

Trump's Energy and Environmental Reset: Key Executive Orders from Day 1

January 21, 2025 Mary Mendoza, Jeff Civins, Victor Salazar

PRACTICES Environmental Litigation, Environmental

On Jan. 20, 2025, the Trump administration issued a number of executive orders (EO) addressing environmental and energy topics. Below is a summary of those orders.

- “Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements” withdraws the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord and terminates the U.S. International Finance Plan. This EO also withdrew the U.S. from other agreements made under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. During the Obama administration, the U.S. joined the Paris Climate Accord, pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2017, President Trump withdrew from the Accord, and in 2021, the Biden administration rejoined the Accord.
- “Declaring a National Energy Emergency” declares a national energy emergency and directs department and agency heads to use emergency authorities to facilitate development of domestic energy resources, including on federal lands. This EO also provides, among other things, for the year-round sales of E15 gasoline, the use of emergency authorities under the Clean Water Act and Rivers and Harbors Act for energy projects, and the use of emergency consultation processes under the Endangered Species Act for energy projects. Note that energy is defined broadly as “crude oil, natural gas, lease condensates, natural gas liquids, refined petroleum products, uranium, coal, biofuels, geothermal heat [and] the kinetic movement of flowing water and critical minerals,” but it does not include solar or wind.
- “Unleashing American Energy” emphasizes actions to “unleash America’s affordable and reliable energy and natural resources.” Among many actions, the EO directs agencies to review regulations to identify and take action on agency actions that “impose an undue burden” on the domestic energy resources (specifically calling out oil, natural gas, coal, hydropower, biofuels, critical minerals and nuclear, but not naming wind or solar), requiring the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to provide guidance on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementation and propose rescinding NEPA regulations at 40 CFR part 1500, and directing agencies to expedite permitting, including the use of emergency authorities. Additionally, EPA is directed to consider eliminating the “social cost of carbon” in the permitting and rulemaking decisions and to assess the “legality and continuing applicability” of the GHG endangerment finding from 2009. The EO directs the Secretary of Energy to restart the reviews of LNG export projects. The EO further expresses a policy intent to eliminate the electric vehicle mandate and to terminate state emission waivers that limit sales of gasoline-powered automobiles.
- “Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential” directs agencies to take numerous steps to “efficiently and effectively maximize the development and production of the natural resources” and “expedite the permitting and leasing of energy and natural resource projects” in Alaska. This EO also prioritizes the development of liquefied natural gas in Alaska and withdraws Secretarial Order 3401, which halted Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) activities, and rescinds certain ANWR lease cancellations.

- “Temporary Withdrawal of All Areas on the Outer Continental Shelf from Offshore Wind Leasing and Review of the Federal Government’s Leasing and Permitting Practices for Wind Projects” withdraws all areas with the Offshore Continental Shelf from leasing for wind energy projects. This EO also directs the agencies to review existing wind energy leases to determine the need for terminating or amending such leases and prohibits new or renewed approvals, rights of way, permits, leases or loans for onshore or offshore wind projects, pending an assessment and review of the practices.
- “Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis” directs agencies to, among other things, “eliminate counterproductive requirements that raise the costs of home appliances” and “eliminate harmful, coercive ‘climate’ policies that increase the costs of food and fuel.”
- “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing” terminates “to the maximum extent allowed by law” environmental justice offices and positions.
- “Regulatory Freeze Pending Review” freezes the proposal or issuance of any new rule until reviewed and approved by the department or agency head nominated by President Trump or that personal delegate. This EO also directs that any rules sent to the Federal Register but not published to be withdrawn and that the adoption of any proposed rules be postponed for 60 days.

The Trump administration also rescinded a number of executive orders by the Biden administration concerning climate change and energy: EO 14008 (“Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad”); EO 14027 (“Establishment of the Climate Change Support Office”); EO 14030 (“Climate-Related Financial Risk”), EO 14037 (“Strengthening American Leadership in Clean Cars and Trucks”); EO 14057 (“Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability”); The Presidential Memorandum of March 13, 2023 (“Withdrawal of Certain Areas Off the United States Arctic Coast of the Outer Continental Shelf from Oil or Gas Leasing”); EO 14096 (“Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All”); and The Presidential Memorandum of Jan. 6, 2025 (“Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Oil or Natural Gas Leasing.”)

The executive orders can be found at [the White House website](#).