

FOURTH QUARTER



A Game Plan for _____
Executive Climate Action
in the Last Year of President Biden's First Term

A photograph of President Joe Biden sitting at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, smiling as he signs a document. He is surrounded by several people, including Vice President Kamala Harris, who are clapping. The desk features the Seal of the President of the United States. The word "INTRODUCTION" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

INTRODUCTION

President Biden signs the “Inflation Reduction Act of 2022”,
Tuesday, August 16, 2022.

Since entering office,

President Biden has taken important strides on the bold climate agenda that he ran and won on: The passage of the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** and historic **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)** ushered in the largest investments in climate and clean energy in our nation’s history. The Justice40 Initiative established a new standard for federal programs with its commitment to support and prioritize historically burdened communities in building a cleaner economy. And federal funds will support the creation of the American Climate Corps, an innovative program to train and employ the next generation of clean energy workers. And more—the administration, at its best, has shown that climate action leads to prosperity for the working class and the strengthening of our civic life.

But the clock is ticking and the job is not done. To meet the demands of this moment, the demands of a climate crisis that waits for no one, and the commitments the president made to the American people, the administration still has much to accomplish in the months ahead.

With just a year left in his first term, and the public demanding even more progress, it is time for the movement and the administration to accelerate action to meet the president’s climate commitments—not only to cut climate,

air, and water pollution but also to deliver for BIPOC and low-income communities who have both borne the brunt of the climate crisis and often been sidelined in processes to address it.

These are the three key actions the administration must prioritize in the next year:

1. Finalize key climate standards in their strongest possible form;

2. Equitably and effectively align climate investments; and

3. Strategically exercise executive authority to bring the whole of government on board.

It's critical that these three priorities are executed simultaneously because the arc of climate pollution must bend sharply downwards, now, to avert the worst of the climate crisis. That means our investments and our government response must match the rigor of our standards to help stand up big new industries and infrastructure in equitable ways, now.

The Biden administration must seize the generational opportunity to finalize strong standards that can accelerate the most critical sectors of the clean energy economy—like transportation, clean power, and buildings. The administration's proposed standards are falling short, including power sector standards that leave out the bulk of dirty gas plants and a truck rule that would not sufficiently protect communities



with the swift path to decarbonization they need. Finishing the job means strengthening these critical rules.

These opportunities are generational; if they are seized now, America can race ahead on solutions to the climate crisis and the global race to build an equitable clean energy economy. Momentum is building, as entire states sign up for 100 percent clean energy economies rooted in working class prosperity. Now is the time to listen to thousands of members of the public and strengthen these standards.

The billions in public investments that the IRA and IIJA have made possible must be deployed in ways that strengthen this program and, even more critically, build public capacity to govern a fair economy. We do not need clean tech billionaires. We need good-paying jobs for communities and cleaner air. That means strategically targeting funds to build up public power and state and local governments in ways that help deploy key programs, while creating opportunities to draw in private investment in ways that benefit ordinary people. And all of this must be done while intentionally rebuilding and investing in harmed and underserved communities.

By following this path President Biden can finish his first term strong and set the stage for a successful and impactful second term.

