

Climate-Changed

America's About to Miss a Big Obama-Era Climate Goal as Trump Dismantles Policies

The country is falling behind on its efforts to cut emissions.

By [Jim Efstathiou Jr](#)
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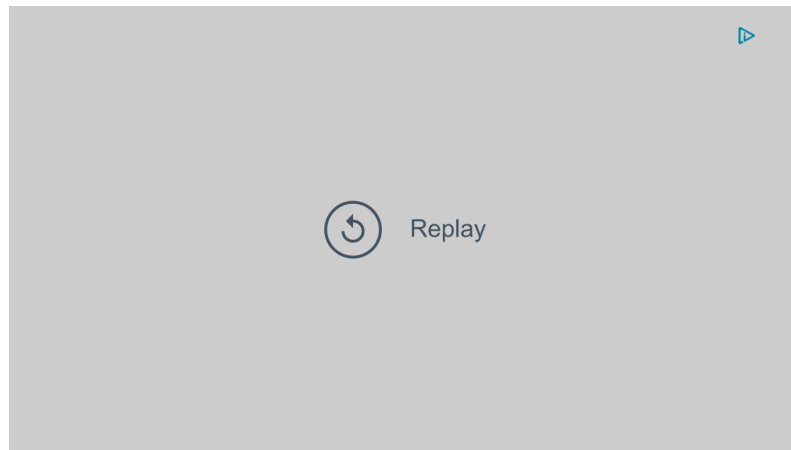
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The U.S. will fall short of its commitment to cut greenhouse gases as the Trump administration continues to roll back Obama-era policies, according to a new report.

Emissions blamed for global warming are on track to fall between 12 and 20 percent by 2025 from 2005 levels, according to the report released Thursday by research firm Rhodium Group LLC. Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. pledged a 26 percent to 28 percent cut as a signatory to the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit the impacts of climate change.

President Donald Trump has moved to withdraw from the international agreement and to dismantle domestic energy policies aimed at cutting pollution from power plants and vehicles. The wide range of possible outcomes reflects uncertainty over policy changes as well as economic, technical and market forces that determine emissions trends.



“From regulatory and legal hurdles to pushback by the regulated industries themselves, many of the Trump administration’s rollback attempts remain stymied,” according to the report. “Where the administration has been extremely successful, however, is in sowing confusion among a wide array of stakeholders and significantly increasing regulatory uncertainty for American businesses.”

The U.S. wasn't on track to reach the Paris targets before Trump took aim at Obama-era policies, according to John Larsen, a director at Rhodium Group and co-author of the report. If climate policies were left untouched, emissions cuts would still fall about 20 percent short.

"We need to be talking about more action, not rolling back existing action," Larsen said in an interview. "You're going literally in the wrong direction."

Lower natural gas prices, cheaper wind and solar power and an uptick in coal plant retirements have accelerated emissions reductions this year. After 2025, those same forces could force more carbon-free nuclear reactors into retirement, leading to an uptick in greenhouse gases produced by power plants.

“Emissions begin to rise after 2025 in nearly all of our scenarios,” according to the report. “Today’s regulatory rollbacks also have a bigger impact after 2025—exacerbating these market drivers.”

Climate policies enacted under Obama now being targeted by Trump include a plan to significantly lower power plant emissions
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-04/trump-is->

said-to-begin-repeal-of-obama-power-plant-emission-cuts and to raise fuel economy standards <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-02/trump-s-epa-moves-to-cut-obama-s-auto-mileage-rules-jfijl7vt>> for cars and trucks. Rules to control the release of methane from gas wells on public land and to control hydrofluorocarbons, a potent greenhouse gas from refrigeration and cooling, remain in limbo pending court action, according to the report.

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