



Written by [William P. Hoar](#) on July 2, 2021

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Correction, Please

Biden Has Green Regulatory Pipedreams; Moscow, Beijing Get Boost



Keep it in the ground: The Biden administration is giving environmental activists what they want by canceling oil pipelines and new drilling projects. Since oil will be shipped via railroad and trucks, this won't help the environment, and it will kill jobs. *(Photo credit: stanley45/iStock/GettyImagesPlus)*

Item: Under a headline reading "Biden pushes protection for more streams and wetlands, targeting a major Trump rollback," the Washington Post noted on June 9 that the "Biden administration is set to toss out President Donald Trump's efforts to scale back the number of streams, marshes and other wetlands that fall under federal protection, kicking off a legal and regulatory scuffle over the fate of wetlands and waterways around the country, from the arid West to the swampy South. Michael Regan, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, said his team determined that the Trump administration's rollback is 'leading to significant environmental degradation.'"

Item: CNN on June 10 reported that the Canadian developer of the Keystone XL pipeline had announced that it "is pulling the plug on the controversial project after the Biden administration revoked its permit in January." The cancellation, said CNN, "ends more than a decade of controversy over the pipeline and marks a big win for environmentalists who argued the project threatened the environment and would only worsen the climate crisis."

According to CNN, "On his first day in the White House, President Joe Biden revoked the permit his predecessor granted to Keystone XL, and also moved to re-enter the United States in the Paris climate agreement."

The left-wing network happily noted that "environmental groups" had "cheered the news." For example: "The termination of this zombie pipeline sets precedent for President Biden and polluters to stop Line 3, Dakota Access, and all fossil fuel projects," Kendall Mackey, campaign manager of 350.org's Keep It in the Ground campaign, said in a statement."

Correction: If there's one principle that unites people on the Left, this is it: If it was done by Trump, it should be undone.



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That tends to hold when it comes to “green” proposals. Biden and his folks clearly want to reverse Donald Trump’s deregulatory actions on the environment. Some activists, to be sure, have expressed discouraging words about the EPA — but generally this is because the agency hasn’t moved even more quickly on their pet project.

There has been some pushback. For instance, a federal judge in Louisiana (a Trump appointee) has just blocked President Biden’s January moratorium on new oil and gas leasing on federal lands and waters. That decision will be fought.

Biden has also announced that the United States would suspend federal leasing in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) — sales that were held under Trump in accordance with 2017 legislation. Though activists will not admit it, the planet has not been saved because of the Alaska and Keystone moves. Indeed, Biden’s energy secretary, Jennifer Granholm, publicly admitted (in May 2021) that using a pipeline is “the best way” to transport fuel.

And Ben Lieberman, a senior fellow who specializes in environmental policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), has explained that the oil

that would have been produced in ANWR will come from somewhere else, quite possibly nations that impose far less stringent environmental measures than the U.S. And the oil that would have traversed the Keystone XL pipeline will be transported instead by less safe and less energy efficient methods such as rail or through older pipelines much more susceptible to spills than new ones.

But the green powers-that-be care more about politics than actual results.

U.S. energy security, however, will take a hit. CEI’s Lieberman points to a report by the International Energy Agency, which concluded that a transportation “decarbonization” campaign would exchange “a dominant market position in petroleum production for one of substantial dependence on China to provide many of the minerals necessary to make” batteries for electric vehicles.

While China is building coal plants (and not even pretending to reduce emissions until 2030), the eco-establishment in this country has pledged that the United States will keep trying to meet impossible carbon goals. As explained by the *Wall Street Journal*: “Amid last year’s Covid-19 lockdowns, greenhouse gas emissions fell to about 21% below 2005 levels. In other words, even with the economy shut down and a large share of the population stuck at home, the U.S. was less than halfway to Mr. Biden’s goal.” Is anyone looking forward to that journey?

