim of the Study

The objective of this study is to identify the successes and limitations of US climate policy in the era of the Paris climate agreement, as well as its prospects for the future. The goal of this study is to analyze how the direction of US policy has changed in the aftermath of 2015, progress achieved, challenges that persist and a path to how the US can continue to lead in the global climate space.

3. Statement of the Problem

Even after coming back to the Paris Agreement and introducing bold climate actions, complex internal and external challenges continue to impede the United States' climate policy. Political polarization and economic dependence on fossil fuels, coupled with inadequate legislative consensus, leave behind doubts about meeting the climate commitments and leading the country on international platforms. This paper tries to find out if US policy actions

match its declared climate goals and also looks into how sustainable these are in the present form.

4. Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that while the United States has achieved notable progress in climate policy since rejoining the Paris Agreement, persistent political, economic, and structural challenges limit its capacity to fulfill its commitments and maintain consistent global climate leadership.

5. Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative, analytical approach based on the review of official policy documents, international agreements, governmental reports, and scholarly articles. A comparative analysis will be conducted between the climate actions of different US administrations, focusing on achievements, legislative support, and international engagement. The study also uses case studies and data from institutions such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the US Department of Energy (DOE).

6. Definition of Terms

- **Paris Agreement:** World leaders pledged to try to prevent global temperatures rising by more than 1.5C above those of the late 19th Century - known as "pre-industrial" levels.

  It saw almost all the world's nations agree to cut the greenhouse gas emissions which cause global warming.

  Adopted by nearly 200 countries in the French capital in December 2015, the the Paris Agreement came into force on 4 November 2016 (Esme & Mark, 2025).

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG):** Although the overall percentage of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere may seem small, greenhouse gases have the unique ability to absorb thermal energy, unlike non-greenhouses gases like oxygen and nitrogen. Greenhouse gases act as a layer of insulation around the planet, keeping Earth's surface at a habitable temperature and allowing life to flourish.

  Energy from the sun reaches the Earth through radiation. About 29% of this incoming solar radiation is reflected into space by clouds, atmospheric particles, and large snow and ice surfaces. Of the remaining 71%, some is absorbed by the surface, and some is absorbed by heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere, also known as greenhouse gases (GHGs), which includes carbon dioxide, water vapour, methane, and other trace gases (Shakti, 2020).

- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** NDCs lay out how each country will contribute to the global temperature goals outlined under the Paris Agreement. They detail countries' plans to slash GHG emissions and help limit global warming to "well below" 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F), with efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F). Many NDCs also include measures to build resilience to climate impacts, such as drought and sea-level rise, and provide information on the finance needed to achieve their commitments (Maggie, Rhys, Jamal, & Natalia, 2024).

- **Climate Justice:** Climate Justice recognizes the disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income communities and communities of color around the world, the people and places least responsible for the problem.

It seeks solutions that address the root causes of climate change and in doing so, simultaneously address a broad range of social, racial, and environmental injustices. These solutions can be organized into Six Pillars of Climate Justice (justice, n.d.).

- **Climate Finance:** 'Climate finance' is a multifaceted concept. It generally refers to finance for activities aiming to mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change. However, it is sometimes conflated with the related and overlapping concepts of green finance, sustainable finance, and low-carbon finance (Éléonore & Rob, 2023).

7. Dissertation Organization

The dissertation is structured into two main chapters. Chapter One explores the achievements of US climate policy since rejoining the Paris Agreement, focusing on emission reductions, clean energy policies, and international leadership. Chapter Two analyzes the challenges hindering US climate action, including political, economic, and equity-based issues, and concludes with an outlook on future prospects. Each chapter includes an introduction, thematic sections, and a summary to ensure clarity and coherence. The study concludes with general findings and recommendations for policy improvement.

Chapter I:

US Policy Achievements in the Paris Agreement Era

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the global response to climate change has been significantly shaped by the Paris Agreement, a landmark international accord aimed at limiting global warming. The United States, as one of the world's largest economies and emitters, has played a pivotal role in this effort. Following a period of withdrawal under the Trump administration, the U.S. rejoined the agreement under President Biden, signaling a renewed commitment to environmental leadership. This shift brought with it notable achievements in emission reductions, advancements in clean energy, and substantial policy reforms. Supporting these changes, various federal agencies, state-led initiatives, and critical legislative measures have strengthened the country’s climate agenda. Moreover, the United States has reasserted its influence on the global stage, contributing significantly to international climate finance and diplomatic efforts aimed at fostering worldwide coopera

1.2 The US's Return to the Paris Agreement:

1.2.1 What is the Paris Agreement?

The Paris Agreement is a landmark international accord that was adopted by nearly every nation in 2015 to address climate change and its negative impacts. The agreement aims to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing the means to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees. The agreement includes commitments from all major emitting countries to cut their climate pollution and to strengthen those commitments over time. The pact provides a pathway for developed nations to assist developing nations in their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, and it creates a framework for the transparent monitoring, reporting, and ratcheting up of countries' individual and collective climate goals (Hu, 2025).

1.2.2 Official statement from the US government

On January 20, on his first day in office, President Biden signed the instrument to bring the United States back into the Paris Agreement. Per the terms of the Agreement, the United States officially becomes a Party again today.

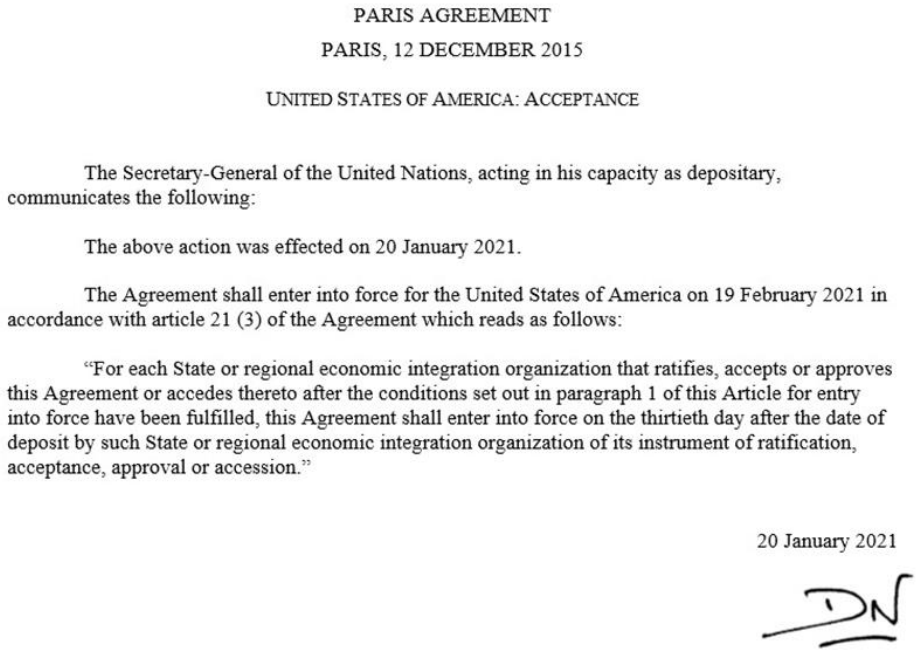
The Paris Agreement is an unprecedented framework for global action. We know because we helped design it and make it a reality. Its purpose is both simple and expansive: to help us all avoid catastrophic planetary warming and to build resilience around the world to the impacts from climate change we already see.

Now, as momentous as our joining the Agreement was in 2016 — and as momentous as our rejoining is today — what we do in the coming weeks, months, and years is even more important.

You have seen and will continue to see us weaving climate change into our most important bilateral and multilateral conversations at all levels. In these conversations, we're asking other leaders: how can we do more together?

Climate change and science diplomacy can never again be "add-ons" in our foreign policy discussions. Addressing the real threats from climate change and listening to our scientists is at the center of our domestic and foreign policy priorities. It is vital in our discussions of national security, migration, international health efforts, and in our economic diplomacy and trade talks.

We are reengaging the world on all fronts, including at the President's April 22nd Leaders' Climate Summit. And further out, we are very much looking forward to working with the United Kingdom and other nations around the world to make COP26 a success (Blinken, 2021).



PARIS AGREEMENT

PARIS, 12 DECEMBER 2015

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: ACCEPTANCE

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, communicates the following:

The above action was effected on 20 January 2021.

The Agreement shall enter into force for the United States of America on 19 February 2021 in accordance with article 21 (3) of the Agreement which reads as follows:

"For each State or regional economic integration organization that ratifies, accepts or approves this Agreement or accedes thereto after the conditions set out in paragraph 1 of this Article for entry into force have been fulfilled, this Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of deposit by such State or regional economic integration organization of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession."

20 January 2021

Figure 01 : Agreement document (UN Climate Change, 2021).

he Paris Agreement and Biden

On his first day in office, President Biden sent a letter to the United Nations, formally signaling that the United States would rejoin the Paris Agreement. Thirty days later (as is required), on February 19, 2021, the nation was re-entered.

To bring the country back on track to achieve its Paris Agreement goals, President Biden pushed for a comprehensive climate action plan during his term, including by twice updating the nation's targets for reducing emissions. His legacy also includes both the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022, which allocated more than $369 billion toward fighting climate change through clean energy tax credits and other means, along with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021, which also provided funding to develop clean technology, infrastructure, and transportation (Hu, 2025).

1.3 Key Achievements

1.3.1 Emission reductions

Setting a goal that gets the job done on eliminating emissions: Building a 100 percent clean energy economy requires clear goals to guide its critical decisions. The Biden administration is the first to embrace the goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by midcentury in order to stabilize global temperatures at 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming. * That means that the Biden administration's interim target—cutting U.S. carbon pollution to half of peak levels by 2030—requires reducing annual carbon pollution nearly four times faster than the Obama administration's interim target did. ** Ambitious policy goals drive ambitious policy change (Rachel , Devon , & Trevor, 2024).

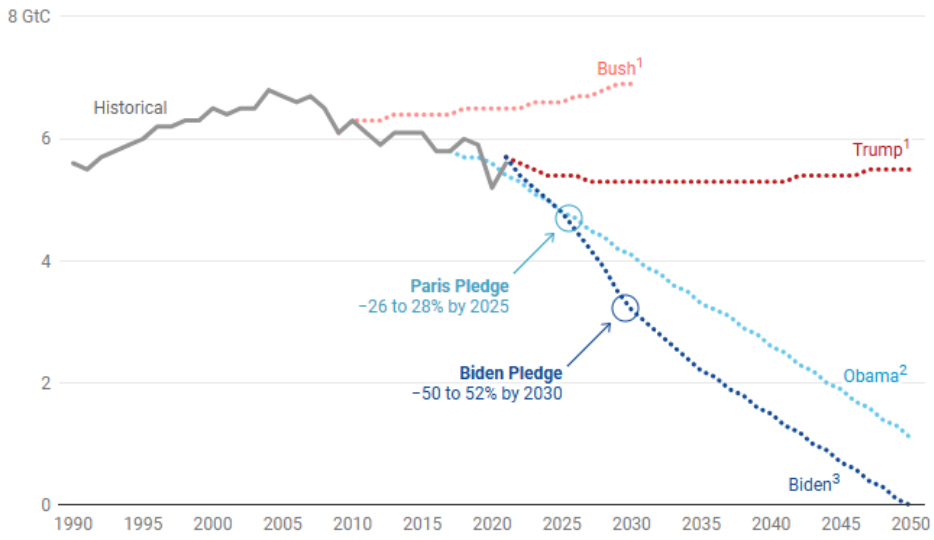


Figure 2 Historical U.S. annual greenhouse gas pollution levels and projections under different presidential administrations in gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent, 1990–2050.

