

Democrats Lay Groundwork for Infrastructure & Clean Energy Ahead of General Election

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As the days countdown until the November 3 General Election and, while we are making no predictions on the outcome, we are beginning to have a clear sense of how Democrats might govern on clean energy if they were to hit the trifecta of winning the presidency, taking control of the Senate, and keeping the House majority.

In recent weeks, the House has approved a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure package that includes various clean energy provisions, House Democrats have unveiled a Climate Action Plan, and Vice President Biden, soon to officially accept the nomination as the Democratic candidate for President, has released his plan for clean energy.

On July 1 the House of Representatives, along a largely party-line vote, approved the Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2), the Democratic proposal for a massive \$1.5 trillion infrastructure program. The bill calls for a \$70 billion investment in the nation's energy infrastructure including renewable energy, electric vehicle charging, energy efficiency, weatherization, and Smart Communities infrastructure. More specifically, the bill would extend the Production Tax Credit and Investment Tax Credit for various clean energy technologies, including biomass, hydropower, marine hydrokinetic, geothermal, solar, and energy storage.

Republican leadership in the Senate has said that they will not take up the bill, and the White House issued a Statement of Administration Policy indicating that the president's advisors would recommend a veto if H.R. 2 were approved by the Congress. However, while enactment in the current congress is unlikely, we would expect H.R. 2 to serve as the foundation for an infrastructure and clean energy package next year in the new 117th Congress were Democrats to have the majority in both chambers.

The House of Representatives' Select Committee on the Climate Crisis recently released their long-awaited [report](#) on "Solving the Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America". According to the select committee, the report provides a roadmap for Congress to build a prosperous, clean energy economy that values workers, advances environmental justice, and is prepared to meet the challenges of the climate crisis by reaching 10% clean, net zero emissions economy-wide in the U.S. no later than 2050; establishing ambitious climate targets to assess progress and reduce pollution in environmental justice communities.; and achieving net-negative emissions during the 2nd half of the century.

Topics covered by the report include Agriculture, Buildings, Carbon Capture, Climate Science, Disasters, Electricity, Environmental Justice, Financial Risk, Floods, Health, Industry Manufacturing, Innovation, International, Labor, National Security, Natural Systems, Oceans, Public Lands, Resilience, Transportation, and Wildfires. One-pagers on each of these topics can be accessed [here](#).

Vice President Joe Biden, who will accept the Democratic nomination for president at the Democratic National Convention in mid-August, has released his plan to "Build a Modern, Sustainable Infrastructure and an Equitable Clean Energy Future" as part of his Build Back Better agenda, calling for a \$2 trillion accelerated investment in infrastructure and clean energy during his first term.

Included in his proposal is the creation of a new cross-agency Advanced Research Projects Agency on Climate, (ARPA-C) to target affordable, game-changing technologies to help America achieve a 100% clean energy target, including grid-scale storage at one-tenth the cost of lithium-ion batteries; small modular nuclear reactors at half the construction cost of today's reactors; refrigeration and air conditioning using refrigerants with no global warming potential; zero net energy buildings at zero net cost; using renewables to produce carbon-free hydrogen at the same cost as that from shale gas; decarbonizing industrial heat needed to make steel, concrete, and chemicals and reimagining carbon-neutral construction materials; decarbonizing the food and agriculture sector, and leveraging agriculture to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it in the ground; and capturing carbon dioxide from power plant exhausts followed by sequestering it deep underground or using it to make alternative products.

The Vice President's plan also calls for a new Clean Energy Export and Climate Investment Initiative that would offer incentives for U.S. firms that supply low-carbon solutions to the international market in order to spur U.S. industry, jobs, and competitiveness, and make America the world leader in clean energy

technologies.

As much of the nation continues to operate in lockdown during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the coming weeks can seem like a lifetime, but in the scheme of things Election Day is just around the corner. Much can change between now and November 3 and after the predictions for the 2016 election any predictions about the outcome this November should be taken lightly. With that said, these proposals from Democrats give us a very good sense of what to expect should they prevail in November. No matter the outcome of the election, Mintz and ML Strategies will be prepared to proactively and effectively engage with whomever is in charge come January.

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