



# NEW DEMOCRACY

## HOW DEMOCRATS MAKE ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WINNING CAMPAIGN ISSUES

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For more than a generation, Democrats have valiantly advocated policies to combat the existential problem of climate change. For this they deserve great moral credit. But, sadly, they have often done so with political naiveté and seeming indifference to the complex energy and climate views of most American voters. The result has frequently been political calamity.

While many in the Party still refuse to admit it, the mishandling of energy and climate issues has played a major role in devastating national election losses for Democrats – particularly in 1994, 2010, and 2016. These losses have relegated Democrats to minority status in the House of Representatives for 16 of the past 20 years, but the wounds are even deeper. After the 2016 election, Democrats have fewer elected officials in office at the combined national, state, and local level than at any time since 1920.<sup>1</sup> Of course, many issues have contributed. But energy and climate change together have become essential bellwethers of political identity – touching both cultural and economic concerns directly, in much the same way that the immigration and lost manufacturing jobs issues do.

Legitimately concerned about climate change, many top Democrats have simply lost a realistic perspective on domestic energy politics, and especially the major economic and environmental value of the shale oil and gas boom.

## **A Distinctly Democratic Pro-energy and Pro-climate Vision**

It is long past time to break this pernicious cycle. Democrats can and must put forward an *economically powerful pro-energy and pro-climate agenda*, one that can beat Republicans decisively at the ballot box, and be effective and popular policy

once Democrats regain power. Trump and other Republicans have badly overplayed their hand – basing their climate denial and coal-dust memories on outright lies – and creating unique political and policy opportunity. But, to take advantage, Democrats must be smart about correcting some fundamental strategic mistakes of their own.

Democrats must stop outsourcing energy messaging to often-elitist environmental advocates who are painfully out of touch with the concerns of average Americans.

Especially in the key political moments that have defined the Party’s energy and climate profile over the past decade, Democratic leaders have, many times, appeared more preoccupied with gaining the unalloyed approval of environmental groups than the support of mainstream voters around the country needed to win back majorities.

Instead, the Party must use the U.S. energy revolution – in renewable energy, efficiency, *and* shale gas and oil – to carve out an economically and environmentally robust Democratic vision.

### **Republicans Have Stereotyped Democrats on Energy**

Republicans have used climate and energy issues as key elements in successfully portraying Democrats as tax-raising, liberal elites more concerned with increasing energy costs and cutting greenhouse gas emissions than providing affordable energy to middle- and working-class families and creating high-paying energy jobs. This has contributed mightily to the stereotype of Democrats as out of touch with the values of working-class Americans – and hurt the Democratic brand far beyond energy and climate issues.

Specifically, Republican attacks on the Democrats’ BTU tax bill in 1993, cap-and-trade carbon taxing legislation in 2009, and greenhouse gas regulations

in Obama’s second term were hugely important to sweeping Republican wins in the elections that immediately followed.

### **Shale Boom Occurred Under Obama**

But, for voters in most parts of the country, the obsession with immediately eliminating all fossil fuel use appears an ideological crusade, not a legitimate energy or environmental policy. These views are especially predominant in just the regions – the Midwest, South, Plains and Mountain West – Democrats are now losing in record numbers, and must take back to gain power. And, because Democrats have been so closely aligned with environmentalists for years, many voters do not distinguish between the extreme views of “keep it in the ground” oil and gas prohibitionists, and those of the Democratic Party as a whole.

The U.S. shale oil and gas revolution of the past decade has exacerbated this divide.

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### **THE SHALE BOOM, IN FACT, OCCURRED UNDER OBAMA – NOT BUSH OR TRUMP – AND HAS BEEN AN ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS.<sup>2</sup>**

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It has saved American consumers hundreds of billions of dollars in lower energy costs, and created millions of new oil and gas jobs in 20 states.<sup>3</sup> And, in climate terms, it has been effective policy, displacing more polluting coal – and allowing the U.S. to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 12 percent under Obama.<sup>4</sup>

But many Democrats, seemingly fearful of attacks from environmentalists, have only claimed credit for renewable energy breakthroughs. They have publicly distanced themselves from the shale windfall they, in fact, helped create and have supported with policy, allowing Republicans to take credit for the boom. This has created the false

impression that most Democratic lawmakers agree with the “keep it in the ground” wing, when they do not.

### Energy and the 2016 Election

This reluctance to embrace both engines powering the U.S. turbocharged energy vehicle – oil and gas production and the clean energy technology – has, in turn, provided Republicans precious political opportunity of their own. During the 2016 election, Hillary Clinton and other Democratic candidates communicated their worthy goal to “make America the 21st century clean energy superpower.” But Secretary Clinton shied away from the key role shale gas has played in cutting air pollution, reducing asthma, and lowering U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention its massive economic benefits.

This led to an absurd outcome, letting Donald Trump – with his practically outlandish and politically vulnerable “I’ll bring back coal” lies – come to be seen as the energy populist in the race. In fact, had Clinton more vocally embraced shale gas and faced down Trump over the role of coal, she would have been perceived as far less elitist and out of touch, and perhaps rallied just the moderate voters she needed to win in key states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

To borrow from Bill Clinton’s playbook, it is precisely these sort of “Sister Souljah” moments – confronting unreasonable demands of far-left interest groups like the oil and gas prohibitionists – that Hillary Clinton needed to show the country she would govern as a centrist concerned about the economic welfare of all Americans.

### How to Win in 2018 and Beyond

Now, candidates across the country, especially in “purple” swing states and districts, must create a distinctly *Democratic brand* on energy and climate change, a vision that combines the advanced

renewable energy boom and the benefits of domestic oil and gas. Democratic candidates competing in these middle American states and districts must look for these *defining energy moments* as well.

The tremendous irony is that, even now, as climate impacts become more pressing and expensive to taxpayers, Democrats must demonstrate to voters that they understand the economic importance of the shale oil and gas boom in order to gain the power needed to deal with the existential issue of climate change. The whole-hearted embrace of shale gas by Conor Lamb in Pennsylvania’s 2018 special election – a Democrat winning in a district Trump carried by 20 points – is suggestive of the symbolic power of energy issues in the overall perception of candidates by voters.

But there is good news.

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**NEW SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, ENERGY COST AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION DEVELOPMENTS OVER JUST THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE MADE ACTUAL DEMOCRATIC POLICIES MORE POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY POWERFUL THAN EVER BEFORE.**

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This seachange, and the radical rightward turn of Trump and other Republicans, has created immense new opportunities for Democratic policies to be hugely winning campaign issues.

But Democrats have to commit to more aggressive and economic-minded political and communications approaches to reap the benefits. Democrats cannot rely on the same old political actors from the Clinton and Obama eras, who have too often been proxies for, or captive of, the environmental left. And Democrats must seize important symbolic moments

in which to show they understand the economic importance of energy production to the American people and economy.

The Party must embrace, not be embarrassed by, regional differences in energy and climate politics. They must allow for diverse opinion during campaigns that lead ultimately to beneficial economic and climate outcomes, as part of a “big tent” political strategy of taking back the White House and majorities in Congress and in dozens of states where they are not now competitive.