Note: The historical line is based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's inventory of greenhouse gas emissions. The graph utilizes the Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook forecast for the Bush and Trump administrations'

emissions projections, scaled to match U.S. economywide greenhouse gas emissions, rather than solely energy emissions. Since neither administration established climate goals, the graph shows the best available policy projections from the year they left office (AEO2009 and AEO2021). The graph utilizes stated climate goals of the Obama and Biden administrations, showing an interpolated pathway between emissions goals set by those presidents during their administrations.

The Paris Agreement speaks of the vision of fully realizing technology development and transfer for both improving resilience to climate change and reducing GHG emissions. It establishes a technology framework to provide overarching guidance to the well-functioning Technology Mechanism. The mechanism is accelerating technology development and transfer through its policy and implementation arms (UNFCCC).

President Joe Biden aims to secure his climate legacy with a new target to cut United States greenhouse gas emissions by more than 60 percent by 2035.

The announcement comes mere weeks ahead of the conclusion of Biden's tenure, as incoming Republican President-elect Donald Trump vows to dismantle key components of his climate policies.

Biden's new climate target implies a significant shift in the U.S. approach to climate change, focusing on long-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

As the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the United States plays a critical role in international climate action. The new pledge reinforces commitments under the 2015 Paris Agreement, which requires nations to update their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) every five years to reflect higher ambition.

In a videotaped statement released Thursday, Biden revealed a new NDC under the Paris Agreement. The target calls for reducing net emissions to 61 percent to 66 percent below 2005 levels by 2035.

Biden described the proposal as "ambitious," noting that it builds on previous goals to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions economy-wide by 2050.

"I'm proud that my administration is carrying out the boldest climate agenda in American history,'" he said (Shannon, 2024).

An important part of achieving the 2035 emissions target will be reductions of the potent greenhouse gas methane by 35 percent from 2005 levels. “Cutting methane emissions is among the fastest ways to reduce near-term warming and is an essential complement to CO2 mitigation,” the White House said in a statement.

The anticipated 35 percent reduction in methane emissions goes beyond the 30 percent target set in the Global Methane Pledge, a non-binding agreement to reduce methane emissions launched by the U.S. and European Union in 2021.

While the NDC isn’t binding, including a specific figure for methane, something the U.S. did not do in its NDC for 2030, strengthens the U.S. commitment to reducing methane emissions.

A significant reduction in methane emissions would also go further to curb warming than an NDC that relied solely on carbon dioxide emission reductions. Methane is a short-lived greenhouse gas. It stays in the atmosphere for approximately 11 years, whereas carbon dioxide can remain for hundreds of years. Curbing methane emissions would have a much more immediate impact on the climate than similar reductions in carbon dioxide.

A recent assessment by the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development found that NDCs that include a strong methane emission reduction component result in about one third of a degree more cooling than those that rely solely on carbon dioxide emission reductions.

“I’m really excited to see that there is a concrete step here being taken by the United States in cutting methane emissions, which is one of the fastest and most impactful ways to cool the planet,” said Avipsa Mahapatra, the climate campaign director for the Environmental Investigation Agency US, a nonprofit based in Washington (Marianne & Phil, 2024).

1.3.2 clean energy advancements

Although climate change action needs to be massively increased to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, the years since its entry into force have already sparked low-carbon solutions and new markets. More and more countries, regions, cities and companies are establishing carbon neutrality targets. Zero-carbon solutions are becoming competitive across economic sectors representing 25% of emissions. This trend is most noticeable in the power and transport sectors and has created many new business opportunities for early movers.

By 2030, zero-carbon solutions could be competitive in sectors representing over 70% of global emissions.

The United States (US) has put in place significant energy and climate policy reforms designed to put the country on a path towards a clean, secure and affordable energy system for a net zero economy while promoting equity and high-quality jobs (UNFCCC).

Federal government action is focused on expanding the clean energy economy and creating diverse and resilient energy supply chains to strengthen energy security and clean manufacturing (ENERGY, 2024).

Implementing a people-centred energy transition

Affordability, equity and quality jobs are at the heart of federal government policy making. This is backed by good jobs principles and labour standards, which have been introduced, to also ensure investment supports high-quality jobs. The Justice40 Initiative directs 40% of the benefits of certain federal investments, notably investments in climate and clean energy, to disadvantaged communities (ENERGY, 2024).

Biden's record investment in clean energy

The first quarter of 2024 saw a record $71 billion in clean energy investment in the US, marking a 40 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023.

This surge in investment underscores a significant shift towards renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, which are critical to reducing emissions from the power sector. Ben

King, associate director of Rhodium's energy and climate practice, acknowledged the progress but emphasized that it is insufficient for meeting the 2030 target (Harsh, 2024).

Actual clean energy and transportation investment in the US continued its recordsetting growth in Q3 of 2024, reaching a new high of $71 billion (Figure 1). That's a 2% increase from Q2 2024, sustaining a nearly unbroken streak of quarter-onquarter growth over the past three years, minus a small decline in Q1 2024. Actual investment this quarter is a 12% increase from the same period in 2023. Clean investment represents a growing share of the US economy as well. In Q3, clean investment accounted for 5.0% of total US private investment in structures, equipment, and durable consumer goods nationwide, up from 4.9% in Q2 2024 and 4.5% in Q3 2023 (Lily, et al., 2024). (Figure 2).

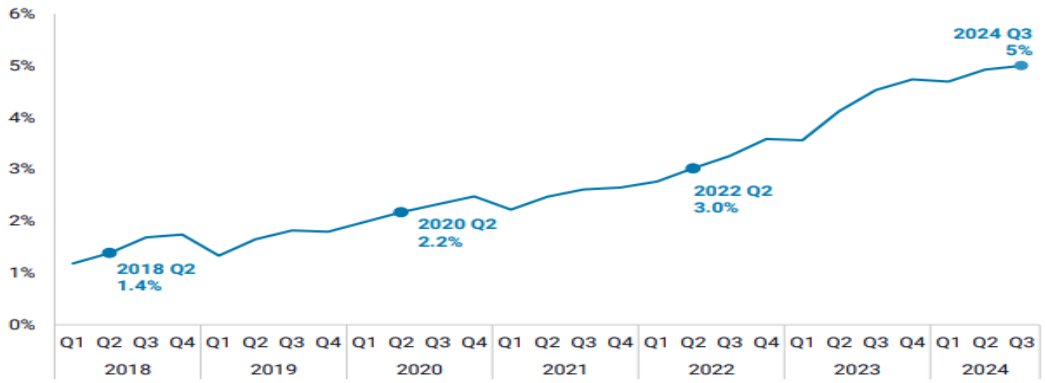


Figure 3: Actual clean investment as a share of total US private investment (Lily, et al., 2024).

We categorize our clean investment tracking into three segments: investment in the manufacture of GHG emission-reducing technology ("manufacturing"); investment in the deployment of that technology, both to produce clean energy or decarbonize industrial production ("energy & industry"); and investment through the purchase and installation of that technology by individual households and businesses ("retail"). Each dollar figure in this report is actual investment in Q3 2024, or the real dollars spent in the previous quarter on retail purchases or new facility construction. For example, when we confirm an announced facility breaks ground, we begin tracking actual investment in its construction and equipment. At the end of subsequent sections, we summarize announced investments to provide context and insight into potential future actual investments.

This quarter's report includes several data and methodological updates, some of which significantly impact our headline findings. First, we refined our carbon management tracking within the energy and industry segment to include a number of more granular industrial processes, specifically cement production, clean fuels, and iron and steel. Our carbon management technology category now includes only direct air capture, point-source capture in the power sector, and carbon dioxide utilization and removal. Second, we have updated our

inflation adjustments to align more closely with price indices specific to each investment category we track, ensuring more accurate cost assessments. And finally, we have conducted a thorough review of our tracked manufacturing, energy, and industrial facility projects to confirm construction timelines are current. This update provides that greenfield facilities are included in our actual spending estimates only when it's confirmed that they have broken ground, regardless of originally reported timelines. For projects reporting delays or timeline changes, we have adjusted both the completion date and associated spending rates. These updates impact different components of our tracking in both directions. On net, the refined inflation adjustment and closer construction timeline tracking have lowered our actual investment estimates in every quarter across the CIM dataset.

By segment, retail investment drove the quarter's clean investment growth, accounting for 50% of total clean investment in Q3 at $35 billion. Actual retail investment increased 9% relative to the previous quarter and was up 11% relative to Q3 2023. In the energy & industry segment, there was $20 billion in new investment in clean energy production and industrial decarbonization in Q3 2024, slipping 7% quarter-on-quarter and down 6% compared to the same period last year. Manufacturing investment stayed flat from Q2 with $16 billion of new investment but was still up 57% year-on-year (Lily, et al., 2024).

About American Clean Power

The American Clean Power Association (ACP) is the leading voice of today's multi-tech clean energy industry, representing energy storage, wind, utility-scale solar, clean hydrogen, and transmission companies. ACP is committed to meeting America's energy and national security goals and building our economy with fast-growing, low-cost, and reliable domestic power (Phil, 2025).

Key Highlights:

New Capacity: 93% of new energy capacity that came online in 2024 was clean energy — exceeding the previous five-year average of 75%.

Utility-Scale Solar: More than 33 GW of solar capacity was deployed in 2024.

Utility-Scale Energy Storage: More than 11 GW of energy storage was deployed in 2024.

Strong Wind Pipeline: Including both offshore and onshore wind, the overall wind pipeline is 40 GW, with 20 GW under construction.

Manufacturing Growth: 46 U.S. primary component manufacturing projects across the utility-scale wind, solar, and storage supply chains came online in 2024.

Red States Lead the Way: Red states saw some of the fastest growth in clean power capacity 2024, with Mississippi, Louisiana, and Kentucky increasing operational capacity by more than 200% year-over-year (Phil, 2025).

Battery storage nearly doubled in 2024, with total installed capacity reaching almost 29 GW — and projected to grow another 47% in 2025. This growth in capacity will help support the grid when variable renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind, are unavailable, making the U.S. power system more stable and secure.