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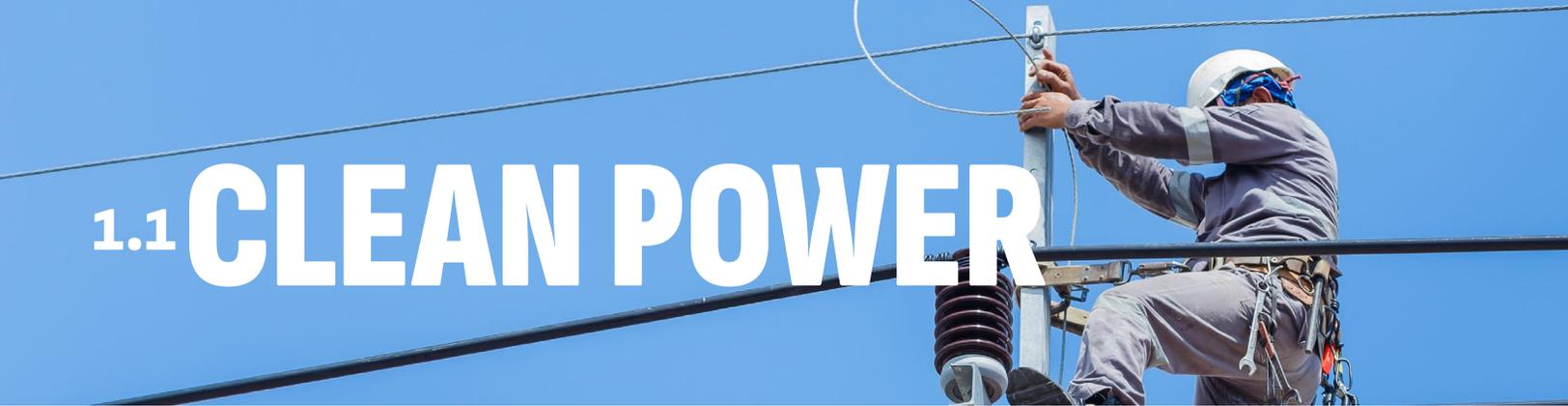
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A photograph of Joe Biden, wearing a dark blue suit and a blue patterned tie, sitting at a desk. He is looking down at a document on the desk, holding a pen. The background shows a window with a view of a city at night and a lamp on a side table.

1 Finalize Strong Standards With Once-In-A-Generation Impact

In the next year, the Biden administration will finalize emissions standards for the most polluting sectors of the economy. But its proposed standards fall short of what science demands, leaving major reductions on the table. In order to achieve these necessary emissions reductions, this administration must listen to communities and experts. It must finalize strong standards that work to virtually eliminate polluting combustion from the biggest economic sectors, including the power and transportation sectors, while reducing fugitive emissions and ramping down oil and gas extraction.



1.1 CLEAN POWER

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

1.1.1 **Strengthen and finalize** key power sector air pollution standards

- [111B Carbon pollution standards for new power plants \(EPA\)](#)
- [111D Carbon pollution standards for existing power plants \(EPA\)](#)
- [Mercury and air toxics standards \(EPA\)](#)
- [National ambient air quality standard \(NAAQS\) for Soot \(EPA\)](#)
- [Coal ash rule \(EPA\)](#)
- [Effluent Limitation Guidelines for coal plants \(EPA\)](#)

The power sector is the second largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in the nation, and dirty fossil fuel plants spew out toxic pollutants into communities across the country. Strong versions of these rules will help us ensure our grid is powered with clean energy instead of dirty fossil fuels. But the standards as proposed don't provide strong enough incentives. They can be bolstered to cut pollution from old pollution plants to better protect communities breathing in dirty air.

Further Reading

[EPA Power Sector Report Card](#) >

1.1.2 **Strengthen and finalize** key transmission standards

- [Regional Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation rule \(FERC\)](#)
- [Backstop Transmission Siting rule \(FERC\)](#)

We have a huge opportunity to build out nearly 2,000 gigawatts of wind, solar, and storage already in the queue—enough to power the entire country on reliable, affordable clean energy, and then bring more online. But right now, we can't because of inadequate transmission infrastructure. In other words, without transmission, there's no transition.

Further Reading

[No Transmission, No Transition](#) >

[FERC's role in the Transition to 100% Clean Electricity](#) >



1.2 CLEAN VEHICLES

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

1.2.1 ***Strengthen and finalize*** key clean vehicles rules

- [Heavy duty vehicles phase 3 rules \(EPA\)](#)
- [Light duty vehicles rule \(EPA\)](#)
- [CAFE standards \(NHTSA\)](#)

The transportation sector, which currently relies primarily on burning dirty fossil fuels to move people and goods, is the most polluting sector in the U.S. And unlike power sector pollution, it's actually growing. Strong federal standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles are the key to tackling this pollution.

This is also a major justice issue: Communities of color and low-income communities suffer disproportionately deadly transportation pollution. The administration needs to listen to these communities and put the sector on a path to 100 percent zero-emission vehicles now.