Facts are flexible for leftists. Consider that the Obama State Department carried out five environmental reviews for the Keystone pipeline, finding that it would not make a significant change to global warming and that it was environmentally safe. When in office, Biden didn’t even bother with another environmental impact statement before pulling the plug.

Supposed environmental decisions can affect national security — in this case, for the United States and its allies. Consider the Russian natural gas pipeline (Nord Stream 2) across northern Europe. Concerned about its potential strategic value, Congress in early January passed sanctions on it.

Biden, who stopped the Keystone pipeline that would have been a boon for the United States, then greenlighted Moscow’s project. In May, as noted by Heritage Foundation analysts, the president



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waived sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG, the subsidiary of Gazprom, Russia's state-owned energy company, building the pipeline; the company's CEO; and corporate officers, all using a "national interest" waiver.

The waivers marked a confusing about-face from statements by Biden that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a "bad deal" for Europe, and by Secretary of State Antony Blinken that there was "no ambiguity" in U.S. opposition toward it.

If completed, the natural gas pipeline would run from northwestern Russia to northern Germany and be operated by Gazprom.

As it is, Moscow supplies 45 percent of the European Union's natural-gas imports. As demonstrated by Heritage's Katie Tubb and Daniel Kochis, the completion of the Russian pipeline is "neither economically necessary nor geopolitically prudent. It would increase European dependence on Russian gas, magnify Russia's ability to use its European energy dominance as a political trump card, calcify the divisions in Europe over energy that Nord Stream 2 has opened, and specifically undermine U.S. allies in Eastern Europe and central Europe."



Killing coal: The U.S. coal industry is under attack by the Biden EPA, which is trying to get rid of the "dirty" energy source. China, however, is building new coal plants at a rapid pace — and environmentalists here in America don't seem to mind. *(Photo credit: CreativeNature_nl/iStock/GettyImagesPlus)*

The president did take a bit of heat for his move, but he also got cover from the usual suspects. Paul Gregory, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, who writes frequently on Russian energy, penned a piece for *Forbes* about "two fellows of the influential Council on Foreign Relations" who had written a "'green' apologia" in *The Hill*.

That *Hill* article (entitled "How to Turn Nord Stream 2 Into a Win for Ukraine"), as Gregory said, "contends that Ukraine's loss of the gas transit business is a blessing in disguise. It frees the Ukrainian budget from reliance on carbon energy, and it allows Ukraine to focus on green energy. After all, in the long run, the world will be carbon free, so Ukraine can be at the forefront of the green energy revolution." Green nirvana, eh?



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So why is Putin smirking?

Professor Gregory assuredly isn't smiling. He observes that Gazprom

makes no bones that it is an instrument of Russian foreign policy and power, not a commercial undertaking. What goes unmentioned is that, given the importance of gas revenue to Putin's Russia, Russia cannot invade Ukraine so long as a considerable portion of its gas pipeline traverses through Ukraine. With Nord Stream 2 in full operation, Putin can invade at his convenience.

The U.S. taxpayers are not going to be smiling either should Biden's taxing, spending, and regulating crusade take full effect. The president unveiled an astonishing \$6 trillion federal budget in late May. Meanwhile, the left-wing *Washington Post* has enthusiastically established a scorecard that registers the specific environmental policy shifts from Trump made by Biden. Joe Biden has promised that his team will impose "a whole-of-government approach to put climate change at the center of our domestic, national security and foreign policy."

Under Trump, the focus of his Department of Energy was to fix existing rules. But remember, "Orange Man Bad." So, as a CEI analysis puts it, most of the Trump reforms "to existing rules are in the process of being revoked, and the emphasis is back on tough new standards likely to raise costs and compromise choice and quality."

In January, the White House notified the heads of executive departments and agencies just what types of regulatory actions were wanted and how to do this. Writing for *Reason* early this year, Eric Boehn described the operation. The officials were instructed to revamp

their regulatory review processes to "promote public health and safety, economic growth, social welfare, racial justice, environmental stewardship, human dignity, equity, and the interests of future generations." The memo also states that the new regime "serves as a tool to affirmatively promote regulations."

