

# Trump wants to 'Drill, baby, drill.' What does that mean for climate concerns?

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Attendees holding signs listen as Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at Alro Steel on Aug. 29, 2024, in Pottersville, Mich.

Alex Brandon/AP

Morning Edition is diving into promises President-elect Donald Trump said he would fulfill in his second term. NPR's A Martínez asks energy and climate policy expert Brian Murray what Trump's plan to focus on oil and gas means for green initiatives.

## **What Trump has said about scaling up oil and gas production and rolling back green alternatives.**

President-elect Donald Trump has been very vocal about his support of America's oil and gas industry.

His campaign slogan, "Drill, Baby, Drill" has become synonymous with his plan to boost fossil fuel production and reverse climate policies and regulations aimed at reducing U.S. carbon emissions.

Trump earlier this year said he "will terminate" the Inflation Reduction Act and issue an executive order to "make sure that [offshore wind] ends on day one."

NPR's A Martínez spoke with Brian Murray, director of the Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability at Duke University, to understand what President-elect Trump's proposals could mean for U.S. energy and climate policy.



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## **Trump's plan to increase fossil fuel production and lower energy prices**

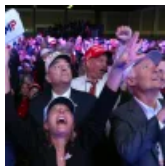
"Starting on Day 1, I will approve new drilling, new pipelines, new refiners, new power plants, new reactors, and we will slash the red tape," Trump said in early September.

Murray said the U.S. is and has for years been the largest producer of oil and gas in the world, doing so despite restrictions on leasing and oil and gas extraction on federal lands.

"One thing that the Trump administration could do is to reduce those restrictions. They could rapidly increase oil, natural gas and coal production on federal lands. They can also call on Congress to repeal the Antiquities Act, which was used to establish national monuments where mineral and oil and gas extraction can occur," Murray said. "I will cut your energy prices in half within 12 months," Trump said during a rally in Detroit on Oct. 18.

Increasing global supplies will generally reduce prices and increase consumption,

according to Murray. However, this would also lead to more emissions. "The U.S. is a large and important producer, but it's not the only producer in global markets," he said.



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### **What rolling back the Inflation Reduction Act and green incentives could mean**

"To further defeat inflation, my plan will terminate the Green New Deal, which I call the Green New Scam," Trump said in September. "And [I will] rescind all unspent funds under the misnamed Inflation Reduction Act."

The Inflation Reduction Act has spurred hundreds of billions of dollars in investments since 2022. Murray points out that various estimates claim that about 70% to 80% of the IRA's benefits have gone to districts that have Republican representation in Congress and/or voted for President Trump in this election. So eliminating President Biden's signature climate bill may receive pushback from Republicans themselves.

"Earlier this fall, 18 Republican House members appealed to House Speaker Mike Johnson to retain some core elements of the IRA. And in response, Speaker Johnson said he'd consider using a scalpel rather than sledgehammer in revising the IRA," Murray said.

### **Trump is no fan of offshore wind projects**

"We are going to make sure that [offshore wind] ends on day one. I'm gonna write it out in an executive order," Trump said during a campaign rally in May.

Murray said that Trump has been "openly hostile to offshore wind for years." There are several ways for the next administration to cut back on offshore wind in the U.S. One option is to not provide any new leases. Trump could also try to eliminate the IRA tax credits that are specifically for offshore wind, but that would require congressional approval and wouldn't happen on day one.

"If they were eliminated, that would put a lot of the private capital at risk right,

because the investors of that private capital are planning on tax credits as part of the return that they're going to have on their investment," Murray added.

### **Electric vehicle demand has risen and spurred incentives**

"Now they want to give you all-electric cars. Does anybody want to drive for an hour and then wait four hours to get to recharge? First day in office, I'll be ending all of that," Trump said while campaigning in Georgia in June.

Electric vehicle sales hit a record high during the third quarter even though some automakers have slowed production. Murray said that the EV tax credit and other incentives have helped boost EV sales.

But the beneficiaries of the tax credits might have been battery manufacturers, he added. Battery plants in red states like Georgia and North Carolina are the result of this type of government investment, so eliminating the tax credit for EVs might be a challenge for President-elect Trump.

### **What the Trump camp says**

NPR asked the Trump transition team how the president-elect planned to increase oil and gas production given that production hit record highs under Biden and if he had any response to the potential concerns flagged by Murray.

Trump spokesperson Karoline Leavitt offered the following statement:

"The American people re-elected President Trump by a resounding margin giving him a mandate to implement the promises he made on the campaign trail. He will deliver."



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### **What Trump's win means for energy production and climate change concerns**

Trump announced this week that former New York congressman Lee Zeldin will be nominated to lead the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, drawing criticism

from environmental advocacy advocates over his past opposition to climate legislation.

Trump's past dismissal of the scientific consensus about human-caused climate change has also concerned environmental advocates and scientists that the president-elect will look to scale back government incentives for green energy and efforts to study climate change.

Global climate talks are underway in Azerbaijan. Trump's win has cast a long shadow over them, given that the U.S. has historically been the largest contributor of greenhouse gasses. Trump has already shown an unwillingness to work on combating climate change. In his first term, Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement, a pledge by almost 200 countries to reduce emissions.

*Obed Manuel contributed. Suzanne Nuyen edited.*

*The radio version of this story was produced by Lilly Quiroz.*