Democrats should emphasize their pivotal role in supporting tax incentives, breakthrough R&D, and other policies that have produced the stunning cost reductions in renewable energy, in auto, building and appliance efficiency, and other technologies – saving consumers hundreds of billions of dollars while cutting U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by billions of tons. When framed as part of an energy portfolio that allows a role for natural gas and oil, voters are often especially convinced of the value of these clean energy technologies.

And, while carbon taxes can also be good policy, they should be pursued with extreme political care. Carbon pricing as part of an overall repeal of the recent Republican tax giveaway in a manner that actually cuts costs for nearly all taxpayers and eliminates the need for some regulations is a far more robust political position than a stand-alone energy tax.

The result can be an overwhelmingly positive Democratic political resurgence on climate and energy, exposing the amoral and backward-looking climate denial of Republicans, and Trump’s coal-focused energy delusions. Democrats must advance a can-do American energy vision, reasserting our nation’s unique ability to deliver low-cost clean energy, climate protection, and economic prosperity to all Americans.

*Note to Candidates: Top 20 Democratic Winning Campaign Approaches to Energy and Climate – See Page 20.*

## **A HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC ENERGY AND CLIMATE MISTAKES**

From 1993 to 2018, national Democrats have consistently made a basic political mistake on energy and climate: attempting a seemingly “perfect” environmental outcome through legislation or regulation while ignoring obvious political and economic dangers. Obsessed with pleasing the often ideologically-driven environmental elites, national Democrats have alienated centrist voters without producing obvious, signature political victories on energy and climate to build on, despite many smaller victories.

This model of political miscalculation was established by Vice President Al Gore in 1993 when he sprung the idea of a “British Thermal Unit” or BTU energy tax on members of his own party. While the idea of taxing energy or carbon may be sound, its execution was anything but.

The BTU tax was opposed by key Democrats at the Finance Committee, preventing committee passage, and never had the support of a majority of the full Senate. Yet Gore insisted that the BTU tax be part of the budget package House Democrats had to pass, even though it had no chance in the Senate. To be “BTUUsed” has become an infamous term of art in Washington – specifically, for a White House to force House members to take a politically suicidal vote when the proposal was already dead in the Senate. In the event, to raise needed revenue to meet the Clinton deficit reduction goals, the Senate opted for a 4.3-cent gasoline tax increase that became law – the last time U.S. federal energy taxes have been increased.

Republicans rightly smelled blood. They made the BTU episode a centerpiece of their 1994 campaign attacks on House Democrats, featuring the issue more prominently in their attack ads than any other issue except the “Hillary-care” health reform proposals. Republicans won an historic victory in November, winning more than 50 House seats to give them the lower chamber majority for the first time in 40 years – a dominance which, except for 2006-2010, has continued ever since.

### **BTU All Over Again – Cap and Trade in 2009**

Democrats were not to again regain control of both chambers of Congress and the White House for 15 years. Then, in 2009, they made an even bigger political mistake on key climate change and tax issues.

In the 2008 election, President Obama rode to power with the largest majorities of any Democratic President since 1977. But, on climate and energy issues, the signs were ominous from the start. Rightly supporting a cap-and-trade pricing policy during the campaign long before the Great Recession began, Obama did not reconsider the timing of carbon pricing even in the midst of the worst economy since the Great Depression, choosing former EPA administrator Carol Browner to be “climate czar.”

Browner had been a stalwart EPA chief, doggedly implementing a series of key regulations to improve U.S. air quality for all eight years under Clinton. But, naturally, Browner was distrusted by the very oil, gas, coal and electric utility industry leaders she had regulated. Brown was simply the wrong person to broker a complex political deal on carbon pricing that would have to gain the support of these very industries to have any realistic chance of becoming law.

The task was further complicated by a shift to the left on a key House committee. Representative

Henry Waxman, the veteran California liberal and formidable legislator, sensed his own opportunity after the 2008 election. Waxman challenged and defeated ailing octogenarian Michigan Congressman John Dingell – a moderate with deep ties to the auto industry – for the chairmanship of the key House Energy and Commerce Committee. Waxman was determined, despite the Great Recession, to push through the cap-and-trade climate pricing system long advocated by environmentalists.

Somehow, the notion of instituting a complicated commodity trading scheme – even as the stock market was tanking, financial industry and traders were being bailed out by the government, and the economy was losing 700,000 jobs a month in the early months of 2009 – still seemed a good idea at the White House and among House Democratic leaders. Such has been the influence environmental advocates have had over Democratic Party strategy and policy approaches. Under such circumstances, especially when insurmountable obstacles in the Senate arose, the White House could have proposed other climate policies like a national renewable energy standard, saying they would try cap and trade again when the economy was more stable. But Obama’s team appeared too captive to the environmental left to see this reality, or perhaps even willing to sacrifice House Democrats to retain Obama’s unalloyed environmental advocate support for his 2012 reelection campaign.

In the event, Waxman used all his political wiles to buy off various industries and interest groups allied with different House Democrats, including labor, the auto industry, agriculture, and some electric utilities. The process involved granting permits to emit CO<sub>2</sub> to these industries – permits which, under the cap-and-trade market system, would have significant monetary as well as environmental value. By June of 2009, this horse-trading yielded just enough votes for the measure to scrape through the House.

But, just as with the BTU tax in 1993, the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill never had a realistic chance of Senate passage – for at least three fundamental reasons. Many moderate Senate Democrats were concerned that, even in the face of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the President’s two major legislative priorities were left-leaning efforts to fight climate change and expand access to healthcare, once the economic stimulus package was passed. Indeed, the Affordable Care Act was a far higher priority, and absorbed the lion’s share of the White House and Senate leaders’ time, eventually passing in the fall of 2010 after 18 months of effort.

Second, the very nature of the cap-and-trade approach, with its complicated “emissions trading” structure, was deeply suspect to average voters and Democratic Senators at a moment when they had just seen Wall Street traders almost bring down the U.S. financial system. Waxman’s horse-trading in the direct aftermath of the financial industry bailout left an unusually bad taste in the mouths of many moderates in the Senate. It also galvanized far-right reactionaries in key swing states. The Tea Party was born (financed initially, in part, through money from the oil industry), and made defeating so-called “cap and tax” one of its leading causes – and perhaps its signature legislative win of Obama’s first two years. Thus, the climate issue gained unusual and negative political prominence in many purple states where Democratic moderates were defending seats.

Finally, and perhaps least appreciated, the cap-and-trade approach, in effect, shifted both tax and appropriations prerogatives from the Finance and Appropriations Committees to the Senate Environment Committee. This unprecedented usurpation of power was regarded from the beginning by the more tradition-minded Senate as deeply subversive. Indeed, it remains a leading reason some believe a federal cap-and-trade

emissions system is much less likely to gain Senate passage than a direct carbon tax.