Further Reading

[6 Actions to Reduce Vehicle Emissions](#) >

[Electrifying all US trucks is possible](#) >



1.3 CLEAN BUILDINGS

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

1.3.1 ***Finalize*** key clean buildings rules

- [Determination on energy codes for housing programs \(HUD & USDA\)](#)
- [Water heaters rule \(DOE\)](#)
- [Consumer cooking products rule \(DOE\)](#)

Buildings are a major source of our nation's climate pollution and where we spend the majority of our time. Cutting indoor and outdoor pollution from buildings is the key to making our homes, schools, and workplaces safer. The Biden administration can address pollution from buildings, clean up our air, and improve public health by updating building energy codes and finalizing rules for indoor appliances including water heaters and consumer cooking products.

Further Reading

[What Biden Can Do for Building Pollution](#) >

[Updating Household Energy Efficiency Standards](#) >

[Indoor Air Pollution and the Climate Crisis](#) >

1.3.2 ***Support*** states to lock in emissions reductions with SIPs

- [Guidance on zero-emission technologies in State Implementation Plans \(EPA\)](#)
- [Include zero-emission appliances as a control measure \(EPA\)](#)

The Biden administration can work with states to update State Implementation Plans (SIP) to address six air quality pollutants and cut pollution from buildings. By standardizing the recommended technologies and control measures across SIPs, EPA can encourage greater use of zero-emission building technologies.

1.4 OIL AND GAS



Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

1.4.1 **Finalize** strong rules for oil and gas extraction

- [Methane oil and gas rule \(EPA\)](#)
- [Oil and gas rule \(DOI\)](#)

The fossil fuel industry—and its devastating effect on our climate, outsized influence on our politics, and deadly public health impacts—is a clear and present threat to Americans.

If we want cleaner air, a healthier planet, and more reliable and affordable power, we must transition to clean energy. As we do so, the Biden administration must mitigate the harm caused by decades of reliance on dirty fuels by maintaining its climate commitments and establishing rules addressing its effects.

Further Reading

[Oil & Gas Rule Misses Opportunity On Climate](#)



[EPA must strengthen accuracy of oil and natural gas reporting](#)



[New BLM Rules for Oil and Gas Leasing on Federal Lands](#)





2 Properly Align Investments for Efficient and Equitable IRA and IIJA Implementation

The IRA and IIJA represent a historic downpayment on the transition to a clean energy economy that has the power to shift energy ownership and resources out of private industry and into the hands of the public. Through grant, loan, and formula fund programs, along with tax credits, the IRA and IIJA will inject billions into American communities over the next decade to support clean energy development, domestic production, and manufacturing, and grow the clean energy workforce. But living up to this administration's climate goals also means equitably implementing federal programs to ensure that historically burdened communities receive 40 percent of program benefits and that federal programs support good jobs. The new economy cannot be captured by the same millionaires and billionaires who now threaten the climate—which means steering investments in ways that empower the public and working class. We can do that while aligning the programs to achieve significant sectoral climate pollution reductions as quickly as possible.



2.1 CLEAN ENERGY TAX CREDITS

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

2.1.1 ***Finalize*** strong guidance on remaining tax credits

- Rigorous carbon Capture and Storage (45Q) guidance (IRS)**
- Hydrogen guidance that supports clean energy, not fossil fuels. (IRS)**
- Elective/Direct Pay tax forms must be made available for tax-exempt entities (IRS)**

Tax credits are the largest source of IRA funds and have the power to either maintain the status quo of investment by keeping energy resources in the hands of few—or to create new ownership networks and models for clean energy systems that will empower communities and reduce harm while restructuring the entire economy.

We need to see the biggest value tax credits—which could fund hydrogen and carbon capture—lead a divorce with fossil fuels rather than buttress this dying industry. That means finalizing them with rigor and focus. And we need to see adroit use of direct pay that puts tax credits directly in the hands of governments, not corporations.

Further Reading

[Clean Hydrogen Tax Credits](#) >

[What Is Elective Pay?](#) >



2.2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

2.2.1 **Provide guidance** to states on the highest-priority programs

- Transmission programs (FERC)
- Charging Infrastructure (DOT)
- Building electrification (DOE)
- Justice 40 Programs

States, local, and Tribal governments, nonprofit organizations and businesses will all be key players in achieving clean energy and climate pollution reductions. They will each need support with navigating complex federal funding applications. States and local governments will also need additional guidance to implement federal programs equitably, provide 40 percent of the benefits to impacted communities, and ensure that federal funds support high-quality jobs.

