

The Paris Climate Agreement

Good for America

Under the Paris Agreement, developed and developing nations alike have committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions based on each country's own national policies¹. This is the first agreement that achieves the long-held goal of both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to ensure that all nations – including China, which is now the world's largest emitter – are committed to meeting specific emission targets and transparently reporting progress.

The agreement preserves the right of the United States and every nation to establish our own domestic policies and determine on our own how we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nothing in the Paris Agreement alters U.S. laws or processes, nor infringes on the rights of Congress, the executive branch, or the courts, to set domestic policies.

The foundation for the Paris agreement was the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was signed by President George H. W. Bush and ratified by a unanimous vote in the Senate in 1992. The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016. As of the end of November, 115 countries representing nearly 80 percent of global emissions have joined.

Why is the Paris Agreement Good for America?

The Paris Agreement has been particularly beneficial for U.S. interests on four fronts:

- (1) *Global pollution reductions protect American families.* Reducing greenhouse gas emissions globally will help reduce the impact of global pollution and climate change on our public health², national security³, and economy⁴.
- (2) *Clean energy leadership creates American jobs.* American workers and businesses have a lot to gain from U.S. leadership in the clean energy economy. For example, job growth in the solar industry was 12 times stronger than the rest of the economy in 2015, and the total number of solar jobs in the U.S. has reached a level higher than oil and gas extraction or coal mining in any of the past several years⁵.
- (3) *Diplomatic leadership advances America's strategic interests.* A major contributor to the diplomatic breakthrough in Paris was the fact that the United States has led the world in emission reductions, strengthening U.S. relationships with nations who play critical roles in the United States' strategic interests abroad.
- (4) *A global roadmap unlocks business investment.* A stable global roadmap on emission reductions provides a global roadmap for U.S. businesses, including those with markets or operations overseas. This stability increases business confidence in investments that create jobs and economic growth.

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What is Included in the Paris Agreement?

The Paris Agreement includes binding obligations under international law for each nation to set emission targets (known as “nationally determined contributions,” or NDCs) every five years to pursue policies, determined sovereignly, that are intended to achieve those targets and to report on progress toward meeting the targets.

In 2016, the United States set a target of reducing emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2025. The U.S. is well on the way to meeting this target, and we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by nine percent between 2005 and 2014. Further progress requires continued investment into building clean and efficient energy infrastructure.

Who supports it?

The Public: 71 percent of Americans, including 57 percent of Republicans, support the Paris agreement, according to a survey of 2,061 Americans by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs⁶.

Business: 154 American businesses supported the American Businesses Act on Climate Pledge in the run-up to the Paris climate accords. These businesses are a part of the backbone of the American economy, employing nearly 11 million people across all 50 states, with a market capitalization of over \$7 trillion. These companies not only voiced support for a strong Paris outcome, they committed to increase their low-carbon investments. More recently, over 300 American businesses announced support for this agreement⁷, including companies like DuPont, Gap, General Mills, Hewlett Packard, and Kellogg. Major oil companies, including ExxonMobil⁸ and Shell⁹, have also publicly reiterated their support for the Paris Agreement since the election.

“We want the US economy to be energy efficient and powered by low-carbon energy... Failure to build a low-carbon economy puts American prosperity at risk. But the right action now will create jobs and boost US competitiveness... We call on our elected US leaders to strongly support: (1) Continuation of low-carbon policies to allow the US to meet or exceed our promised national commitment and to increase our nation’s future ambition. (2) Investment in the low carbon economy at home and abroad in order to give financial decision-makers clarity and boost the confidence of investors worldwide; (3) Continued US participation in the Paris Agreement, in order to provide the long-term direction needed to keep global temperature rise below 2°C” – Statement of 365 U.S. businesses, Nov. 2016.

Mayors: Dozens of mayors from Pittsburgh, PA, to Houston, TX, have called on President-Elect Trump to embrace the Paris Agreement¹⁰.

“We ask that you lead us in expanding the renewable energy sources we need to achieve energy security, address climate change and spark a new manufacturing, energy and construction boom in America... And we ask that you shift to embrace the Paris Climate Agreement and make U.S. cities your partner in doing so.” – Statement of 40 U.S. mayors, Nov. 2016.

¹ Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

² Climate and Health Assessment, U.S. Global Change Research Program, <https://health2016.globalchange.gov/>

³ Climate Security: Building National Security, <http://www.americansecurityproject.org/climate-security/>

⁴ Risky Business Report, https://riskybusiness.org/site/assets/uploads/2015/09/RiskyBusiness_Report_WEB_09_08_14.pdf

⁵ Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-05-25/clean-energy-jobs-surpass-oil-drilling-for-first-time-in-u-s>

⁶ The Chicago Council, <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/publication/growing-support-us-some-climate-change-action>

⁷ Business Backs Low-carbon USA, <http://www.lowcarbonusa.org/>

⁸ Exxon Mobil, <https://twitter.com/SuzanneMcCarron/status/796747352816156672>

⁹ Business Statement Applauding the Paris Climate Agreement, <http://www.c2es.org/international/business-support-paris-agreement>

¹⁰ Open letter to President-elect Donald Trump on Climate Action, <https://medium.com/@ClimateMayors/open-letter-to-president-elect-donald-trump-on-climate-policy-and-action-33e10dcdf85#.nvmv05ymo>