As even former top Gore aide Elaine Kamarck noted about the cap and trade obsession at the time: “There is a sense that all the Democrats over-read their mandate” after the 2008 election. “The other explanation was that no one stopped to think how the dissatisfaction with Wall Street was going to play into a cap-and-trade plan,” she added.<sup>5</sup>

In the end, as with the BTU tax, the cap and trade bill was never voted on by the full Senate. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid realized the measure lacked the votes to become law, even though Democrats had a filibuster-proof 60 seats for most of Obama’s first two years. Even more than the BTU tax in 1994, the “cap and tax” washout played a key role in the 2010 election, as the political momentum in the country suddenly surged toward the reactionary Tea Party Republicans, fueled in part by fossil fuel interests from the American Petroleum Institute to ExxonMobil to the Koch Brothers.

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**THE “CAP-AND-TAX” WASHOUT PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE 2010 ELECTION, AS THE POLITICAL MOMENTUM IN THE COUNTRY SUDDENLY SURGED TOWARD THE REACTIONARY TEA PARTY REPUBLICANS.**

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In one of dozens of examples from the 2010 campaign, Senate candidate Marco Rubio said in a major ad: “If cap and trade were imposed on America it would devastate economic growth, it would get rid of jobs, it would be permanently debilitating.”<sup>6</sup>

Even some Democratic candidates in purple states were using the issue in attack ads: “Cap and trade would devastate Hoosiers,” intoned an ad run by

Democratic Indiana Senate candidate Rep. Brad Ellsworth, claiming his opponent, future Senator Dan Coats, was paid to lobby for the legislation.<sup>7</sup>

Probably the most famous and effective ad of the entire 2010 campaign was run by then-Governor Joe Manchin (D-WV), who won his Senate race against Republican John Raese by literally shooting a hole in cap-and-trade legislation in his biggest ad buy. Manchin's ad showed him firing a rifle at a piece of paper with the words "Cap and Trade bill" in large type: "I'll take dead aim at the cap and trade bill," Manchin said in the ad, "because it's bad for West Virginia."

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**THE FAR LEFT KEEP-IT-IN-THE-GROUND OIL AND GAS PROHIBITIONISTS FACED DOWN BARACK OBAMA ON THE KEystone XL PIPELINE, EVEN THOUGH THAT PIPELINE WOULD HAVE HAD ESSENTIALLY NO EFFECT ON LONG-TERM GLOBAL GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS.**

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Republicans knew how critical Democratic political mishandling of climate had been to the GOP's success.

*"...Conservatives defeated cap-and-trade by exposing it as cap-n-tax – a stealth tax on energy. Democrats lost the House in 2010 chiefly because they voted for Waxman-Markey," wrote Marlo Lewis of the influential right-wing think tank the Competitive Enterprise Institute just last year. "In the 2010 South Carolina GOP primaries, challenger Trey Gowdy beat incumbent Bob Inglis by 70 percent to 29 percent. Why? Chiefly because Inglis campaigned for a carbon tax and Gowdy campaigned against it."<sup>8</sup>*

In 2010 Republicans again recorded a massive rout, gaining 63 House seats, the largest House gain in

a mid-term since 1938, and six Senate seats. In the states, the sweep was even more complete, with Republicans gaining 680 legislative seats, breaking the previously record of 628 in 1974 following Watergate, and the GOP taking complete control of 26 state legislatures to Democrats' 15.

Democrats have not regained the U.S. House since the 2010 election. Indeed, despite Trump being at the top of the Republican ticket, after the 2016 election Democrats have fewer elected officials in office than at any time since the Civil War. Democrats now risk becoming a near-permanent minority party, with Republicans in control of both legislative chambers in 33 states, compared with only 13 for Democrats, and Republicans holding 68 legislative majorities to the Democrats' 31. Republican have 33 Governors' mansions, or two-thirds of the Governorships, while only 16 Governors are Democrats.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, Obamacare, the economic stimulus and financial bailouts, and other factors influenced the 2010 election. But Democrats (and professional environmentalists) have consistently underplayed the critical role the poorly timed cap-and-trade effort played.

**Obama's Keystone Pipeline Mistake**

Democratic energy and climate rhetoric often remains reflective of the views of national environmental groups. Many leading Democrats, including the House and Senate leadership, rarely stray from the orthodoxies of the environmental far left, much of which is increasingly opposed to any even near-term fossil fuel development and use as part of a responsible transition to a clean energy economy. The keep-it-in-the-ground crowd faced down Barack Obama on the Keystone XL pipeline, even though that pipeline would have had essentially no effect on long-term U.S. or global emissions.

Obama should have *approved* the Keystone XL pipeline, noting its negligible climate impacts. He could have used this key spotlight moment to give a Presidential address highlighting how his more pragmatic energy and climate policies were actually benefitting most voters, taking hold of the issue in a manner that would appeal to Americans broadly, while both upbraiding Republican nihilistic climate denial and distancing himself from the keep-it-in-the-ground far left. Instead, he kowtowed in a key moment to the far left, and voters noticed.

For 25 years, Democratic leaders have seemed to assume that the interests of the Democratic Party and environmental groups are the same – consistently leading to political disaster. It’s time for a change – a change that will end up yielding far better political and, ultimately, environmental outcomes.

### **OBAMA-ERA ENERGY ECONOMY MIRACLE – THE STORY DEMOCRATS HAVEN’T TOLD**

Amid the focus on unsuccessful carbon pricing efforts, Democrats have neglected to exploit arguably the biggest positive story in the American economy during the Obama era – the boom in all types of U.S. energy that Democratic policies have supported.

In the Obama years, the U.S. energy economy – including natural gas, efficiency and renewable energy – enjoyed an unprecedented boom. America became the world’s largest producer of natural gas, with production growing a startling 34 percent. The shale gas revolution has, in fact, been embraced, but often silently, by most Democrats – not only for the direct economic benefits, but also because it has allowed the U.S. power sector to switch from the dirtiest fuel source, coal, to much cleaner and greenhouse lower-emitting natural gas. This “dash to gas” cut coal use roughly in half over the past

decade, from around 60 percent of U.S. electricity to about 30 percent in just 10 years, and is the single biggest reason greenhouse gas emissions declined under Obama. Of course, the major reason Democrats have not taken due credit for the shale gas boom is that many environmentalists are loath to admit its role in displacing coal, and continue to attack even the most responsible shale development.

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### **AMERICA BECAME THE WORLD’S LARGEST PRODUCER OF NATURAL GAS, WITH PRODUCTION GROWING A STARTLING 34 PERCENT.**

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Indeed, Obama put in place emissions and other shale development protections that helped the industry demonstrate the technology was generally safe when well regulated. In particular, Democrats imposed sensible regulations on leaks of gases such as methane, a greenhouse gas 25 more powerful than carbon dioxide, making U.S. gas the least-emitting in the world. Now, Trump and Republicans are attempting to overturn these regulations.