Further Reading

[White House Technical Assistance Resources](#) >

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CON'T

2.2.2 **Target** assistance to applicants with limited resources

- Environmental justice communities
- Tribes
- Rural co-ops

Additional technical assistance and support will also be needed for applicants with limited resources and capacity, such as environmental justice organizations, Tribes, and rural co-ops.

Further Reading

[Technical Assistance Centers are a big deal for EJ communities](#) >

2.2.3 **Include** community benefits plans in all federal projects

- Require community benefits plans for all IRA and IJJA-funded projects

Equitably implementing billions in federal funds means ensuring that communities, especially those historically harmed by pollution, directly benefit from clean energy projects and new infrastructure. By requiring comprehensive community benefits plans for all federal projects, communities will be able to weigh in on projects before they are developed.

Further Reading

[Community Benefit Agreements FAQ](#) >

[Community Benefit Agreements Toolkit](#) >

2.3 DEPLOYMENT



Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

2.3.1 Rapidly *deploy* funds from IRA and IIJA programs

- CPRG (EPA)
- HOMES/HERA Grants (HUD)
- Transmission grants (DOE)
- PACE and NEW ERA (USDA)
- Clean Ports and Clean HDVS (EPA)
- Environmental Justice Block Grants (EPA)

Though the IRA provides billions in investments for climate change and clean energy that will lower energy prices and provide tax incentives to consumers and businesses, some Republicans in Congress want to repeal IRA funds. To combat this, federal agencies must deploy funds as rapidly as possible to demonstrate the positive impact IRA programs have across the country. For example, there is a major opportunity to align funds to help drive forward ambition to decarbonize our freight system. The administration should prioritize quickly deploying resources that will be the most transformational as far as climate pollution reductions and benefits to communities.

Further Reading

[Republican cuts for food, farmers and climate](#) >

[House GOP plan to repeal IRA incentives](#) >

[Electrifying all US trucks is possible](#) >

[Congressional Republicans Plan to Increase Inflation and Costs](#) >

2.3.2 *Attach* labor and workforce standards to IRA and IIJA programs

- Ensure that IRA and IIJA programs include labor and workforce standards that improve job quality

In addition to reducing climate pollution and developing clean energy, IRA funds can also support quality jobs in a variety of industries across the country. Federal clean energy programs can boost American industry and workers by directly tying workforce standards to each project.

A photograph of Joe Biden sitting in a leather chair in the Oval Office. He is wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is holding a mobile phone to his ear with his left hand and writing on a document with a pen in his right hand. The background shows the American flag, a blue flag with white stars, and several framed pictures on the wall.

3 Exercise executive authority to meet climate commitments

Achieving the administration's ambitious pollution reduction and clean energy goals requires a true all-of-government approach. President Biden must use each federal tool available to address the climate crisis, which requires aligning the regulations and goals of each federal agency, authority, and commission to reduce climate pollution and build out clean energy. The Biden administration must not allow federal entities to operate in the status quo but rather mobilize each federal entity to make progress on domestic and international climate commitments.

3.1 CLEAN POWER

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

3.1.1 **Engage** federal power authorities and electric co-ops to reduce reliance on fossil fuels

- Limit the buildout of new gas projects (TVA & BPA)
- Leverage IRA funds to generate more local clean electricity (TVA, BPA, rural co-ops)

President Biden must directly manage federal power authorities, including Tennessee Valley Authority and the Bonneville Power Authority, to ensure that they are serving their public mission, scaling up clean energy to power major electrification efforts across the economy, and scaling back fossil fuels use. The administration must also engage electric co-ops, which are often run on dirty fossil fuels, to expand clean power access.

Further Reading

[Next-generation rural electrification](#) > [TVA overly reliant on fossil fuels](#) >

[TVA reaches an inflection point](#) >

3.1.2 **Propose** new transmission rules

- Interregional transmission and minimum transfer capability (FERC)
- Intervenor compensation (FERC)
- Interconnection reforms (FERC)

FERC must move quickly to prioritize rules that will speed up the expansion of transmission and interconnection to allow for more clean energy projects to connect to the grid.

Further Reading

[No Transmission, No Transition](#) > [FERC's role in the Transition to 100% Clean Electricity](#) >



3.2 DECREASE FOSSIL FUEL EMISSIONS

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

3.2.1 **Stop** the buildout of new fossil fuel projects

- [Halt new LNG Projects \(FERC\)](#)
- [Halt new LNG Projects \(DOE\)](#)

The UN and climate experts all agree: To stand a chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, no new oil and gas infrastructure can be approved.