At the same time, onshore wind capacity growth has tapered off, with only 5.3 GW of new generation added in 2024, significantly less than wind installation levels in previous years. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), installed wind capacity totaled 153 GW at the end of 2024. Limited growth of wind power resulted in part from a focus on repowering older facilities as well as continued challenges related to supply chains, financing, interconnection and permitting (Lori, Andrew, & Ian, 2025).

1.3.3 policy changes

With the Paris Agreement, countries established an enhanced transparency framework (ETF). Under ETF, starting in 2024, countries will report transparently on actions taken and progress in climate change mitigation, adaptation measures and support provided or received. It also provides for international procedures for the review of the submitted reports.

The information gathered through the ETF will feed into the Global stocktake which will assess the collective progress towards the long-term climate goals.

This will lead to recommendations for countries to set more ambitious plans in the next.

Stern remarked upon how the Paris Agreement is recognised as a landmark climate accord, with several defining characteristics:

Universality: Every country now has obligations under the agreement, marking a departure from past agreements (such as the Kyoto Protocol) wherein developing countries notably were not called upon to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' is still respected, whereby obligations are based on national capacity (Halpern, 2025).

President Biden has mapped out a $2 trillion clean energy and green jobs plan, has pledged to cut emissions from electricity to zero by 2035, and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. With slim majorities in the House and Senate, this will not be easy. And there are only three pathways Biden could take: He can work across the aisle with Congress, work with Congress without bipartisanship, or take executive action.

In addition to rejoining the Paris Agreement on day one, Biden signed an executive order instructing all agencies to review actions taken over the last four years that are inconsistent with his climate policies and to suspend, revise or rescind them. These include

the Trump administration's actions to weaken regulations for methane emissions, fuel economy standards, appliance energy efficiency standards, and hazardous air pollutant standards.

Biden's executive actions have also revoked Trump's executive orders that weakened requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from federal operations, sped up environmental reviews, fast-tracked oil and gas pipelines, promoted offshore drilling, and removed protection for national monuments to allow for fossil fuel development. Biden put a moratorium on fossil fuel leasing on federal land and water, directed agencies to curtail fossil fuel subsidies, and restored science to the climate change fight (Renée, 2021).

Biden's climate policy successes During his current term in office, Joe Biden has been able to achieve climate policy successes at different legal levels. He issued a series of executive orders to ensure that US climate policy was Paris-compliant, which included the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 50–52 percent below 2005 level by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. He also announced various sectoral sub-targets: for example, zero-emission vehicles should account for half of new car sales by 2030, while the decarbonization of the electricity sector was to be achieved by 2035 (Sonja, 2024).

Executive measures and climate regulation Biden initially relied on executive measures to achieve the new targets. In the "Federal Sustainability Plan", he instructed the federal authorities to take into account new sustainability criteria in government procurement. The intention is to use the immense purchasing power of the federal government to boost the production of green steel, low-carbon building materials and electric vehicles (EVs), among other things. For their part, government bodies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have introduced new regulations that cover coal-fired power plants and new gas-fired power plants, for example. These measures are designed to achieve a 90 percent reduction in

emissions from coal-fired power plants by 2032; thereafter it will be possible to operate coal-fired power plants and newly constructed gasfired power plants only if expensive carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology is used. In the transportation sector, the EPA finalized stricter efficiency standards for various types of vehicle with the aim of shifting the market towards zero-emission vehicles by 2032. And it has set strict limits for methane emissions in oil and natural gas production, which is a very important step as the US is the world's largest oil and gas producer. In July, however, a federal district court lifted a temporary ban on the approval of new export terminals for liquefied natural gas (LNG), arguing that the measure had no legal basis.

The Biden administration's most important climate action to date was signing the Inflation Reduction Act into law in August 2022, the most comprehensive climate legislation the U.S. has even seen. The law invests hundreds of billions of dollars in clean energy, electric vehicles, environmental justice and more.

But passing the Inflation Reduction Act was just the first step. In the two years since its enactment, the administration has focused on developing tax credit guidance and launching programs to implement its many clean energy provisions. Earning top marks in climate action, however, will require continuing timely and equitable implementation of the legislation while taking additional action to fill policy gaps (Lashof, 2024).

1.4 Institutional and Legislative Support

1.4.1 Role of federal agencies, state initiatives

On the first day of his presidency, Biden signed an order directing a return to the Obama-era policy of taking into account the social cost of carbon when implementing new regulations, a practice that the Trump administration had abandoned in 2017 (Sommer, 2021).

In February 2021, Biden raised the social cost of carbon in the US to $51 per tonne, replacing the lower Trump Administration's estimates with the prior estimates developed under Obama. This figure had an impact on EPA regulations but not on fuel prices (Chemnick, 2021). Carbon pricing was also already in operation in a few U.S. states. The $51 estimate was lower than the European Union's carbon price but higher than the Chinese carbon price. Additionally, the administration set the social cost of methane at $1,500 per tonne.

In March 2022, the court allowed the Biden administration to use the social cost of carbon, thus reversing a previous court ruling (Showalter, 2022).

On February 11, 2022, Western Louisiana U.S. District Court Judge James D. Cain Jr. issued a preliminary injunction in *Louisiana v. Biden* (2022) in favor of the plaintiffs to block federal agency requirements to assess the social costs of greenhouse gas emissions in regulatory actions under the order (Joselow, 2022).

On March 16, the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals stayed the decision following an appeal by the U.S. Justice Department, (Phillips, 2022) and on May 26, the U.S. Supreme Court issued an order without comment or opposition dismissing an appeal filed by the plaintiffs to vacate the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals decision (Williams, 2022).

In the years 2021–2022, Biden promoted two bills that could reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50% from the level of 2005: the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Build Back Better Act. The Build Back Better Act faced strong opposition in the Senate and was not approved (Lo, 2022).

However, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was approved by Congress and signed by Biden into law in November 2021.

A group of experts at the REPEAT Project said that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act alone could make only a small reduction in emissions, but they didn't count the impact of measures regarding highways and public transport.

Ultimately, the bill included the largest federal investment in public transit in history. It also included spending of $105 billion in public transportation while giving $110 billion to fixing roads and bridges, including measures for climate change mitigation, such as access for cyclists and pedestrians (Sprunt, Barbara, 2021)

In August 2022, President Biden signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act, the largest climate investment by the U.S. federal government in history, which included over $391 billion to reduce carbon emissions.

The bill, passing by a 51–50 vote in the Senate, explicitly defined carbon dioxide as an air pollutant under the Clean Air Act to make the Act's EPA enforcement provisions harder to challenge in court. With this law, and additional federal and state measures, the U.S. could start to fulfill its pledge in the Paris Agreement: 50% greenhouse gas emissions reduction by the year 2030.

In 2024, the administration issued new rules which could reduce emissions by over 1 billion tonnes. Among others, coal plants for operating after 2039 must use carbon capture and storage technology (America, 2024).

President Biden’s ambitious domestic climate action offers countries gathering at COP28 a proven model for how bold action to tackle the climate crisis and end dependence on fossil fuels can unlock a new era of clean and inclusive economic growth, investment, good-paying jobs, energy security, and savings for families and business. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – the largest investment in clean energy and climate action

ever – the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and other executive actions, the United States is in a strong position to achieve our 1.5°C-aligned emissions target under the Paris Agreement. Implementation of these two laws alone is expected to cut U.S. emissions as much as 41% below 2005 levels in 2030 – roughly 80% of the way towards achieving the 50-52% reduction outlined in our nationally determined contribution (NDC). At the same time, the Biden Administration is pursuing additional federal actions to bring us to the full 50-52% reduction levels, including measures like the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) standards for vehicles, power plants, and methane emissions – which complement increased action from state and local governments and the private sector (House, 2023).

President Biden's ambitious climate agenda has also unleashed a clean manufacturing boom – stimulating over $350 billion in announced private investment in clean energy manufacturing since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration and creating over 210,000 clean energy jobs in just the last 15 months, with an additional 1.5 million jobs projected to be created over the next decade. Through robust incentives, the United States will not only accelerate our own clean energy transition, but also catalyze investments in other countries and drop the cost of clean energy for everyone – saving hundreds of billions of dollars globally. Over the next seven years, according to analysis from the Department of Energy (DOE), twice as much U.S. wind, solar, and battery deployment is expected than would have been without the IRA.

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Through robust incentives, the United States will not only accelerate our own clean energy transition, but also catalyze investments in other countries and drop the cost of clean energy for everyone – saving hundreds of billions of dollars globally. Over the next seven years, according to analysis from the Department of Energy (DOE), twice as much U.S. wind, solar, and battery deployment is expected than would have been without the IRA (House, 2023).

1.4.3 key legislative actions

The Build Back Better Plan was a legislative framework proposed by United States President Joe Biden between 2020 and 2021. Generally viewed as ambitious in size and scope, it sought to make the largest nationwide public investments in social, infrastructural, and environmental programs since the 1930s Great Depression-fighting policies of the New Deal (The White House, 2021).

The plan was divided into three parts: one of them, the American Rescue Plan, a COVID-19 relief spending bill, was signed into law in March 2021.

The other two parts were reworked into different bills over the course of extensive negotiations within and among Congressional entities. The American Jobs Plan (AJP) was a proposal to address long-neglected infrastructure needs and reduce America's contributions to climate change's destructive effects; the American Families Plan (AFP) was a proposal to fund a variety of social policy initiatives, some of which (e.g. paid family leave) had never

before been enacted nationally in the U.S (The White House, FACT SHEET: The American Families Plan, 2021).

The Build Back Better Act was a bill introduced in the 117th Congress to fulfill aspects of the Build Back Better Plan. It was spun off from the American Jobs Plan, alongside the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, as a $3.5 trillion Democratic reconciliation package that included provisions related to climate change in the United States (centered around Senator Ron Wyden's technology-neutral, tax incentive-first approach) and social policy, lowered to approximately $2.2 trillion. The bill was passed 220–213 by the House of Representatives on November 19, 2021 (Weissmann, 2023).

In December 2021, amidst negotiations and parliamentary procedures, Senator Joe Manchin publicly pulled his support from the bill citing its cost and a too-aggressive transition to clean energy, then retracted support for his own compromise legislation. This effectively killed the bill as it needed 50 senators to pass via reconciliation, and all 50 Republican senators opposed it (Seipel & Hernandez, 2021).

The Build Back Better Act, which passed the House on September 27, 2021, was used by the Senate as the legislative vehicle for this legislation. On August 6, 2022 Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer proposed an amendment which would replace the text of the previously passed bill with the text of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. This substitute amendment was later adopted (Yarmuth, 2022).

