

## COP 26 Report #1



From the Environmental Working Group as of October 25, 2021

Global cooperation (to keep average temperature from exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels) is perhaps the most important ingredient in achieving a stable climate. So, the Environmental Working Group is closely watching the UN's Climate Summit (COP 26), which begins later this week in Glasgow.

While all the world's players are key, our focus now is on the US national situation. As reported by [Coral Davenport](#), the deletion of a clean electricity program from a massive budget bill now being negotiated on Capitol Hill weakened the hand of President Biden, who is set to arrive in Glasgow on Nov. 1 where he had hoped to re-establish American leadership on the fight against climate change.

The US national position is important for two reasons: 1. Our climate envoy John Kerry needs to show the US is doing its share as he negotiates with other nations, and 2. We are historically the largest source of the pollution that is heating the planet, and we (like other industrialized nations) must cut emissions drastically. Our national position needs to be strengthened significantly.

The administration's current strategy is a three-pronged approach of generous tax incentives for wind, solar and other clean energy, tough regulations to restrict pollution coming from power plants and automobile tailpipes, and a slew of clean energy laws enacted by states. An [analysis released this week by Rhodium Group](#), a nonpartisan analysis firm, found that the current strategy could technically fulfill Mr. Biden's pledge to cut the country's emissions 50 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. That pledge,

even if realized would not be enough to keep us below 1.5°C. The [2019 UN Emissions Report](#) says we need to be reducing emissions by at least 8% per year. And chances for success of Biden's pledge are slim as the approach faces significant legal, logistical and political challenges. The process of crafting regulations could take years and the conservative-leaning Supreme Court could overrule them or a future president could simply roll them back. And relying on states to amp up their clean energy laws just shifts the fight to statehouses for environmentalists and fossil fuel interests to battle it out on the local level. Think about trying to get a low carbon portfolio standard in Florida-an uphill battle to say the least. The president's strategy is not sufficient as is, and the likelihood of even implementing it is low.

A bit of good news is that the president and congress are considering a price on carbon in the reconciliation package. This is good news for three reasons.

1. Many countries we trade with are already putting a price on (*e.g.* by taxing) carbon pollution and setting up border carbon adjustments. To remain competitive, the United States must do the same.
2. A fee on carbon, with revenues returned to households in the form of monthly dividends, will reduce our emissions beyond the president's 50% by 2030 pledge when added to his current strategy. It would also stimulate the economy and create jobs in green energy.
3. John Kerry needs ammunition to show the US is serious about climate, as he works to get other nations to also agree on bold action. Having a price on carbon will be the evidence of US resolve that he needs.

**Consider acting:** We can help move US policy in the right direction by calling/writing the president and our members of congress and urge them to include a price on carbon in the reconciliation package. If you have not already sent that email or made the call, please consider doing it now. Here's a link to the Citizens Climate Lobby action page to put you in touch with the president.

<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/white-house/>

More next week on COP 26.

Comments, questions: contact Coty Keller [wckeller@earthlink.net](mailto:wckeller@earthlink.net)

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