The Biden administration should halt new liquified natural gas export facilities proposed by DOE and FERC, align the federal fossil fuel program with national climate targets, and protect historically harmed communities.

Further Reading

[Analysis on LNG Exports](#) >

[GHG Impact of U.S. Fossil Fuel Exports](#) >

DECREASE FOSSIL FUEL EMISSIONS CONT

3.2.2 *Propose* and *finalize* standards for fugitive fossil fuel emissions

- Landfill methane pollution regulation under section 111 of the Clean Air Act (EPA)

The administration is already pressing forward on methane leaks from oil and gas—but the next biggest source of methane, our landfills, need attention. Landfills are the third largest source of methane pollution in the United States with super-emitter activity detected in most states. Landfills also emit hazardous air pollutants, odors, and other dangerous gases that impact the health and wellbeing of nearby communities, a majority of whom are low-income or communities of color. EPA can draw from recent progress in the oil and gas sector and at the state level to promulgate strong standards.

Further Reading

[Methane from Municipal Landfills](#) >

[Petition to EPA on Landfill Methane](#) >

[EPA Must Slash Landfill Methane Emissions](#) >



3.3 AMERICAN CLIMATE CORPS

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

3.3.1 Implement the American Climate Corps (ACC) successfully

- High road labor and equity standards
- Corps members deployment
- Existing service program reform
- State initiative support

The transition to a clean energy-powered and climate-safe future cannot happen without a trained American workforce. The ACC will be a bridge to the clean energy transition by training 20,000 people in clean energy and climate resilience jobs.

Further Reading

[The American Climate Corps](#) >



3.4 HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

Before the end of this term, President Biden must...

3.4.1 Allow existing programs to cover the costs of housing electrification

- HOME (HUD)
- HTF (HUD)
- HTF (HUD)
- CDBG (HUD)

This administration called for a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate change and should execute on this by aligning existing programs with climate goals. Federal programs that existed prior to the IRA can be aligned to support pollution reduction and electrification. In particular, housing programs run by HUD can be updated to support electrification and energy efficiency, which would benefit residents and maximize federal funds.

Further Reading

[Gas stoves are linked to childhood asthma](#) >

3.4.2 Upgrade public housing appliances to electric

- Prohibit replacement of fossil fuel appliances in public housing when electrification costs are comparable (HUD)

Residents of public housing should receive the same benefits of the transition to clean energy, at the same pace, as other communities. This includes the improved air quality and better health outcomes that result from switching out fossil fuel household appliances for electric ones.

Further Reading

[HUD Must Remove Gas Stoves From Federally Assisted Housing](#) >

CONCLUSION



The Biden administration—and the movement—have months left to put the largest sectors of our country’s economy on an irreversible and ambitious path to decarbonization. It has already taken transformational climate action, including passing the historic Inflation Reduction Act, but more is needed to achieve its goals. And this needs to be done in ways that tangibly support Black and Brown communities and the working class.

The bad news is that we aren’t there yet, and many proposed standards must be strengthened to meet the moment. The good news is that strong standards can reinforce each other and build on a foundation of well-aligned investments and whole-of-government programs.

A strong power sector standard will supercharge clean energy that can be used to decarbonize transportation, industrials, and buildings—which in turn can help provide energy storage and grid reliability services to accelerate cleaning up the grid. Accelerating transmission deployment and investment can create new jobs to support the electrification of whole sectors, while supporting upgrades to the industrial base and the building stock of entire cities. On every front, upward spirals await to inspire the public and move us all forward.

It is time to bring us all together. As we face the end of President Biden’s first term, we need to know that the government will act to not just cut climate pollution but show that democracies can do hard things. We can build a foundation for the working class to prosper in a new energy economy. We can reverse our racist and classist history to center community needs and voices in ways that end sacrifice zones and turn extractive economies into reparative ones.

Ultimately, it is time to demonstrate that an egalitarian, ambitious, response to the climate crisis will be at the core of President Biden’s legacy. Will the United States truly help restabilize the climate and center the clean energy economy in justice? The next few months will tell. We are ready to help.