

# Joe Biden's climate plan could put Paris Agreement targets 'within striking distance,' experts say

By [Helen Regan](#), CNN

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**(CNN)** — US President-elect [Joe Biden's climate plan](#) could put the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C "within striking distance," [according](#) to detailed analysis provided by the Climate Action Tracker.

To get there, the US must achieve Biden's [pledge](#) to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The [President-elect's climate policy](#) includes a \$1.7 trillion investment in clean energy and green jobs, and calls for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and a ban on new oil and gas permits on public lands.

The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) -- a non-profit analysis group which tracks government climate action -- crunched the numbers and found that, if fulfilled, Biden's plan would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 75 gigatons of carbon dioxide by 2050, decreasing global warming by 0.1°C by the end of the century.

But the US cannot do it alone.

To ensure the 1.5°C goal is within reach, China needs to stick with its pledge to go carbon neutral by 2060, and the European Union, Japan and South Korea all need to achieve their climate commitments, CAT said.

It's a huge feat to pull off, but one that experts say is now within the planet's grasp.

"This could be an historic tipping point: with Biden's election, China, the US, EU, Japan South Korea -- two thirds of the



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by mid-century commitments," Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics, a CAT partner organization, said in a statement.

"These commitments are very close, if not within, 1.5°C-consistent pathways for this set of countries and for the first time ever puts the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit within striking distance."

Currently, the world is set to warm by 2.7°C by the end of the century, [according](#) to CAT, [bringing more extreme storms](#), heatwaves, greater sea level rise, and, for many parts of the world, worse droughts and rainfall extremes.

The Paris Agreement, a pact signed into effect in 2016 by almost all the world's countries, seeks to limit global warming

to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

Biden has pledged to re-enter the Paris climate accord -- which President Donald Trump left -- on his first day in office, and then through "a major diplomatic push" seek to "raise the ambitions of countries' climate targets."

Biden released [a transition website](#) over the weekend that puts [climate change as a top priority](#) for his administration.

He laid out a climate action roadmap to Covid-19 recovery that includes investments in infrastructure, the auto industry, transit, the power sector, upgrade and weatherize buildings, housing, innovation, agriculture and conservation, and environmental justice.

## No longer a leader

The US is the world's second biggest polluter, behind China. When Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Paris accord, it signaled to the world that America would no longer lead the global fight against climate change -- and critics argued undermined other nations' efforts. Under Trump, dozens of environmental protections were gutted -- [many of them Obama-era guardrails](#) that limited the scope of global warming.

Other big polluters, such as the European Union and China signaled they would fill the gap. At the United Nations general assembly last month, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that China would attempt to become carbon neutral by 2060. And in recent weeks, Japan and South Korea [pledged to reach](#) net-zero emissions by 2050.

CAT said the US joins a "wave" of countries across the world now supporting net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century, including 127 nations accounting for 63% of global emissions.

"What can other countries now do other than follow this overwhelming trend to net zero greenhouse gas emissions?" said Niklas Höhne of NewClimate Institute, a CAT partner organization.

The climate analysis group acknowledged that there was "considerable uncertainty" surrounding their estimates. They include the possibility of spill-over effects -- whether other countries follow suit -- and which greenhouse gases are included in the pledges -- carbon dioxide or all planet-warming emissions.

on climate change for the whole world

his climate plan may depend on which party controls a majority in the Senate.

Nevertheless, Hare said that while Biden has a lot of work ahead of him, "he will be surfing a new wave of global ambition."

Experts say the US could now take a renewed lead in climate negotiations and use its influence to pressure other polluting nations to step up their own climate ambitions.

[Jonathan Pershing](#), program director of environment at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, who was the former special envoy for climate change at the US Department of State during the second term of the Obama administration, said it was "essential" that the US is a global leader in the fight against climate change.

To become a credible leader again, the US will have to prove it is implementing those domestic climate policies and decide what role it will play in bringing the world together around climate solutions, he told CNN last month.

"I think it does that in many, many different ways. It does that by participating in technical assistance programs for developing countries. It does that by creating important alliances around strong policy actions," Pershing said. "It's not just good enough to say I promise you the following things."

*CNN's Drew Kann contributed reporting.*



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