The shale gas revolution was directly the result of technologies developed through Democratic-supported federal research and development that created 3-D imaging, advanced seismology, and super-efficient gas turbines. Yet these are the very R&D investments that Trump’s budget proposes to eliminate.<sup>10</sup>

The shale revolution also drove the remarkable boom in oil production, with American production rising 74 percent under Obama. Indeed, most market analysts believe U.S. shale oil production is the major reason global oil prices have stayed low by historic standards since 2013, falling from \$100 a barrel to about an average of \$50 for the past 5 years, resulting in a huge boon to U.S. consumers,

with tens of billions in savings. Overall, U.S. oil imports in 2016 were 22 percent below their 2005 high, and OPEC's share of oil supply to the U.S. was lower than in any time since records began in 1973.<sup>11</sup> Obama's approach of doubling U.S. auto fuel efficiency and quietly encouraging U.S. oil production has effectively ended OPEC's control of global oil pricing.

Over the period, U.S. greenhouse gas emissions fell more than 12 percent due to Democratic-led policies on auto, appliance and building efficiency and incentives for clean energy sources like solar, wind and natural gas. Yet most Democrats, including presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, have not taken the credit they deserve for this economically and environmentally powerful clean energy revolution.

As impressive as the oil and gas resurgence has been, renewable energy production under Obama grew even more rapidly. Wind and solar production in the U.S. grew by more than 300 percent since 2009, as costs came down dramatically and investment skyrocketed, largely due to renewable energy tax credits Democrats created and have supported steadfastly.<sup>12</sup> Solar costs have fallen by more than 60 percent in just the past 5 years, and U.S. wind energy costs are 40 percent lower today than a decade ago.

Most profound of all is the clean energy jobs story. There are now 4.5 million such jobs across the country, up from 3.4 million in 2011.<sup>15</sup> And these jobs numbers don't include the hundreds of thousands of new jobs created in the natural gas industry, an indispensable part of our transition toward cleaner fuels.

Crucially, these clean energy jobs are good, high-paying jobs. U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics show, for example, that natural gas extraction workers earned, on average, about \$56,000 a year in 2015, the last year for which data is available.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, wind

turbine installers at the same level earned more, about \$60,000.<sup>17</sup>

Electrical installers of solar energy earn about \$76,000, while solar mechanics earn about \$73,000 and solar engineers well over \$100,000 a year. These wages are more than competitive with disappearing coal industry employment, where the typical coal excavating machine operators earn about \$54,000 – roughly the same as a wind turbine installer.<sup>18</sup>

Trump's claim that he will bring back coal jobs is specious; coal employment has fallen due to market forces, especially automation, movement toward industrial-scale western coal operations, and cheap natural gas, as well as climate concerns, with coal mining jobs falling from 180,000 in 1985 to about 50,000 today.

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**INCREASED STORMS, DROUGHTS, WILDFIRES, AND FLOODING RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE IS COSTING TAXPAYERS HUNDREDS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS - DEMOCRATS MUST ARTICULATE THE DOMESTIC ECONOMIC COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE MORE CLEARLY.**

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Meanwhile, solar energy alone already employs more than three times as many Americans as coal,<sup>19</sup> and employment in the U.S. solar business is growing 12 times faster than the economy's overall job creation.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes, One statistic says it all: Wind turbine technician is by far the fastest-growing profession in America.<sup>21</sup>

Democratic policies have been a key to this energy bonanza. In addition to consistently enacting clean energy consumer and industry tax credits on the federal and state levels, Obama's stated

determination to limit U.S. greenhouse gas emissions drove massive investment away from high-polluting coal and toward all manner of cleaner energy sources, including natural gas.

Moreover, Democrats for 30 years have supported robust energy R&D investments through the Department of Energy and its National Laboratories that have directly led to almost every advanced energy technology benefitting consumers today. This funding has created 3-D imaging, advanced seismology and super-efficient gas turbines that created the gas boom for which Republicans falsely take credit.

Democratic-led investments have created the world's best natural gas turbines, the most sophisticated oil-drilling equipment, the world's most efficient solar cells, advanced glass and lighting, among scores of others. For example, Sandia National Laboratory oversaw the improvement of diamond compact drill bits to penetrate hard rock used widely in the 2000s for unconventional oil and gas well drilling, accounting for as much as 60 percent of all drilled footage.

The Obama Administration, strangely cowed by environmental advocates and staffed with many in thrall to the far left, did a uniquely poor job of communicating the Administration's balanced energy and climate policy.

Most shockingly, in the 2016 election, Hillary Clinton allowed Donald Trump's energy lies to go largely unchallenged by not countering with the remarkable American energy bonanza created under President Obama. Clinton did not seize on the economic miracle of the Obama energy economy that produced millions of new, good jobs, cut consumer costs, and was a huge bright spot in the economies of states around the country.

Trump's claims during that campaign and as President that he would bring back coal jobs are entirely fabricated. The movement toward industrial-scale western coal operations (and away from eastern coal) has had a huge role, as has the flood of cheap natural gas. Yet Hillary Clinton and other Democrats allowed Trump to repeat these lies with impunity, mostly because Democrats did not tell the Clean Energy Miracle story themselves, including the role of shale gas.

Nor did the Obama White House fully understand the need to portray the economic benefits of their energy policies. Instead, energy and climate issues were dominated during his presidency by just a few symbolic issues, especially the cap and trade attempt, the Solyndra solar subsidy, the Keystone XL pipeline showdown, and the decline of coal production. In each case, the actual policy facts were decidedly on Democrats' side, but their lack of tactical political finesse and unwillingness to challenge far-left climate political correctness prevented them making effective counter arguments and winning back popular opinion.

### **MAINSTREAM DEMOCRATIC CLIMATE POLICIES HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE**

Under Obama, U.S. greenhouse gas emissions fell more than 12 percent, at the same time as the overall economy grew by 15 percent. This demonstrates that the U.S. can grow the overall economy, including its oil and gas sector, even while cutting emissions substantially.

The U.S. shale gas boom has greatly eased the power sector move away from coal by providing cheap natural gas, which has only half the carbon emissions of coal. Gas also has far fewer conventional smog and air pollution problems than coal, is a much more flexible power source

to integrate into the electric grid, and is especially compatible with renewable energy. Coal use dropped from providing 49 percent of U.S. electricity in 2006 to only 29 percent in 2015, with natural gas surpassing coal as the primary source of U.S. electric power generation for the first time in history.

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**THE US SHALE GAS BOOM HAS GREATLY EASED THE POWER SECTOR MOVE AWAY FROM COAL BY PROVIDING CHEAP NATURAL GAS WHICH HAS ONLY HALF THE CARBON EMISSIONS OF COAL.**

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In transport, U.S. emissions have been reduced over the past decade as well, largely because of vehicle fuel economy standards – passed by Democrats in 2007 and strengthened under Obama. These rules, agreed to by the industry, have saved U.S. motorists hundreds of billions of dollars in gasoline costs and cut emissions, yet President Trump has indicated he will water down future fuel economy targets.

**Climate Gains at Risk from Trump**

The U.S. economy is also far more efficient in using energy than it was a decade ago due to a revolution in efficiency standards for appliances, and industry investments in less wasteful building lighting, cooling and heating efficiency – all based on R&D supported mostly by Democrats. Trump’s proposed budget calls for cutting all these programs, as well, and has no plans to upgrade efficiency standards as technological and industry advances allow.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, the Trump Administration seems intent on creating an “alternate” reality, suggesting that *only they* know how to create economic growth and jobs while cutting carbon emissions, when, in fact, the policies

they propose are putting current progress at risk. Too often, Democrats and news media allow Trump and Republicans to get away with this nonsense.

