

REACHING FOR 2030: CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY PRIORITIES



The need to address climate change remains urgent. The passage of historic climate and clean-energy legislation in the past two years—the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA), the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)—represents an important and critical down payment on U.S. climate action. Estimates project these policies could reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 32 to 42 percent below 2005 levels in 2030. While this represents a significant first step toward meeting the U.S. goal under the Paris Agreement—50 to 52 percent reductions below 2005 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050—much work remains in achieving this target. Realizing the full potential of recent advancements and accelerating progress toward a thriving, just, and resilient net-zero economy will require not only the strategic implementation of IIJA, IRA, and the CHIPS Act but also additional executive and legislative action.

POLICY PRIORITIES

The United States is primed for a critical decision: whether we want to lead in the clean-energy future or follow. Climate and clean-energy policies have gained critical momentum over the past 15 months with the passage of the IIJA, CHIPS and Science Act, and the IRA. These recent investments, if strategically implemented, along with continued private sector investments can position the United States to rapidly lower our own emissions, protect our communities from continued and worsening impacts, and export critical decarbonization technologies. However, Congress and the administration must continue to prioritize climate policies to maintain that momentum and accelerate the net-zero transition.

Informed by conversations with our Business Environmental Leadership Council (BELC) and other leading companies, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) developed a set of policy priorities for the administration and Congress that, when taken together, will build on the momentum of the past two years and serve U.S. climate and economic objectives. Pursuing the 46 policy priorities we outline and describe in our brief offer the best chance to achieve U.S. climate and economic ambitions.

The policies fall within four major categories:

1. **Investment:** Policies to drive private sector investment in clean-energy and low-carbon technologies, as well as approaches to minimize investment risk.
2. **Competitiveness:** Policies to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. industries, particularly manufacturing, by growing domestic markets and supply chains, innovating new and exportable low-carbon technologies, and building on the U.S. carbon advantage.
3. **Community:** Policies to empower local communities not only to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate, but to also build the necessary capacity to capitalize on emerging economic development opportunities in the low-carbon transition.
4. **Whole of economy:** Policies to further reduce emission across the entire economy.

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INVESTMENT

Addressing the climate crisis in time to meet 2030 goals and avoid the worst catastrophic impacts will require an unprecedented level of investment, both public and private. New policies can incentivize the private sector to accelerate their investment at the scale necessary to reach our climate goals. With the right policy support, these investments can produce significant economic benefits for communities across the country. Our investment recommendations fall into four sections:

1. permitting for new clean energy
2. IRA tech-neutral tax guidance
3. decarbonizing transportation
4. accelerating industrial and building decarbonization.

COMPETITIVENESS

The United States has the unique opportunity to lead the world in the new clean-energy economy. We need additional policies to better leverage our existing competitive advantages, and grow our economy by incubating the low-carbon technologies the world needs to decarbonize. Our competitiveness recommendations fall into five sections:

1. supply chain for critical minerals
2. hydrogen
3. accelerating industrial efficiency and decarbonization
4. clean procurement and embodied carbon
5. climate and trade.

COMMUNITIES

Climate change—as well as the transition to a net-zero economy—both represent significant risks to communities across the United States if not thoughtfully and urgently addressed. Federal policymakers need to support communities as they decide how to best prepare themselves to thrive in this future. Our communities recommendations fall into four sections:

1. minimizing harms and expanding access to benefits
2. building local capacity
3. preparing the workforce for the clean-energy economy
4. climate resilience.

WHOLE OF ECONOMY

Every facet of our economy needs support to decarbonize. Beyond facilitating investment, strengthening competitiveness, and supporting communities, a range of opportunities exist to boost our economy while addressing emissions. Our whole-of-economy recommendations fall into six sections:

1. methane
2. nature-based solutions
3. agriculture
4. carbon dioxide removal and recycling
5. market-based policies
6. climate-related financial risk.



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The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to secure a safe and stable climate by accelerating the global transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and a thriving, just, and resilient economy.