Schumer's lead staffer, Gerry Petrella, recalled the surprise phone call came from Senator Joe Manchin's office just prior to the August recess and the breakthrough negotiations occurred on the final summer weekend. Some of the many experts, lobbyists and organizers who worked to refine the bill's provisions included Leah C. Stokes, Adrian Deveny, Katherine

Hamilton, Ari Appel, Mike Carr, Danielle Deiseroth, Ari Mathusiak, Camila Thorndike, Jamal Raad, Topher Spiro, and Yogin Kothari; the overall approach was shaped by Manchin and Senators Ron Wyden, Mark Warner and Chris Coons, while Representative Scott Peters worked to add pro-pharmaceutical industry limits to the Medicare drug pricing provisions, Bernie Sanders contributed the basis for the Solar for All program, and Senators Elizabeth Warren and Kyrsten Sinema negotiated on shaping an alternative minimum tax for corporate book income (Gearino, 2025).

1.5 US Influence in Global Climate Policy Contributions to international climate finance and diplomacy.

1.5.1 US contributions to international climate finance

From Day One, the Biden-Harris Administration has been committed to boosting international climate finance. This includes scaling-up our own bilateral finance, fully leveraging multilateral financial institutions, and mobilizing private investment. These efforts are also in direct support of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. As a result of these efforts over the last three years, the United States significantly scaled up our climate finance – from $1.5 billion in FY21 to over $9.5 billion in FY23, a more than sixfold increase.

These actions build on domestic efforts to catalyze investments in game-changing climate mitigation and climate resilience innovations. At COP29, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing new efforts to mobilize investment at the speed and scale the climate crisis requires, including:

- Announcing a $1 billion guarantee for ADB's Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific (IF-CAP) – a $2.5 billion climate finance platform for Asia and

the Pacific, making the United States the Facility's largest donor. The U.S. guarantee will enable $4.5 billion in new lending from ADB, which will start this month.

- Supporting the Launch of the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) Capital Markets Mechanism – an innovative new mechanism that will allow the CIF to raise funds directly in the capital markets, where it estimates it could raise $5 billion or more over 10 years.
- Achieving Record-Levels of Climate Investments through DFC and EXIM – with DFC reaching $3.71 billion in FY24 and mobilizing significant private investment to support over 1 GW of new clean energy capacity, improving U.S. partners' energy security and access. In line with its congressional mandate, EXIM has more than doubled its investments in clean energy and other environmentally beneficial exports – from $1.1 billion in FY23 to a record $1.6 billion in FY24. These new investments, which represent over one-fourth of EXIM's transactions this year, supported $1.7 billion in clean energy and other environmentally beneficial exports, EXIM's highest-ever levels.
- Pioneering Innovative Approaches to Mobilize Private Investment – working with Congress, USAID is investing $41.1 million to drive private finance into hard-to-reach geographies and sectors. This includes a $7.25 million investment through the Enterprises for Development, Growth, and Empowerment (EDGE) Fund to incentivize private investment in impact funds and mobilize investment in natural climate solutions which includes $2.75 million in grants to enable two new investment fund managers under the PREPARE Adaptation Finance Window that aim to catalyze additional public partners to co-invest. USAID will also commit $27.7 million for the Colombia Invest for Climate activity, which aims to transform markets and financial systems and direct public and private funds into climate-smart businesses. Finally,

USAID is committing $6.1 million to the Partnerships for Green Investment initiative announced at COP28 last year to mobilize at least $200 million to achieve 50 million tons of emissions reductions, climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and benefit sharing across Southeast Asia.

- Supporting the Development of the Cambodia Climate Financing Facility (CCFF) – USAID provided technical assistance to support the development of the CCFF, a $100 million green bank that will fill a critical funding gap for climate projects in Cambodia. Once operationalized, the facility will provide concessions to local banks and businesses to stimulate investment in climate adaptation and mitigation projects, assisting Cambodia in meeting its Nationally Determined Contribution (The American, 2024).

The United States has also redoubled efforts to attract significant amounts of private-sector and philanthropic finance for climate action. We are doing this through initiatives such as the PREPARE Call to Action, the Blended Finance for the Energy Transition (BFET) program, the Methane Finance Sprint, and the Energy Transition Accelerator (ETA). In addition, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency have together ramped up private sector mobilization for climate-smart investments around the world (money, 2023).

The United States is proactively forging and nurturing partnerships to leverage public finance for greater impact. For example, we are engaged in Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) with South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam to accelerate their ambitious energy transitions, strengthen the policy and regulatory environment for clean energy investment, and build a pipeline of clean energy projects. We co-lead the International

Partners Group (IPG) for the Indonesia JETP with Japan and worked with our IPG partners and the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero to mobilize over $20 billion in public and private financing. On forestry, the United States has joined the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership with 25 other countries, committing to work collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. As part of the Global Forest Finance Pledge, the participating countries pledged to collectively mobilize $12 billion for the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of forests by 2025.

Aligning financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement is critical to limiting warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, keeping 1.5 degrees within reach, and tackling the climate crisis. While we are scaling-up our climate finance, we are also driving down the cost of technologies necessary for the clean energy transition through the historic investments in the Inflation Reduction Act and resulting innovation and market creation. This could drop the costs of these technologies by up to 25 percent in some sectors, according to some estimates. Given projected spending on clean energy worldwide, that means more than $120 billion could be saved globally by 2030. The United States is working directly with the private sector to boost green growth, including through the Treasury Department's Principles for Net-Zero Financing and Investment. The principles promote consistency and credibility in financial institutions' voluntary net-zero commitments.

DETAILED ANNEX: U.S. INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC FINANCE

Climate Finance in 2022

Total U.S. climate finance increased from $1.5 billion in FY 2021 to $5.8 billion in FY 2022. Of this, $2.3 billion was for adaptation, $2.8 billion was for clean energy, and $655 million was for sustainable landscapes. $2.6 billion was provided as grants, while the remainder was loans, loan guarantees, insurance products, and other financial instruments

intended to leverage greater sums of private finance. This includes a $950 million concessional loan to the Clean Technology Fund.

Climate Finance in 2023 (Projections)

Full ex-post data is not yet available for FY 2023, but preliminary estimates suggest that U.S. climate finance will exceed $9.5 billion, fully in line with and on-track to meet the President's pledge in FY 2024.

DFI Leadership

The United States recognized the power and importance of scaling public finance for the mobilization of private capital through its bilateral development finance institution, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). Over the past three years, DFC's annual climate finance commitments have grown from less than $500 million to over $3.7 billion in FY 2023. DFC's climate commitments encompass private sector investments across nearly every sector of the economy including clean energy, food security, critical minerals, adaptation, and nature-based solutions.

Multilateral Funds

The United States is a committed supporter of multilateral climate funds, which are crucial partners for emerging markets and developing countries working to increase resilience and lower emissions. In 2022, the United States pledged $600.8 million for the Global Environment Facility's eighth replenishment, subject to the availability of funds, a significant portion of which is dedicated to climate. President Biden also doubled his pledge to the Adaptation Fund to $100 million, subject to congressional notification, and we have provided the first $25 million of those funds.

Earlier this year, the United States provided $1 billion to support the Green Climate Fund (GCF), bringing total U.S. support for the GCF to date to $2 billion. In 2023, the United States co-chaired the board of the GCF, making significant progress on further improving access to the Fund and increasing mobilization of private funds, including with the hiring of a new, visionary Executive Director and the approval of a Strategic Plan focused on concrete programmatic and operational improvement targets.

The United States announced a multi-year U.S. pledge of $3 billion for the GCF for its Second Replenishment, subject to the availability of funds. This funding will support the GCF in its mission to mobilize finance to help developing countries reduce their emissions, enhance energy security through diversification of energy sources, assist the most vulnerable to adapt to climate impacts, and strengthen the resilience of their economies and critical infrastructure. In the context of our pledge, the United States will continue to champion an ambitious GCF evolution agenda to help ensure that future U.S. funds provided to the GCF have maximum impact for U.S. taxpayers with respect to climate and diplomacy.

MDB Evolution

Under President Biden, the Treasury Department has championed efforts to evolve the MDB to be more fit-for-purpose to respond to global challenges, including climate change, with urgency and impact. Significant progress was achieved this year, beginning with the World Bank, which has adopted a new vision statement of creating a world free of poverty on a livable planet. Among many other reforms, the United States has pressed for measures to free up additional MDB lending capacity, which in turn will boost MDB climate finance, and improve operational models, including to strengthen crisis response toolkits and incorporate climate-resilient debt clauses into loan agreements.

The United States has also championed the use of innovative financial approaches across the MDBs, including guarantee platforms, hybrid capital, and securitization. As one example, we aim to support the Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific (IFCAP) at the Asian Development Bank, which could mobilize as much as $15 billion in new climate finance. We are also pushing the MDBs to maximize the impact of private capital mobilization reforms by increasing investor co-financing, creating robust private capital mobilization goals and metrics, and increasing data transparency. Measures already adopted or under consideration are expected to increase MDB lending capacity by $200 billion over 10 years, and additional work remains to build on this year's progress.

Private Finance & Philanthropy

The United States is working to mobilize more private and philanthropic capital for climate action. Since Special Envoy Kerry and USAID Administrator Power launched the PREPARE Call to Action to the Private Sector at COP27, ten companies have mobilized an estimated $610 million in additional finance to build climate resilience in partner countries. These investments have supported more than 9.3 million people in Africa, Middle East, and Latin America to better manage the impacts of climate change.

The United States is also collaborating across government agencies to support innovative private sector-led approaches to blended finance. Through the Blended Finance for the Energy Transition (BFET) program, the State Department, in partnership with USAID's Climate Finance for Development Accelerator, will help mobilize over $1 billion of capital to accelerate the energy transition in emerging market and developing countries. With co-funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and development finance institution, IFU, and engagement from the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, BFET competitively awarded funding to two private sector-led blended finance investment funds.

Philanthropies have been stepping up as part of the Methane Finance Sprint, launched in April 2023 by President Biden to increase overall funding for methane abatement. Overall, methane grant funding mobilized since COP27 has significantly exceeded the goal set by President Biden. Philanthropies have been an essential part of this effort.

We are also working with philanthropic partners to design and launch the Energy Transition Accelerator (ETA) to catalyze private capital to speed up the transition from dirty to clean power in developing and emerging economies through high-integrity carbon crediting. The ETA partners – the State Department, the Bezos Earth Fund, and The Rockefeller Foundation – will join with interested countries and leading companies to pioneer an innovative sectoral-scale crediting approach. This approach will generate high-quality credits based on verified emission reductions achieved across the power sector, ensuring strong environmental integrity and incentivizing large-scale sectoral transformation (money, 2023).

"By funding a national network of non-profit financing institutions that will deliver capital to tens of thousands of clean technology projects in local communities across the country, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund will transform local economies and help us meet our climate goals," **said Senior Advisor and Acting Director of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Jahi Wise**. "Investments like this one will expand opportunities for the communities that have too often been left out and left behind."