In announcing the executive order directed at undoing the key Clean Power Plan greenhouse gas regulations, Trump Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt in 2017 engaged in such double-speak. “For too long over the last several years,” Pruitt told ABC News, “we’ve accepted a narrative that, if you’re pro-growth, pro-jobs, you’re anti-environment.”

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**YET, UNDER OBAMA’S SUPPOSEDLY “JOB-KILLING REGULATIONS,” AS TRUMP CALLED THEM TUESDAY, MORE THAN 11.3 MILLION NEW JOBS WERE CREATED, COMPARED TO JUST 2.3 MILLION UNDER GEORGE W. BUSH.**

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The U.S. saw a record 75 straight months of job growth under Obama, all while greenhouse gas emissions fell substantially.

In total under Obama, the American economy has effectively decoupled economic growth from emissions growth in the past decade, producing 23 percent fewer energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of GDP in 2015 than it did 10 years earlier.<sup>22</sup> This allowed the U.S. to be on pace to reduce emissions 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, as promised by President Obama under the 2009 Copenhagen Accord.

The rest of the world readily responded to the U.S. as the natural leader in clean energy development under Obama. Once it became clear that Obama was attempting to pursue an aggressive, responsible clean energy agenda, despite fierce resistance from Congressional Republicans, the U.S. again quickly gained the mantle as the global leader in

international climate change negotiations. This was critical, as the EU has shown itself incapable of the flexibility needed to create an agreement that gained the participation of all major nations.

Later than many others,<sup>23</sup> but still in time to act, the Obama international climate negotiating team recognized that the top-down, “legally binding treaty,” Kyoto-type approach the EU continued to push even after the Copenhagen negotiations was a dead end. Obama rightly insisted that a race to the top on climate change among major nations through a voluntary, pledge and review, “nationally determined” set of emissions goals was the best way to involve all countries, including major emitting nations like China. This progress, in turn, set the stage for the Paris Agreement on climate change, the first to gain pledges from all nations, and an instrument that can evolve, helping pressure nations to make much deeper emissions cuts that will be needed to meet the stated goal of keeping warming below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and preventing runaway, catastrophic climate change.

The U.S. commitment under the Paris Agreement is to cut emissions 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, a pace of decarbonization significantly more ambitious than that the U.S. accomplished in meeting the Copenhagen emissions goals. Yet there are strong reasons to believe the U.S. can cut its GHG emissions this quickly, even while the economy grows robustly, were it not for the anti-clean energy regulatory, budget and tax policy rollbacks of Donald Trump and Congressional Republicans. The sheer pace of energy technology development and deployment in recent years, and that additional progressive policies would unleash, suggests the opportunity for a seismic shift downward in long-term U.S. emissions.

A U.S. climate and clean technology strategy much like that which emerged in Obama’s second term, combining emissions regulations and clean energy incentives, could be tremendously effective, even without federal carbon taxes, should they prove impossible. Such a policy would probably involve more rapid growth in renewable energy, re-licensing nuclear power plants, much faster deployment of electric vehicles to cut oil emissions, and carbon capture and storage technology at natural gas power plants. This mix of current technologies could, in all likelihood, achieve the long-term U.S. emissions target of a 90 percent cut in emissions by 2050 over 2005 levels. And new technology breakthroughs, which are likely in fields like large-scale electricity storage, could allow such deep decarbonization much more quickly. But, again, additional policies (like those outlined below) would be necessary, and only Democrats will pursue them.

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**THIS MIX OF CURRENT TECHNOLOGIES COULD, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, ACHIEVE THE LONG-TERM U.S. EMISSIONS TARGET OF A 90 PERCENT CUT IN EMISSIONS BY 2050 OVER 2005 LEVELS.**

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Elitist environmental influence has not been limited to shale. Regarding nuclear power, carbon capture and storage, and other extremely valuable energy and climate policies, many Democrats have consistently ceded their rhetoric and policy approaches to extremist environmental advocates.

### **Huge Costs of Climate Change Impacts to U.S. Taxpayers**

American technological leadership in fields like commercial-scale carbon capture and storage, electric vehicles and wide-scale renewable energy will also help other nations decarbonize, helping

prevent catastrophic, runaway climate change. This, in turn, will help limit the taxpayer costs that climate change impacts are inflicting in the U.S., already in the tens of billions a year.

Recent Hurricanes Harvey and Irma are just glimpses of the massive extra costs from extreme weather events that climate change will cause in coming years. Democrats must begin to effectively articulate the massive economic and human costs of climate change inaction, to further build support for policies that will protect the American people from the worst climate change outcomes.

In December 2016, the Office of Management and Budget released a report warning of tens of billions in additional costs from wildfires, crop insurance, flood insurance, healthcare spending and other impacts related to climate change. As much as “15 percent of total federal discretionary spending by late-century,” could be caused by climate change, OMB said.<sup>24</sup>

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a program more than \$25 billion in debt, was shored up by Congress in the same Harvey funding bill for only a few months. Most Americans lack any flood insurance, with uninsured rates often reaching 80 percent in the hardest hit areas.<sup>25</sup> Reforms in the NFIP are needed and could reduce some costs, but the fundamental problem of more extreme precipitation has gotten much worse over the past 50 years, according to the National Climate Assessment, and will only become more serious as a warming atmosphere holds more moisture.<sup>26</sup>

In 2016, record floods in the Baton Rouge area that destroyed or damaged more than 100,000 homes and cost \$15 billion were made twice as likely because of climate change, according to a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study.<sup>27</sup> Federal taxpayers picked up 90 percent of the tab. Hurricane Matthew in 2016, that devastated North

Carolina and cost an additional \$12 billion, was made larger because of climate change, according to leading scientists. But Democrats are not yet framing climate change as a matter of higher taxpayer cost.

Despite the obfuscations of Trump Administration officials like Energy Secretary Rick Perry and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt,<sup>28</sup> scientists know that climate change is making hurricanes stronger. As Greg Holland, a hurricane expert at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, put it, “climate change has already produced a substantial increase in the proportion of intense hurricanes” and “an active season now will tend to have a higher number of intense hurricanes than the same season 20 years ago.”<sup>29</sup>

The reason is that Gulf, Caribbean and Atlantic water temperatures are one to three degrees higher now than in the first half of the 20th Century. And, for every degree of water temperature increase, there is a 4 percent increase in atmospheric moisture that makes storms larger and more intense. And it’s not just hurricanes and extreme storms. Climate change is acting as a force multiplier for wildfires, heat waves, sea-level rise, infectious disease, and other impacts that increase federal budget costs.<sup>30</sup>

Today, more than half of the entire U.S. Forest Service budget is burned up just fighting wildfires; in 1990, fires consumed only 15 percent of USFS costs.<sup>31</sup> Leading researchers find that climate change is a key reason U.S. wildfires now burn twice the forest area they did in 1984.<sup>32</sup>

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**FOREST TEMPERATURES IN THE WEST  
HAVE RISEN BY 2.5 DEGREES SINCE 1970,  
EXPERTS SAY, SO WE CAN EXPECT BOTH  
MORE FREQUENT AND BIGGER FIRES  
ALONG WITH BALLOONING COSTS.**

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Places like Alaska are experiencing more and larger fires than ever before and climate change is making them larger, studies show.<sup>33</sup> The 2017 fire season, especially intense in Montana and the Northwest, burned more than 8 million acres – an area larger than the state of Maryland.

