



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 1, 2024

Podesta Tabbed to Replace Kerry as Climate Envoy

On Wednesday, the Biden administration chose longtime Democratic “fixer” John Podesta to fill John Kerry’s shoes as the climate envoy for the U.S. government. In the new post, Podesta will be in charge of supervising clean-energy subsidies and other climate-related portions of Biden’s inappropriately named Inflation Reduction Act.

Podesta, a veteran of the Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations, will now be the lead U.S. negotiator when it comes to climate change. The Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC) office is ostensibly a part of the State Department, but it’s been rumored that Kerry, a former secretary of state, had more-direct access to the White House.

Podesta will be tasked with keeping the Biden administration’s efforts on the so-called climate crisis moving along.

“President Biden’s appointment of John Podesta to continue to lead our global climate efforts demonstrates the President’s steadfast commitment to tackling the climate crisis — and reflects his belief that we have not a moment to lose,” said National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in a [statement](#). “[Podesta] is a key architect of turning President Biden’s bold vision — that tackling the climate crisis also represents the single biggest economic opportunity of our time — into a reality here at home.”

“We need to keep meeting the gravity of this moment, and there is no one better than John Podesta to make sure we do,” [said](#) White House chief of staff Jeff Zients. “John has [been] — and will continue to be — at the helm of driving the implementation of the most significant climate law in history.”

Kerry himself called Podesta a “longtime climate ally” who “knows the issue.”

“He will bring important expertise to the work ahead, particularly in respect to the down-to-earth challenges of implementing COP28,” Kerry noted. “We’ve made historic progress these last three years and I know that in his new role as President Biden’s senior advisor for international climate policy, John will continue to grow the momentum from Glasgow, Sharm el-Sheikh, and Dubai.”

Kerry announced in January that he would be leaving his role as climate envoy to concentrate on President Biden’s 2024 reelection campaign. Kerry has been under scrutiny for the [secretive](#) way in which he ran the SPEC office, including refusing to name staff members in FOIA requests and being extremely tight-lipped about the negotiations involved in an agreement to phase out coal that Kerry brokered with 56 other nations.

Protect the Public’s Trust (PPT), a watchdog group that has been seeking more transparency from Kerry



AP Images
John Podesta



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and the SPEC office, isn't [thrilled](#) with the announcement of Podesta as the replacement.

"When news broke that John Kerry was leaving his role as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate at the State Department, [PPT] expressed hope that this could signal a turn toward more transparency in the powerful but secretive office. Reports that John Podesta will be assuming this role drained much of our optimism," said PPT Director Michael Chamberlain.

According to Chamberlain, Podesta may have assisted Kerry and the SPEC office in their secretive behavior:

Mr. Podesta is the quintessential embodiment of the revolving door. Documents PPT received from Mr. Kerry's SPEC office reveal that before Mr. Podesta's latest jaunt through that door, his organization was one of those with a disturbing influence on the SPEC office operations and policies, with one of Mr. Podesta's colleagues jokingly grouching to a SPEC official, "You all keep taking our good people."

Mr. Podesta appears to not only have helped John Kerry build the revolving door at SPEC, but picked out the handle, threshold, and trim. It seems only fitting that he would now walk through that door.

Chamberlain's concerns about Podesta are not unfounded. [Recall](#) that in his role as Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign chairman, he was one of the first to observe that Clinton needed to "dump all those emails" that existed on the private server she used as secretary of state to conduct government business.

Podesta knows exactly what needs to be done when a cover-up is necessary. Does this indicate that Kerry is leaving the SPEC office in such a mess that only a "fixer" like Podesta can clean it up?



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