In other words, if a bureaucrat can conceive of a way that new regulations could advance the goals of racial justice or environmental health, those political aims should be counted as benefits — even if they can't, well, actually be counted.

That was just about the time that Biden was killing Keystone. After all, we surely must have more regs on equity, racial justice, and human dignity. But who needs a project that would bring thousands of good jobs and more than 800,000 barrels of Canadian oil every day to refineries on the Gulf Coast?

The nation is headed in a dangerous direction with the imposition of a Biden climate plan that would make us more reliant on Communist China. Steven Milloy offers more on the national-security implications as revealed in the aforementioned report from the International Energy Agency, "The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions." The publisher of [JunkScience.com](#), Milloy writes in *Real Clear Energy*:

China is one of the top three locations for the mining of copper, nickel, rare-earths and lithium. When it comes to mining rare-earths, China is responsible for 60% of global



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extraction. But there's more to these essential materials than mining; they must be processed as well.

When it comes to processing the ores, China is the leader for all of them plus cobalt, the latter of which is mostly mined in the Congo. China processes about 35% of the global nickel supply, 40% of copper, 55% of lithium, 65% of cobalt and 85% of rare-earths.

So, thanks to its low-wage and slave labor and lack of environmental regulations, China has successfully positioned itself to have a stranglehold on the global production of raw materials essential for the goal of the climate agenda.



Enjoy them while they last: Modern “luxuries” such as washers and dryers, dishwashers, showers, and air conditioners may soon come under strict environmental regulations in the name of saving the planet. *(Photo credit: urfinguss/iStock/GettyImagesPlus)*

The United States gets about 80 percent of its rare-earths — a necessity for “clean energy” technology that is supposed to save us from fossil fuel, the engine of the U.S. economy — from China. There are U.S. supplies of such minerals needed for batteries. But guess what? Green activists are against their mining. And there is now a clash between a planned lithium mine project in Nevada and a rare desert wildflower known as the Tiehm's buckwheat.

Led by green activists and fueled by unconstitutional power grabs, Washington is taking multiple potshots at working Americans. As the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* put it in early June:

America's big banks have red-lined U.S. coal companies and refused to finance oil projects in ANWR, which the 2017 GOP tax reform opened up to development. Now the Biden Administration is trying to wall off the Arctic again as it launches a regulatory assault on fossil fuels — from tighter emission rules to endangered-species protections.

The consequences go beyond our borders. Russia's Putin is undoubtedly gloating that his pipeline to Germany will soon be completed — with the assistance of Joe Biden. Meanwhile, as the *Journal* has noted, Biden didn't care “about upsetting Canada when he killed the Keystone XL pipeline. Nor Alaskans when he suspended the ANWR leases. Mr. Biden wants to curtail North American energy



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development while he stands by as Russia uses its natural resources for strategic gain.”

The president is pressing for hundreds of billions of tax dollars for what he calls “infrastructure” while giving his agencies marching orders to throttle any projects that don’t fit into his “climate” and other pipe dreams.



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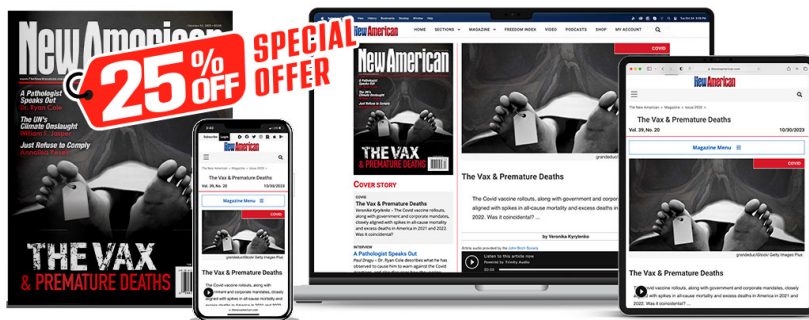
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