National security experts are finding large new costs to defense budgets due to climate change impacts, both direct and indirect.<sup>34</sup> Key facilities, like the nation's largest naval base in Norfolk, face huge dislocation expenses from sea level rise, and, over time, may have to move entirely. Military leaders have found that droughts made worse by climate change in North Africa and the Middle East are leading to clashes over water, food and other resources – exacerbating ethnic conflicts and immigration problems.<sup>35</sup>

Individual industries, from insurance to real estate to recreation to energy, face increased costs, which will be passed on to consumers. For example, the concentration of the oil and gas industry on the Gulf Coast, and especially vulnerable refineries and ports, means billions in additional costs,<sup>36</sup> some borne by consumers but others by taxpayers as the industry receives federal funding to rebuild this infrastructure, as Hurricane Harvey showed. The irony of the fossil fuel industry, after many years of denial, both causing climate change and now recouping costs, is lost on few.

And none of this contends with the almost unthinkable costs of moving our coastal cities, home to more than 170 million Americans, if sea level rises 4 feet or more as experts<sup>37</sup> predict without much more decisive U.S. and global action to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

### **A Vision for Effective U.S. Climate Leadership Under Democrats**

It is worth noting that the U.S. and others around the world must also limit greenhouse gas emissions

other than carbon dioxide, including methane, HFCs, and black carbon, to ensure climate protection, as a major recent study found.<sup>38</sup> The success of the Kigali Agreement to eliminate HFCs, one of six major greenhouse gases, shows how much can be done here if the U.S. leads.

More broadly, global climate protection can, in fact, be achieved only with such U.S. leadership. No other nation or group of nations – not China, the EU, India or any other country – can bring the technological prowess to solve the climate challenge, and specifically to cut GHG emissions sharply enough to keep global temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius that scientists say may unleash runaway, catastrophic warming. U.S. diplomatic, economic, military, technological and cultural leadership on climate change will also do much to rehabilitate America's image in the rest of the world, and rebuild the trust and cooperation that Trump has squandered.

A new Democratic President, if he or she is to be elected in 2020, must articulate this U.S.-led energy and climate vision, replacing Trump's false coal-dust nihilism with a true and optimistic vision of American leadership and ingenuity benefitting America's economy and security.

Yes, Trump's anti-science and scorched-earth rollbacks of climate protections are creating huge head-winds for further progress. These include overturning the Clean Power Plan regulations on existing U.S. power plants, gutting of funding for enforcement of existing regulations, undermining regulations of methane emissions, threats to weaken U.S. auto efficiency standards, defunding critical technology R&D, as well as alienating our climate allies abroad. But all of these challenges can be turned around quickly by a Democratic President and Congress.

To pursue policies that will protect Americans – that grow our economy and provide them protection from climate change – Democrats must win many more races in the 2018 and 2020 campaigns. But to do that,

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### **DEMOCRATS NEED NEW, MORE POWERFUL ENERGY AND CLIMATE MESSAGES AND POLICIES.**

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#### **THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PLAYBOOK: AMERICAN ENERGY ABUNDANCE AND AMERICAN CLIMATE PROTECTION**

To succeed politically in 2018, 2020 and beyond, Democrats must articulate a bold vision of “American Energy Abundance and Climate Protection” – together. Ideally, this vision would be integrated into a broader Democratic effort to reanimate the “opportunity economy” for all, especially middle- and working-class Americans, with the burgeoning clean energy sector and job creation playing a key role.

But American energy abundance means Democrats cannot just advocate renewable energy, as many on the far left insist, important as wind and solar are. Instead, candidates need to embrace shale gas in many parts of the country, support relicensing of zero-emissions nuclear plants in many states, and urge retrofits of existing polluting plants with carbon capture technology, along with investment in energy efficiency and renewable sources.

Clean-energy policies championed by Democrats over the past decade have helped create millions of high-paying energy jobs for American workers. And innovative Democratic policies going forward can help spur millions more good jobs – in energy efficiency, natural gas, nuclear energy, carbon capture, wind, solar, electric vehicles and infrastructure – in coming years.

Democrats must offer voters a compelling energy and economic plan going forward to show how they can help grow millions more clean-energy jobs. Specifically, Democrats must turbocharge American clean-energy job growth through a combination of additional clean-energy business and consumer tax cuts, as part of a broader, pro-growth economic approach that repeals and replaces the Republican tax giveaway to the super-rich.

This should include a far more ambitious energy and jobs infrastructure effort, and more aggressive breakthrough energy research and development investments. Democrats should also establish a job-focused energy-technology education plan using community colleges, to help train workers – especially in communities, both rural and urban, where unemployment is highest. As the Progressive Policy Institute’s Michael Mandel has illustrated,<sup>39</sup> bringing the benefits of technology to other sectors of the economy has the potential to boost productivity, lower prices, and create more and better-paying jobs.

#### **Natural Gas – the Key Transition Fuel**

In many parts of the country – including Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, West Virginia, Indiana, Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and other states – natural gas has been a huge economic benefit. Democrats must embrace the shale boom in shale states – and in purple and red states and districts – even as, in blue states and districts, they emphasize the role of gas in Democratic plans for deep decarbonization of the American and global economy to prevent the worst domestic impacts from climate change.

Indeed, the shale gas boom has been the key reason the U.S. has been able to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

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**DEMOCRATIC MODERATES MUST CALMLY BUT CLEARLY STATE THIS FACT, WHICH THE “KEEP IT IN THE GROUND” IDEOLOGUES ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL LEFT OFTEN REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE.**

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Natural gas, in fact, will be a key transition fuel for the U.S. for decades to come. One key reason – natural gas integrates with intermittent wind and solar better than any other base load power sources, with new natural gas plants able to fully “power up” within 10 minutes when the wind stops blowing or the sun stops shining. And, when combined with carbon capture and storage, natural gas can be a near-zero-emissions fuel.

Of course, Democrats in urban and light or dark blue districts needn’t discuss shale development. But they shouldn’t willfully attack it either, as it’s been the key to the decline in America’s coal use and will remain a key source of clean and cheap electric power for decades to come. In fact, a majority of the 79 GOP House seats the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is targeting for pick-ups are in states that hugely benefit from or favor shale development.<sup>40</sup>

Still, Democrats must continue to be in the vanguard of reducing the environmental impacts from shale development, including around water quality, seismic activity, air pollution and methane emissions. Importantly, U.S. natural gas is less harmful to the climate than gas from other nations. Natural gas, of course, has less than half the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions of coal. But there’s a catch: Natural gas production also involves leaks of such unburned gas as methane – a greenhouse gas at least 23 times more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub>. If total gas leaks during production, transport and use of natural gas exceed 3.5 percent of overall gas volume, gas is no better than coal from a climate change perspective.