Today's announcement builds on the $7 billion Solar for All competition EPA Administrator Regan launched on June 28, 2023 with Senator Bernie Sanders at an event in Vermont. That competition, also under the Inflation Reduction Act's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, will expand the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities primed for residential solar investment. Through Solar for All, EPA will award

up to 60 grants to states, territories, Tribal governments, municipalities, and eligible nonprofits to create and expand low-income solar programs that provide financial and technical assistance, such as workforce development, to enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy and benefit from residential solar. The announcements today—culminating the President's Investing in America tour—mark the remaining two NOFO announcements for this historic program.

Together, these three competitions under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund will help meet the President's climate goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50-52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030—and achieving net zero emissions by no later than 2050. They also help advance the President's commitment to environmental justice and the Justice40 Initiative, which sets the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments in climate, clean energy, and other areas flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution–with at least $18.6 billion of the $27 billion across the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund dedicated to low-income and disadvantaged communities.

This investment was made possible by President Biden's Investing in America agenda, which is growing the American economy from the middle out and the bottom up – from rebuilding our nation's infrastructure, to driving over $500 billion in private sector manufacturing and clean energy investments in the United States, to creating good-paying jobs and building a clean-energy economy that will combat climate change and make our communities more resilient (epa, 2023).

1.5.2 The United States' diplomatic and political role in shaping global climate policies

After sitting on the sidelines under the last administration, the United States has emerged under President Obama as a leader in international climate diplomacy. In particular,

during President Obama's second term the U.S. has invested substantial political capital and foreign policy resources into the pursuit of an ambitious domestic and international agenda – including but not limited to the Paris Agreement.

The impact of this sustained effort should not be underestimated. Climate change has been a rare bright spot in foreign affairs at a time when the global community has been facing a long list of crises and a wave of nationalist sentiment, with few obvious success stories. Climate can continue to offer space for international cooperation and should not be viewed in a silo, separate from other challenges.

The election of a new U.S. administration is both an opportunity and a risk for global efforts to combat climate change. Given the unique role of the U.S. in international affairs and its significant geopolitical influence, it will be critical that any new administration prioritizes climate change and builds on the successes of the past four years in order to ensure continued momentum after Paris and scaled up ambition (Dimsdale, 2016).

The appointment of John Kerry as U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate

Kerry tweeted that "America will soon have a government that treats the climate crisis as the urgent national security threat it is." The former Massachusetts senator, who ran for president in 2004, added that he will work with Biden, US allies and the climate movement to address the "crisis" of global heating.

As secretary of state, Kerry played a prominent role in the international effort to craft the Paris climate agreement, which commits countries to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid disastrous storms, heatwaves, flooding and other looming climate threats.

Since leaving government in 2017, Kerry has been sharply critical of Donald Trump's dismantling of climate policies and the decision to remove the US from the Paris agreement. Biden has vowed to re-enter the Paris deal.

Over the summer, Kerry was part of a climate taskforce the Biden campaign used to develop its carbon-cutting policies.

The appointment of such a heavyweight political figure to a newly elevated climate position was warmly welcomed by environmentalists.

"John Kerry's appointment is an encouraging signal that the US will make the climate emergency a matter of national security, but it's only a step in what must be a bold new strategy," said Brett Hartl, director of government affairs at the Center for Biological Diversity.

"Because Trump spent four years boosting fossil fuels and blocking solutions, the new administration must prove its commitment to drawing down fossil fuels and treating this crisis with the life-and-death urgency that it deserves."

Seen as a moderate among climate campaigners, Kerry will probably be tasked with gaining support among Republicans for Biden's sweeping $2tn plan to drastically cut emissions by generating millions of new jobs in renewable energy and other climate-friendly activities (Oliver, 2020).

John Kerry's diplomatic efforts

The pandemic has meant very few diplomatic trips in the early days of the Biden administration. But this week brought an exception, as White House climate envoy John F. Kerry hopped a commercial flight to meet masked face to masked face with allies in London, Brussels and Paris.

“What we’re trying to do is raise the ambition of many countries, of all countries,” the former U.S. Secretary of State said from Paris on Wednesday. “Because we’ve been absent for four years and there’s been an absence of any dialogue on climate — and these countries have all been basically dissed over these last four years — President Biden thought it was important for us to be able to conduct this essential personal diplomacy at this point in time.”

Kerry aims to demonstrate that the United States not only has rejoined the international effort to slow global warming, but also wants to lead other signatories in realizing the central aims of the 2015 Paris climate accord. Even as the Biden administration has promised to take significant steps at home, it also wants to persuade other major economies, such as China and India, to move more aggressively to cut their carbon emissions.

Kerry’s packed visit — since Monday, he has met with foreign secretaries, business and industry leaders, the head of NATO, European Union climate chief Frans Timmermans, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron, among others — carried an unmistakable sense of urgency.

In the broader sense, Kerry’s visit also underscores the urgency that Biden has repeatedly expressed about the growing risks posed by a warming climate — and the economic and environmental opportunities that lie in embracing a shift away from fossil fuels.

"One of the purposes of my coming over here, and one of the purposes of these conversations we've been having, is to impress on people that we view this decade as the decade of action," Kerry said Wednesday, adding that the United States and its allies must make "a very genuine effort" to try to hit the most ambitious goal of the Paris accord — limiting the Earth's warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels (Brady, 2021).

Biden and Kerry have said the United States will soon unveil a far more aggressive plan to put the nation on the path toward net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and to take meaningful steps to significantly begin reducing the country's carbon footprint by 2030. The United States is the second-biggest emitter, behind China, of carbon dioxide, the most abundant greenhouse gas.

Biden is hiking the cost of carbon. It will change how the U.S. tackles global warming.

Officials across multiple federal agencies — not to mention various environmental and scientific groups — have been busy crunching numbers to figure out the most significant promise Biden can make, and what mixture of policies would be required to achieve it (Brady, 2021).

The Transatlantic Climate Bridge Initiative

In the fall of 2020, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas announced a relaunch of the Transatlantic Climate Bridge in the aftermath of the U.S. election of President Joseph R. Biden. President Biden, who took office on January 20, 2021, recommitted the U.S. politically to international climate policy after its four-year absence from the global climate governance arena. Although the TCB relaunch provides a framework for establishing long-term, inter-administration climate policy relations between the U.S. and German

governments, it structurally seeks to include Canada as well. Additionally, with the 2020 relaunch, the TCB extended its focus beyond the government level to involve states, cities, parliamentarians, businesses, and academia (Campbell A. , 2008).

The 2021 Leaders' Summit on Climate

The results of the summit were described by Climate Action Tracker as a step forward in the fight against climate change, even though there is still a long way to go to reach the 1.5 degrees target.

The most important commitments were made by United States, United Kingdom, European Union, China and Japan.

At the summit the Biden administration submitted a new Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), according to Climate Action Tracker "the biggest climate step made by any US government in history" (climate, 2021).

At the summit Biden's administration launched a number of coalitions and initiatives to limit climate change and help to reduce its impacts, among others a Global Climate Ambition Initiative to help low-income countries achieve those targets, and a "Net-Zero Producers Forum, with Canada, Norway, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, together representing 40% of global oil and gas production" (knowledge, 2021).

Several countries increased their climate pledges in the summit.

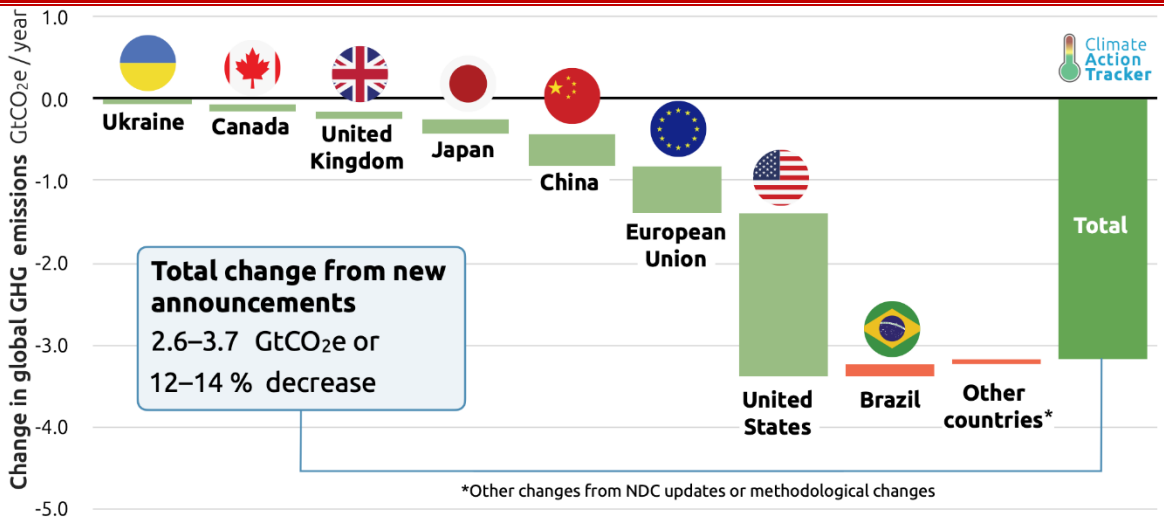

Figure 4: impact on 2030 emissions gap from recent announcements

1.6 Summary

This chapter will show how the United States played its role in global climate efforts since the Paris Agreement of 2015. It will briefly explain why the agreement was considered significant and why a leading role was expected of the US, which is one of the top emitters of greenhouse gases. Another major event that happened was the Trump government pulling out of the Paris Agreement. This was a big loss both in appearance and reality. But this chapter will show how the Biden government joining the agreement again in early 2021 showed real commitment to change and take the lead on climate issues.

Upon its return, the US launched a set of ambitious climate policies to cut emissions, speed up the switch to clean energy, and fund sustainable tech. Big wins include the Inflation Reduction Act—the biggest climate investment in US history—and higher backing for renewable energy, electric cars, and energy efficiency.

At an organizational level, it is highlighted how federal agencies and state governments along with legislative actions have significantly provided support towards the climate goals. It also sketches America's return to international climate diplomacy and its new financial pledges in favor of developing nations to help them adapt to climate change as an effort to rebuild trust and credibility on the world stage.

In conclusion, the chapter summarizes the main successes of US climate policy during the Paris Agreement era, while noting that these achievements must be reinforced to ensure lasting impact, especially in the face of ongoing political and economic challenges.

Chapter II:

Challenges and Future Outlook for US Climate Policy

2.1 Introduction

Achieving ambitious climate change policies, whether on the US homefront or globally, poses a myriad of intertwined problems. Recurrent promises aimed at decreasing fossil fuel emissions and advancing the clean energy economy remain undermined by a myriad of complications...

The US political sphere is characterized by an all-encompassing bipartisan schism in American society, which results in legislative stalemates in terms of both enacting and implementing climate policies. Economically, resistance from legacy industries and slow pace of tech advancement gives rise to new constraints. Furthermore, social equity issues around climate change are increasingly important – in the context of the United States, the protection of susceptible groups and internationally, the concern regarding the obligations of developed nations towards countries with developing economies.