**Exporting U.S. Low Emissions Gas**

The good news is that American gas has much lower methane emissions than other sources, especially Russian gas, and that still-lower U.S. methane emissions are very possible with proper regulation.

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**THE EPA UNDER OBAMA ESTIMATED THAT U.S. SHALE GAS PRODUCTION INVOLVES METHANE LEAKS OF ABOUT 1.5 PERCENT, THE LOWEST EMISSIONS RATE OF ANY MAJOR PRODUCER IN THE WORLD.**

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Russian gas, in contrast, comes from the notoriously leaky Gazprom production system, with leaks or “fugitive emissions” rates of at least 5-7 percent.<sup>41</sup>

Instead of exploiting this U.S. gas methane advantage, including for valuable export markets, the Trump administration and the U.S. oil and gas industry have been fighting against the very methane regulations that can give them a greater competitive edge in an increasingly climate-constrained energy marketplace.

**Carbon Capture and Storage – a Potential Key to Deep Decarbonization**

Prompted largely by climate-concerned Democrats, Congress enacted large tax credits for carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS), a technology that can safely capture and store the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from both coal and natural gas power plants, cutting their emissions to near zero.

The goal of the tax credits is to entice the electric power industry to deploy commercial CCUS technology widely enough to lower its current high price, allowing the U.S. to continue using some coal – and especially natural gas – as part of its energy mix while lowering emissions significantly. And the technology has the potential not only to help the

U.S. do its part in fighting increasingly dire climate change risks, but to help the rest of the world, including coal-heavy China and India, do so as well, while creating a new U.S. export market.

While some on the far left oppose CCUS development as “enabling” fossil fuel production, every major climate model finds that CCUS will need to cut emissions from thousands of global power plants to have a chance of meeting climate goals. In addition, done right, the U.S. has the opportunity to export the technology to cut emissions in China and other coal-reliant countries. In time, coal will be phased out of the U.S. energy mix, but CCUS will still be needed at natural gas power plants for many decades to come.

### **Carbon Taxes as Part of Overall Tax Reform**

Enactment of U.S. federal carbon taxes, favored by nearly all economists, is still a strong Democratic position as part of broader climate protection strategies. But history clearly shows Democrats must tread this political ground carefully. As a general political matter, carbon pricing should be part of a much larger tax reform effort to repeal and replace the Republicans’ recent tax mess – that is, as part of an economic strategy, not just one about climate change. Even so, any carbon tax effort should clearly and simply hold 95 percent of U.S. taxpayers harmless, through some form of rebate – or, more likely, lower tax rates – and, make this utterly obvious to voters through direct yearly checks or payroll tax reductions.

But, if carbon taxes are not politically possible, there is strong reason to believe we can still cut emissions substantially – especially in the next decade or two. A U.S. climate and technology strategy combining emissions regulations and clean energy subsidies is likely to be effective for the near future, though Trump is fighting both policies. Such a deeply low-

carbon future would probably involve far more renewable energy, relicensed nuclear power plants, electric vehicles, and, importantly, carbon capture and storage technology at natural gas power plants, especially. The private sector, aware that either carbon regulations or taxes are inevitable to address climate change, is already making many of these investments, though additional incentives will be needed for deeper emissions reductions.

An approach to regulations and subsidies as outlined above should allow the U.S. to cut emissions sharply, but at higher overall costs. It may be that the U.S. polity – that is, voters and members of Congress, including many Democrats from swing districts – simply would prefer regulations and subsidies to energy taxes for now. Democratic candidates, including those for President, would be wise to consider this perspective before automatically endorsing carbon taxes.

### **Low-cost Clean Tech + High-cost Climate Impacts = New Energy Economic Opportunity**

The economics of clean energy and climate protection have changed substantially in the past 20 years. Due largely to Democratic policies, clean energy is cheaper than ever before – cheaper by far than coal when pollution costs are accounted for. This means America can provide consumers cheap, clean energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Meanwhile, the economic costs of climate change impacts to taxpayers are mounting rapidly, as Hurricanes Harvey and Irma demonstrated, and will consistently be in the tens or hundreds of billions a year.

Where formerly Republicans could make a cynical argument that clean energy investment and climate action was cost without gain, now the huge rise in climate impact costs is a far more powerful political

issue than tiny (and, indeed, disappearing) subsidies for renewable energy. But now – finally – Democrats have the opportunity to use the shocking climate science and policy denial of Republicans as powerful election issues in 2018 and 2020.

But this message will be effective in most parts of the country only if Democrats provide it within an overall energy abundance and climate protection framework that supports natural gas, efficiency and, even in some cases, coal with carbon capture.

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**POLLING SHOWS THAT VOTERS STRONGLY SUPPORT BOTH CONTINUING TAX INCENTIVES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY (80 PERCENT) AND THOSE FOR CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE FOR BOTH COAL AND NATURAL GAS (68 PERCENT).**

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This is the policy balance that will make climate and energy winning issues for Democrats across the country. When Democrats focus on the *economic value* of the clean energy boom and climate protection, they win.

And Dems must also show how Trump's policies are costing workers jobs and consumers money right now. For example, incredibly, Trump has been targeting for closure the voluntary Energy Star efficiency program that *saves U.S. consumers \$34 billion a year* in electricity costs, while costing about \$50 million to administer.<sup>43</sup>

There is no doubt that Republicans' long history of climate change science denial and the Republican Party's consistent efforts to undermine clean energy and climate protection for the past 25 years are moral offenses against current and future generations. These are cynical and cowardly political acts, and should be condemned. Sadly, they fit into a larger pattern of the Republican willingness

to consistently deny factual information if it doesn't fit their political goals – or make self-serving, false claims to ideological consistency.

President Trump's incessant lying is simply the logical extension of this trend, and his climate denial and policy rollbacks are echoed by hundreds of Republicans in Congress and around the country. Simply put, Republicans have been fighting against climate protection for decades – and will continue to do so unless defeated the only place they pay attention to, at the ballot box. Equally, most Republicans have fought against clean energy policies – they have done all they could to prevent the huge economic, jobs and consumer-saving benefits of America's energy technology. Democrats must remind voters of this.

But, ultimately, the American people respond best to can-do positive messages of shared economic growth and opportunity, job creation, consumer benefits, and domestic security – the things Democratic energy and climate policies can deliver.

**DEMOCRATIC, NOT ENVIRONMENTALIST, ENERGY POLICY**

Moderate Democrats should not look to overtly attack mainstream, responsible environmental groups. These groups, by and large, do important and necessary work, calling attention to climate change and other serious air quality, water pollution, land use and health risks to the American people – and often propose valuable policy and technical approaches.

But, equally, Democrats must be clear that they will no longer cede – or even appear to cede – U.S. energy policy to far-left ideologues who, in any case, are unable to gain the political support needed to protect the climate. In sometimes conceding this ground to the environmental left in the past, some feckless Democrats, not the reasonable

environmental advocates themselves, have been to blame. This practice has turned out to be unusually bad politics for Democrats, and has often proven to be self-defeating policy, as well.

Instead, thoughtful Democratic leaders must make the positive, can-do, patriotic case for “American Energy Abundance and Climate Protection” of the American people, using the U.S. competitive advantage of resources, ingenuity, breakthrough energy technology development, and economic innovation.

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## **TOP 20 DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN APPROACHES TO ENERGY AND CLIMATE: HOW TO TALK ABOUT ENERGY AND CLIMATE TO WIN ELECTIONS**

**1. Democrats Can Deliver American Energy Abundance and Climate Protection, Together – America can do both.**

**2. Continuing the New Energy Boom for Everyone.** Democratic policies have created America’s clean energy bonanza, but new policies are needed for even greater economic energy growth, job creation, affordable energy and climate protection.

**3. Economic Benefits of Energy Policy First.** Emphasize specific, local economic benefits of American Energy Abundance policy first, including energy affordability, employment and wage benefits, innovation and technology, and its role in the broader Democratic “opportunity economy” message aimed and middle- and working-class voters.

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**4. Security Benefits of Energy Policy Second.** Focus on regional, national and domestic security benefits of Democratic energy policy, including reducing oil imports, using domestic clean energy like natural gas, wind and solar, and security benefits of reducing climate change.

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**5. Climate Protection as an Economic Issue Saving U.S. Taxpayers Money and Preventing Harm.** Discuss climate protection benefits from a domestic economic, safety and security angle, especially cutting costs of extreme weather disasters, not in the abstract or in international terms.

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**6. Natural Gas as a Key Clean Fuel That Allows Renewable Energy to Grow.** Embrace natural gas (where appropriate regionally) as the key clean transition fuel, including shale gas, noting that natural gas syncs uniquely well with wind and solar to stabilize the electric grid, and can allow the U.S. to grow both.

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**7. Insisting on Safe, Secure Shale Development.** Democrats can be trusted to make sure shale gas and oil development happens far more responsibly than Republicans, who routinely allow polluters to write the rules.

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**8. Regional Energy Diversity Is an American Strength.** Emphasize regional diversity and variety of energy sources as overall economic and energy policy strength; diversity of energy is a unique American economic and security strength.

**9. Energy Infrastructure Investment as Key to U.S. Job Creation.** Link energy innovation and technology to domestic economic investments in roads, bridges, communications, electric vehicles and other infrastructure investments, and to broader economic competitiveness internationally.

**10. Growing Energy Technology Jobs in Rural Areas and in Cities.** This should include a far more ambitious energy and jobs infrastructure plan and more aggressive breakthrough energy research and development investments. Democrats should also establish a jobs-focused energy-technology education plan using community colleges, to help train workers – especially in communities, both rural and urban, where unemployment is highest.

**11. Building Energy Infrastructure Is Key to Low Consumer Costs.** Support energy infrastructure investment when responsible and sensible, including natural gas pipelines, carbon capture, and nuclear re-licensing.

**12. Energy Investments Are Good for Workers and Labor.** Use support of energy infrastructure to make common cause with key labor unions, including IBEW and others.

**13. American Clean Energy Investments Are Keys to Economic Growth.** Turbocharge American clean-energy job growth through a combination of additional clean-energy business and consumer tax cuts, as part of a broader pro-growth economic plan that repeals and replaces the Republican tax giveaway to the super-rich.

**14. American Energy Tech Breakthroughs Are Competitive Game-changers.** Strongly support energy R&D breakthrough investments and research as key to job creation, low-cost energy for consumers, and American global economic competitiveness. Advances include low-cost solar and wind; more low-cost gas and oil; more efficient, cheaper-to-fuel cars, trucks, buildings, and appliances; and millions of new U.S. energy jobs. This will provide America strong global competitiveness in the \$6 trillion global energy market that includes competitors like China.

**15. Nuclear and Carbon Capture Can Be Key to U.S. Clean Energy and Environment.** Nuclear is well over half of U.S. zero emissions energy, and must continue to play a major role in our energy mix, so it is worthy of Democratic support. And, in many areas that rely on coal, Democrats can note that CCS is the best way to support some coal use. In the rest of the country, CCS has huge value as a limiter of natural gas emissions and as an export job creator that can help other countries cut their emissions and prevent harm to America’s climate.

**16. Democratic, not Environmentalist, Energy Policy.** Respect the knowledge and views of major environmental organizations, and praise their important work when appropriate, but be clear that they do not dictate Democratic energy policy, which is solely in the economic and security interest of all Americans.

**17. Lowering Overall Taxes for Middle- and Working-class Americans Is Only Acceptable Approach to Taxing Carbon.** Emphasize carbon taxes ONLY as part of pro-growth tax reform that lowers taxes for all middle- and working-class; no carbon taxes solely as climate policy!

**18. Seek Symbolic Issues That Demonstrate Democrats’ Economically Powerful Energy Policy.** Look for key symbolic moments that demonstrate visionary but economically powerful Democratic energy and climate policies that show a willingness to be pragmatic, investing in economic growth while protecting America’s climate.

**19. Climate Protection Will Lower Costs to Taxpayers and Prevent Harm. Democrats Can Deliver Climate Protection; Republicans Won’t.** Communicate the large economic and human costs that climate change is already having on people locally and nationally as it exacerbates many extreme weather events, and cite the huge costs to taxpayers that climate change impacts are already causing.

**20. Republican and Trump Energy and Climate Policy Are Stuck in the Past; and Are Putting Us at Risk.** Describe Trump and Republican energy policy approaches as a 19th Century, outdated reliance solely on coal that will not help America grow and compete in the technology-based innovation economy, will cost consumers more in the end, and hurt our security and competitiveness.

## **CONCLUSION - THE WINNING DEMOCRATIC VISION**

Of course, different Democrats in different political regions and districts will pick and choose which of these many themes to emphasize, both as messages on the campaign trail and as policy positions. But, as a whole, this list represents a politically and economically powerful set of proposals that will also address American security and the existential threat of runaway climate change.

Just as in World War II and the Cold War, America now has the opportunity to lead the world to new heights of clean energy prosperity and save itself and the world from climate catastrophe. Republican nihilism will not do that job. This is abundantly clear from the increasing willingness of Republicans at all levels to simply lie about factual information – from climate science to budget realities to claim of fake news.

Barack Obama has said, “There is no greater threat to our planet than climate change.” Bill Clinton notes, “The most profound security threat we face today is global warming.” But they both know Democrats must win in purple and red states around the country to enact powerful climate policies.

For almost 30 years now, Democrats have paid a political price for doing the right thing and protecting our nation and our people from the fearsome impacts of climate change. Now Democrats can sow the harvest of that planting, using their climate and energy positions to win elections, improve the economic lives of all Americans, and protect our people.

Democrats can now offer a positive, can-do, pro-economic growth energy and climate vision, reclaiming the support of working- and middle-class Americans around the country, and enriching our nation and protecting our people and future in the process.

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