More sustainable long-term prospects needs to be a priority in light of these issues. This involves innovative strategies that simultaneously seek economic advancement, climate justice, and the environmental obligations of the US on a global scale.

2.2 Political and Legislative Barriers

2.2.1 Impact of political polarization

2.2.1.1 Polarizing Climate Politics in America

Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines – and partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive – than at any point in the last two decades. These trends manifest themselves in myriad ways, both in politics and in everyday life. And a new survey of 10,000 adults nationwide finds that these divisions are greatest among those who are the most engaged and active in the political process.

Beyond Dislike: Viewing the Other Party as a 'Threat to the Nation's Well-Being'

And at a time of increasing gridlock on Capitol Hill, many on both the left and the right think the outcome of political negotiations between Obama and Republican leaders should be that their side gets more of what it wants.

Political Activism Gap: Right and Left More Likely to Vote, Donate to Campaigns

Beyond the rise in ideological consistency, another major element in polarization has been the growing contempt that many Republicans and Democrats have for the opposing party. To be sure, disliking the other party is nothing new in politics. But today, these sentiments are broader and deeper than in the recent past (Political Polarization in the American Public, 2014)**.**

Under President Bill Clinton, US negotiators played a significant role in shaping the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 treaty to curb greenhouse gas emissions through a trading scheme modeled on market-based approaches to limiting the pollutants that cause acid rain. The US never ratified Kyoto because the Senate unanimously voted for the 1997 Byrd-Hagel Resolution, which declared that the US should not join a climate agreement that would create

new commitments for developed countries if it did not also create commitments for developing countries, or would harm the US economy.

This divided government attitude is partly a reflection of the different electoral calculations of a president who can draw votes from across the country, versus individual senators and congress members who are elected by voters in their states, or in even smaller congressional districts. The voting of members of congress does not seem to reflect national attitudes on climate. Just before COP26, a survey from the AP-NORC Center and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago showed that 75% of Americans believe climate change is happening, and 59% say it is accelerating. Fifty-five percent say they would pay a small surcharge on their electricity bills to fund more investment in renewable energy. While almost half the population would support requiring a transition to electric vehicles, the divide along political party lines helps explain why the polling does not translate into new laws: 61% of Democrats support such a requirement, while only 23% of Republicans do. The structure of our government means that majorities govern neither by averages nor, in some cases, America in 2021 (John & Mélody, 2021).

"Affective polarization" refers to how much partisans dislike each other. It is at an all-time high. Evidence of this is that people would rather have their children marry someone from another racial group or religion than from the other political party. At the same time, this kind of tribalism isn't the norm. The Report cites a More in Common study "Hidden Tribes" which finds the right wing of "traditional" and "devoted" conservatives make up 25 percent of voters vs. only eight percent on the left of "progressive activists." Run the numbers and you get the remaining *two thirds*, what more in Common calls "the exhausted majority."

This group tends to be less vocal and less politically engaged. As a result, the extremes have more of an opportunity to shape policy when they can and clash about it when they

can't. This is especially true on the right. Over the past 40 years Congressional Republicans have shifted further to the right than Congressional Democrats have shifted to the left. Finally, the extremes make for more entertaining press copy and online interviews than the many moderates in between. This creates a sense of polarization which is perhaps more real than actually exists. It's not like we're 50/50 at war with each other. While the harder core left and right are engaged in a broad culture war on many topics (e.g., ESG, climate change, and DEI) most Americans are either not engaged in this or are finding it tiresome and wish this war would end (Robert, 2023).

2.2.1.2 US Partisan Polarization on Climate Change

The rise of climate change on the global political agenda coincided with the growth of partisan polarization in US politics and, in many ways, their trajectories mirror one another. When the climate crisis first began to attract political attention 30 years ago, Republicans and Democrats responded with similar levels of interest and concern. Today, partisan division overwhelms all other aspects of climate-change politics and environmental politics more broadly (Egan, Patrick, David Konisky, & Megan Mullin, 2022).

Polarization generally is associated with policy inertia in the United States. The close balance in party strength combined with the system's many veto points demands bipartisan agreement for policies to be enacted and to endure. Thus, for decades, the nation's deep partisan division on climate has yielded gridlock at the federal level and in most states.

However, three developments are emerging in the shadow of polarization that hold opportunity for meaningful action on climate change.

First, as polarization has become more severe and systemic, the two parties have become moreinternally cohesive on the climate-change issue.

Second, the geography of the renewable-energy transition already underway demonstrates the limits of state-policy activity in constraining clean-energy expansion.

Third, the politics of climate-change adaptation have the potential to unfold in ways that depart from the polarized politics of climate-change mitigation.

While polarization's gravity pulls almost every policy domain into its orbit, material and ideological features of climatechange politics have made the issue particularly susceptible to polarization's effects. Because Republican voters are concentrated in jobs and locations that are reliant on carbonintensive industries, the party's embrace of climate-change denialism and resistance to renewable-energy transition is responsive to the interests of its electoral base.

Reaching beyond material concerns, solutions proposed to address the climate crisis require government interventions such as taxes and regulation that have long split Americans ideologically (Campbell & Aaron , 2014).

Partisan division in the United States is a crucial barrier to meaningful political action to address climate change. Among both masses and elites, the two parties have grown only farther apart, even as evidence of the climate crisis mounts. But the past need not necessarily be prologue. Increasing cohesion among Democrats has expanded the scope of climate action when the party is in power. In Republican places, growth in clean energy and climate risk may spur policies that support renewable energy and reduce harm from extreme weather, even without recognition of climate change as a driver. These developments suggest that government responses to the climate crisis at the federal and state levels are possible even as American politics and policy making remain firmly in polarization's grip (Patrick J. Egan & Megan Mullin, 2024).

2.2.2 Legislative gridlock.

The beginning of the Barack Obama presidency offered the first realistic opportunity to pass meaningful legislation addressing climate change. But the political atmosphere surrounding his election, with growing polarization and the rise of the Tea Party, had changed the mood. A wave of opposition made anything the White House touched — including curbing global warming — toxic for Republicans. And though the House passed legislation that would have capped companies' emissions and required them to trade credits if they exceeded those levels, the measure was never voted on in the Senate as Democrats opted to instead focus on health-care reform.

And any hope of passing climate-change legislation quickly disappeared after the Democrats lost seats in the 2010 midterms. So, Obama instructed his agencies to create new regulations on the issue instead. During his presidency, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued nearly 4,000 rules, according to a House Energy and Commerce Committee report. The most significant — the Clean Power Plan — would have functioned as a cap-and-trade program in the power sector at the state level. The hasty rule-making angered Republicans, even some inclined to support measures to address climate change. Obama measures were easy to target for Republicans not only on substance but on procedural grounds.

Enter President Donald Trump.

Trump had previously expressed support for addressing climate change, but during his campaign he railed against regulations he said hurt American businesses. And, upon taking office, he began a vast effort to undo them.

Since then, with Obama absent from the picture, a glimmer of bipartisanship on climate change has re-emerged. The House Climate Solutions Caucus now has 50 members, 25 from

each party. And some of the more controversial measures slowing action on climate change have been halted as a result of Republicans who broke rank (Justin, 2017).

A Senate that's expected to stay in Republican hands is likely to create headaches for a potential Biden presidency on climate legislation and nominees for top environmental posts.

The blue wave anticipated by Democrats failed to materialize, leaving a smaller Democratic majority in the House and what's likely to remain a GOP-controlled Senate, where Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has often refused to bring climate-related bills to the floor.

Republican control of the upper chamber could also make it tough for former Vice President Joe Biden to secure Senate confirmation for potential Cabinet picks and other top administration posts for energy and environment policy.

Nominees who have clashed with the Trump administration might find a steep path to confirmation.

That could pose problems for people like Mary Nichols, one of California's top environmental regulators who's considered a contender to lead the Environmental Protection Agency if Biden wins.

"Four years of Donald Trump have torn gaping holes in the fabric of this country's environmental protection laws," Nichols told Bloomberg earlier this year. "Fixing this damage requires an all-hands-on-deck approach from every citizen, and I stand ready to do my part."

Gina McCarthy, an Obama-era EPA administrator, told reporters Wednesday that she hopes Biden will appoint "the Anthony Fauci" of the EPA and Energy Department, adding that "many people can fit that bill."

Other environmentalists argue that GOP rejection of any qualified nominee would be hypocritical.

"We can't imagine they would now turn around and credibly reject any Cabinet nominees of a President Biden on the basis of policy disagreements, since we know he will only nominate highly qualified individuals," Pierce added.

On the legislative front, climate bills face a tough road to passage, if they're even brought to the floor.

House Democrats this year passed measures on rejoining the Paris climate accord and banning offshore drilling, but the Senate hasn't taken them up and has no plans to do so.

Environmentalists are also hopeful that lawmakers can find issues where there's bipartisan support.

But key players in both the Senate confirmation and legislative process remain something of a wildcard.

The collapse of President Joe Biden's legislative agenda is drawing new scrutiny to the White House's efforts to confront global warming — and Democrats' complaints that his own Climate Policy Office is getting in the way.

The office headed by domestic climate policy chief Gina McCarthy has held up progress on multiple fronts, nine Democrats inside and outside the administration told POLITICO — accusing it of too often placing political considerations and relations with Congress ahead of weaning the nation off fossil fuels.

The office's micromanaging of other government bodies has weakened the Interior Department's efforts to rein in oil and gas leases on federal lands, stalled a redo of federal ethanol policies and slowed White House efforts to address pollution in low-income and minority communities, said the Democrats, who include congressional staff and current or former Biden administration officials. They were granted anonymity to discuss politically sensitive issues.

In some cases, they said, McCarthy's office appears to be avoiding court fights or potential disruptions of negotiations with lawmakers such as Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.). And that's preventing regulators such as the Environmental Protection Agency from doing their jobs, the critics said (Rachel & Rebecca, 2020).

Instead of letting them do the business of writing rules, proposing them and publishing them, [the climate office] at their discretion will pull everything back and ask questions and delay," one administration official said.

The criticism comes at a delicate moment for Biden, who came into office calling climate change one of the "four crises" facing the U.S., and who promised to put people to work upgrading the power grid with renewable energy and making millions of electric vehicles while cleaning up heavily polluted areas. Now, spiking gasoline prices and Russia's war in Ukraine have forced the White House to devote efforts to boosting fossil fuel supplies at home and in Europe. Meanwhile, recent news reports indicate that McCarthy may be close to stepping down.

But the detractors say Biden's agenda is already suffering from Democrats' travails in Congress, where Manchin's opposition doomed efforts to approve more than $500 billion in climate spending last year. They said the climate office's modest accomplishments and seeming lack of urgency are failing to fill the gap — which in turn threatens to dampen progressive voters' enthusiasm for Biden's presidency (Marc, 2022).

2.3 Economic and Technological Obstacles

2.3.1 Issues related to economic interests

International trade tensions

China submitted its second request to establish a panel to determine whether certain tax credits under the United States Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) are in line with WTO rules. The United States said it was not in a position to agree to China's first request in July, justifying its actions as necessary to combat climate change. China stated that the IRA's subsidies favour US goods over imports, violating WTO rules prohibiting such discrimination.

The United States expressed disappointment over China's decision to pursue a panel request and reiterated that the IRA is its most significant step toward clean energy, aimed at ensuring secure and sustainable supply chains for a global clean energy future.

The DSB agreed to the establishment of the panel. Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the European Union, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and Venezuela reserved their third party rights to participate in the panel proceedings.

For the 12th time, the United States raised the matter of the panel ruling in DS597 at a DSB meeting. The US said it was raising the matter again as a result of recent developments in Hong Kong, China regarding free speech and human rights. The US referred back to its previous statements regarding its position on essential security and its reasons for placing this item on the DSB agenda.

Hong Kong, China criticized the US for once again raising this matter at the DSB. It referred to previous WTO panels that dismissed US claims that invoking national security in defense of a trade-restrictive measure is entirely self-judging.

China reiterated its firm belief that a restored appeal mechanism is the proper place to address claims of panel error made by the US and rejected in the strongest terms what it said was US interference in the internal affairs of another WTO member (wto, 2024).

European leaders are becoming increasingly alarmed by the harmful impact of recent "protectionist" US legislation on European industry, with the EU Commissioner for the Internal Market Thierry Breton even calling it an "existential challenge" to Europe that could potentially lead to the continent's "deindustrialisation".

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was signed into US law in mid-August this year and is arguably President Joe Biden's flagship legislative achievement.

"I think it's time for us Europeans to tell our American friends that we are very concerned about the Inflation Reduction Act, and that it could cause the deindustrialisation of Europe," French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire recently said. His words were echoed by Breton, who claimed that immediate action must be taken in order to "revert the deindustrialisation process taking place" (Moller-Nielsen, 2022).

The influence of industrial lobbies and political funding

In a rebuke of more moderate party members who favor preserving select subsidies granted by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, a group of 38 Republicans is pushing for a full repeal of the IRA’s energy tax credits. While the hardliners argue that maintaining any of the credits undermines the GOP’s traditional free-market stance, the party split raises questions about its ability to challenge the climate provisions in any meaningful way.

The Trump administration announced it will allow commercial fishing in the nearly 500,000 square miles of Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, reversing protections established by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The move,

authorized by executive order, allows U.S.-flagged and select foreign vessels with American crews to fish 50 to 200 nautical miles offshore. A separate order called for a feasibility review of other marine monuments. Critics condemned the decision as a threat to fragile ecosystems.

U.S. oil producers are finding themselves on unsteady ground: Just as they look primed to cash in on new deregulation, weakened oil prices and the general economic uncertainty caused by President Donald Trump's tariffs threaten to override their payday. So far, prices have mostly stayed below the $65-per-barrel threshold that makes new drilling a profitable enterprise, and forecasts are for more of the same. Further, analysts warn that tariffs could significantly slow oil demand, while rising production costs and an expected global supply glut add their own pressures. In the end, despite Trump's talk of "energy dominance," it is quite possible that $50-per-barrel oil—the Administration's reported target—will inevitably lead to reduced domestic output (Garden, 2025).

2.3.2 Issues related to technological innovation

Although many types of policies affect innovation, no universally accepted nomenclature or taxonomy summarizes or describes them. Economists often use the term "technology policy" to describe the diverse collection of measures that in one way or another affect technological development, and these are the focus of this report. Taxonomies of technology policy seldom include regulatory policies, such as environmental regulations and antitrust enforcement, which have in the past been a major stimulus to innovation and adoption.

Since World War II, national security and public health have been the primary motivations for U.S. technology policies. In the 1980s, productivity growth and industrial competitiveness became more

Government-Funded R&D

For many policy-makers and analysts inside and outside of government, technology policy begins and ends with public funding of R&D. Studies of climate change and energy policy are replete with calls for "more R&D." (John A, David C, & Edward S).

2.4 Climate Justice and Equity

2.4.1 Addressing equity concerns at the local level.

Just Solutions launched a collaborative effort this past Spring with our national and state partners to highlight policy pathways advocates could pursue to advance and defend climate justice depending upon the presidential election results. Now that the results are known, our forthcoming report to be released in January will highlight what to expect in a second Trump Administration and policy pathways for localities and states to defend and continue to advance environmental and climate justice. As we begin to assess what is ahead, two of President Biden's hallmark equity measures – Justice40 (J40) and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) – are likely at risk of being eliminated.

President Biden's Executive Order 14008, "Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad," established the J40 Initiative and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. For the first time, J40 set a goal for federal agencies to allocate at least 40 percent of benefits from specified programs to "disadvantaged communities." These programs were selected based on their ability to address investment inequities in clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and clean water infrastructure. The interim implementation guidance published by the Council on Environmental Quality in July 2021 required agencies to track and report the amount of funding and other indirect benefits associated with J40 covered programs.

Using numerous indicators of exposure to climate risk, legacy pollution, and socio-economic hardship across eight "categories of burden," the CEJST shows which Census tracts qualify as disadvantaged communities for the purpose of guiding agency implementation of the J40 initiative. As a public-facing tool, the CEJST also allows advocates and stakeholders

to see where J40 investments under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) are prioritized, in order to evaluate if and when benefits from these programs reach these communities.

Although the design and implementation of J40 and the CEJST have had flaws, they have marked a significant effort to center environmental and climate justice concerns and priorities. As a result of J40, federal agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Department of the Interior has tailored various aspects of the implementation of J40 covered programs, including the initial program design, application requirements, and engagement opportunities once funding has been awarded. The White House's Environmental Justice Scorecard provides some insight into how agencies have adjusted their programs and policies to comply with J40 and showcases announcements of funding.

Despite these efforts, advocates have found it difficult to determine if agencies, whether at a programmatic or agency-wide level, are actually reaching the 40 percent target. Additionally, compliance with J40 goals becomes more difficult to determine given that the federal government is measuring "overall benefits," a term that includes both direct financial assistance and related co-benefits. Notably, the EJ Scorecard does not grade agencies' progress toward achieving 40 percent, and it does not account for the fact that some of the J40 covered programs promote or directly fund false solutions to the climate crisis.

Moving forward under a Trump administration, agencies will likely place less emphasis on securing benefits for disadvantaged communities. We also anticipate that agencies will deprioritize awarding grants under IRA and IIJA and that any new awards will be less likely to go to disadvantaged communities.

What's Next for Climate Equity Policies?

Because J40 and CEJST were created through executive order and do not require a notice-and-comment period, President-elect Trump can – and is expected to – rescind EO 14096, remove websites associated with J40, and eliminate the CEJST on Day One. At the agency level, Trump will likely rescind guidance published by the Council of Environmental Quality that helps agencies understand how to administer J40. Agencies will generally no longer be required to track how funding from the IRA and the IIJA is administered or to prioritize funding for disadvantaged communities.

A possible exception to the elimination of J40 goals are those sections of the IRA, in particular, that refer to "disadvantaged communities" in the statutory text and have yet to be fully implemented. These include the Solar for All and Clean Communities Investment Accelerator programs under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, certain grants related to monitoring and addressing air pollution, and the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants (which EPA has implemented in the form of various grant programs, including the Community Change grants and Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program). The legislation either does not define "disadvantaged communities" in these cases or directs that the term is to be defined by the EPA Administrator. If the new administration carries through on its obligations to implement the IRA, definitions developed by the Biden administration will likely be challenged in some cases. In the case of funds that have not yet been obligated, it would be fairly easy for the new administration to create its own definitions of "disadvantaged communities."

While the future of J40 and CEJST is uncertain come January, one thing is clear: many disadvantaged communities can benefit from prioritized federal funding for community-centered solutions. Federal investments are addressing long-standing environmental and

climate justice needs. We remain hopeful that we can continue to see these investments come to fruition and deliver results in the years to come.

2.4.2 Addressing equity concerns at the global level

2.4.2.1 Global Methane Pledge

a- Presentation on the Global Methane Pledge

Methane is a powerful but short-lived climate pollutant that accounts for a third of net warming since the Industrial Revolution. Rapidly reducing methane emissions from energy, agriculture, and waste can achieve near-term gains in our efforts in this decade for decisive action and is regarded as the single most effective strategy to keep the goal of limiting warming to 1.5˚C within reach while yielding co-benefits, including improving public health and agricultural productivity.

The Global Methane Pledge (GMP) was launched at COP26 by the European Union and the United States who have been joined by many countries. In January 2025, GMP counted 159 participants.

Since its launch, the GMP has generated unprecedented momentum for methane mitigation, with major work underway in six action areas including: the Energy Pathway, the Waste Pathway, the Food and Agriculture Pathway, Methane Plans and Policies, Data for Methane Action, and Finance for Methane Abatement.

Such work is being supported by a broad range of leading international actors such as the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), the Global Methane Hub (GMH), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the World Bank. (GMP).

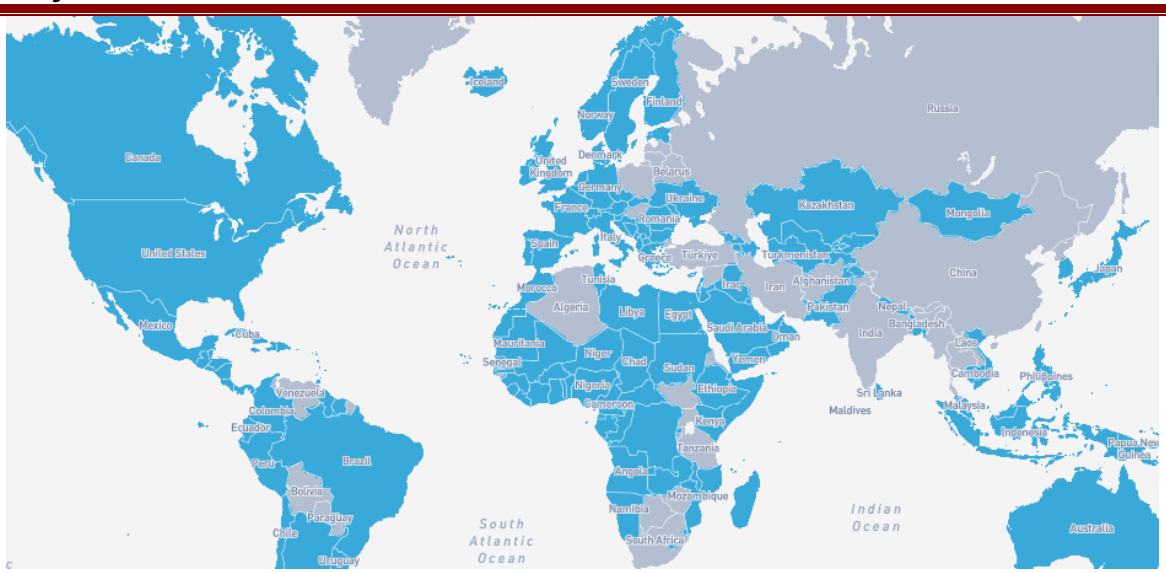

Figure: The countries participating in the Global Methane Pledge are outlined

b- President Joe Biden's Remarks at the Launch of the Pledge

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, to state the obvious, we meet with the eyes of history upon us and the profound questions before us. It's simple: Will we act? Will we do what is necessary? Will we seize the enormous opportunity before us? Or will we condemn future generations to suffer?

This is the decade that will determine the answer. This decade. The science is clear: We only have a brief window left before us to raise our ambitions and to raise — to meet the task that's rapidly narrowing.

This is a decisive decade in which we have an opportunity to prove ourselves. We can keep the goal of limiting global warming to just 1.5 degrees Celsius within our reach if we come together, if we commit to doing our part of each of our nations with determination and with ambition. That's what COP26 is all about.

Glasgow must be the kickoff of a decade — a decade of ambition and innovation to preserve our shared future.

Climate change is already ravaging the world. We've heard from many speakers. It's not a hypothetical; it's not a hypothetical threat. It's destroying people's lives and livelihoods and doing it every single day.

It is costing our nations trillions of dollars. Record heat and drought are fueling more widespread and more intense wildfires in some places and crop failures in others. Record flooding and what used to be a once-in-a-century storms are now happening every few years (white house, 2021).

Certainly. Here's the content arranged into a coherent paragraph without altering the original content:

The US and the EU have announced a global partnership to cut emissions of the greenhouse gas methane by 2030. EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen and US President Joe Biden made the announcement at the COP26 summit on Tuesday.

The Global Methane Pledge aims to limit methane emissions by 30% compared with 2020 levels. It is one of the most potent greenhouse gases and responsible for a third of current warming from human activities. More than 100 countries have signed up to the initiative, first proposed by the US and the EU in September.

The main focus of efforts to curb global warming is carbon dioxide (CO2), which is emitted as a result of human activities such as generating power and clearing forests. But there has been a growing focus on methane as a way of buying extra time to tackle climate change. Although there's more CO2 in the atmosphere and it sticks around for longer, individual methane molecules have a more powerful warming effect on the atmosphere than single CO2 molecules. And while one of the key goals of COP26 is to get countries to commit to achieving net zero by 2050—meaning not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the

atmosphere—both leaders stressed that they needed to act now. "We cannot wait for 2050," EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told the summit. "We have to cut emissions fast." She said cutting methane was "one of the most effective things we can do to reduce near-term global warming", calling it "the lowest hanging fruit". US President Joe Biden echoed her words, calling methane "one of the most potent greenhouse gases there is". The pledge covers countries which emit nearly half of all methane, and make up 70% of global GDP, the US president said. The speed with which the world has moved to tackle methane emissions gives real hope that the world is finally waking up to the massive threat posed by warming gases. Just last August the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that methane was responsible for a significant proportion of the 1C of warming the world has already experienced. In September, the EU and the US brought the global pledge into being, and have persuaded some significant emitters to join the club. The thrust is to cut emissions by 30% by 2030.

The main focus in the short-term will be the fossil fuel industry. Most of the curbs can be achieved at little or no cost. The potential benefits are huge—scientists believe it could help the world avoid 0.3C of warming by 2040. At a time where every fraction of a degree matters, that is a major saving that could help keep the 1.5C threshold in play. But there are some significant clouds on the horizon. Major emitters like Russia, China, and India are not part of the pledge. All the commitments are voluntary—there is no big stick. Despite this, most observers see the pledge as a good step for the world and a boost for the conference (matt , 2021).

2.4.2.2 Climate Justice Initiatives in the Western Hemisphere

No administration in history has done more than President Joe Biden’s to ensure that all people—regardless of race, income, or ZIP code—live in healthy and safe communities. The

Biden administration has advanced an unprecedented climate, clean energy, and environmental justice agenda to accelerate progress toward securing access to clean air and safe water, affordable and clean renewable energy, and climate-resilient and healthy communities for all Americans (Jasia & Jamie, 2024).

Within days of taking office, President Biden launched the first-ever White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC)11 to help shape the administration's environmental justice policies.12 Guided by the WHEJAC, in April 2023, President Biden issued an executive order (EO) recognizing that "restoring and protecting a healthy environment — wherever people live, play, work, learn, grow, and worship — is a matter of justice and a fundamental duty that the Federal Government must uphold on behalf of all people." (Cathleen, Michele , & Rachel, 2024).

The Biden-Harris administration has defined advancing racial justice, tackling global climate change, and furthering peace across the Western Hemisphere as key priorities. These priorities have been ratified with recent reports from the White House, particularly the Biden-Harris Administration's Statement on Drug Policy Priorities for Year One, the State Department International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, and the 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. The fact that these issues were elevated within the first three months of the Biden-Harris administration sends a strong message to the region and reaffirms the administration's commitment to racial equity.

Recent policy initiatives in Colombia, some of them backed by USAID, exemplify how the Biden administration could make supporting community-led Afro-descendant initiatives—for peace, autonomy, climate solutions and sustainable development—a central component of its Latin America agenda. This will allow the U.S. to reclaim and strengthen its leadership role with an equity lens that uplifts and supports historically disenfranchised communities.

In January, a coalition of Afro-Colombian, Indigenous, and Campesino leaders wrote a letter calling on the Biden-Harris administration to take action to secure peace, in part by supporting the political and economic autonomy of Afro-Colombian communities in their territories." As the Biden administration develops its concrete policy for Latin America, it has to promote security and economic development for marginalized communities, in addition to tools and resources that help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Today, deforestation, due to both illicit and sanctioned activities, poses a grave threat to the Amazon and the Pacific region.

Investing the necessary resources in the governance of ancestral territories can present a promising pathway of advancing not only peace and wellbeing, but also drug policy, climate and conservation goals. Indeed, both regionally and worldwide, titled Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, which cover about one fifth of carbon stored in all forests, are often associated with lower deforestation rates. (Gilberto & Caroline, 2021).

Figure 06: It reflects instability and lack of security in the streets of Colombia

Across Latin America, Afro-descendant communities are on the frontlines of deforestation and climate change. With the unprecedented COVID-19 American Rescue Plan,

the American Jobs Plan, and other legislation to implement the administration's proposed FY22 budget, President Biden has the chance to make substantial strides in priorities including tackling global climate change, addressing racial injustice, and furthering hemisphere-wide stability in a way that reflects the centrality of racial and ethnic minorities in any solution. As the case of Colombia demonstrates, investing in Afro-descendant communities throughout Latin America offers one effective means to reach these goals.

2.5 Future Prospects

Timed to coincide with the opening of COP26—the UN Climate Change Conference—and citing his prior commitment to cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50-52 percent by 20301 and achieving a net-zero economy by 2050, on November 1, 2021, President Biden announced the launch of the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE). This whole-of-government initiative by FY2024 would provide $3 billion annually in adaptation finance to reduce climate impacts on those most vulnerable to climate change worldwide. The announcement constitutes the first US Adaptation Communication under the Paris Agreement, which President Biden rejoined on the first day of his administration.

Concurrently, the Biden administration released the Long-Term Strategy of the United States: Pathways to Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2050 (Strategy), which—consistent with the conclusion of the most recent report2 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—states that global warming needs to be limited to 1.5º Celsius.

Importantly, the Strategy refers to a forthcoming set of new policies3 to "accelerate existing emissions reduction trends—for example, expanding rapidly the deployment of new technologies like electric vehicles and heat pumps, and building the infrastructure for key systems like our national power grid"—actions intended to help reduce net GHG emissions 50-52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030 and put the United States on a firm footing to meet the net-zero economy goal by 2050 (J. Paul, 2021).

The launch of the PREPARE plan and the long-term strategy represents a qualitative shift in U.S. climate policy. The focus is no longer merely on controlling domestic emissions; rather, there is now a global approach that includes supporting adaptation efforts in vulnerable countries and reinforcing international leadership in climate action.

From a technical standpoint, the emphasis on clean electricity, electric vehicles, and smart infrastructure demonstrates a deep understanding of the need for a comprehensive transformation of energy, transportation, and industrial systems. However, these policies face significant skepticism regarding the U.S. government's readiness and capacity to implement them, particularly in the face of ongoing partisan political divisions and economic headwinds.

In my view, these developments especially coming from a major industrialized nation like the United States are highly significant and unprecedented. Although the bold funding commitments and new directions are likely to attract criticism, their success will depend on the pace of implementation, the commitment of both local and international partners, and careful scrutiny of long-term impacts on vulnerable communities. The involvement of the private sector will also be crucial in ensuring the achievement of these strategic objectives.

2.6 Conclusion

The U.S. has made significant progress in climate policy since rejoining the Paris Agreement, including setting ambitious emissions targets, investing heavily in clean energy, and reclaiming a leadership role globally. However, political polarization, legislative gridlock, and economic reliance on fossil fuels remain key challenges. Policy implications highlight the need for more stable, bipartisan climate policies, stronger federal-state cooperation, and greater focus on equity. Recommendations include: Ensuring policy continuity through bipartisan support. Enhancing coordination between federal and state actions. Investing in clean technology and climate justice. Strengthening global climate leadership. Encouraging academic research into long-term impacts and public engagement. The future of U.S. climate leadership depends on bridging internal divides and sustaining bold, inclusive, and coordinated action.

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Summary

This research analyzes the U.S. climate policy from the period of the Paris Agreement to the present focusing on the accomplishments under President Joe Biden. Chapter One looked at the emission targets for clean energy, the reconstruction of the United States rejoining the agreement after the previous administration's withdrawal, state agengy's contribution, and the U.S. Department's role toward clean energy. It also provided an analysis regarding the paramters of the cutback in emission clean energy programs under the construct of modern American international politics. It also emphasized the U.S. and its role in the climate finance systems of international relations and in the context of leadership in multilateral environmental diplomacy.

The second chapter focused on issues which elude effective climate policy and the many factors that deal with contemporary United States climate policy. The most prominent being political fragmentation and the legislative Framework of the U.S. Congress stagnation makes it difficult for necessary climate legislation to be passed. This includes the economic sponsored by and traditional industries on emerging and new green technologies. Traditionally framed—within countries affected by climate change and, in terms of some climate justice, in relation to responsibilities toward developing countries relative to the U.S.

In any case, the fundamental case looks reasonably with an outlook on the obstacles through the American climate policy in years to come within the means and targeting advanced planning capabilities for maintaining renewable energy sources to increase sustainably in the environment.