

Aug. 27, 2020

Senate Democrats outline plans for tackling the climate crisis

Senate Democrats have set the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. A report from Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis calls for legislation that would increase federal spending on climate action to at least 2 percent of GDP annually, ensuring that "at least 40 percent of the benefits from these investments help communities of color and low-income, deindustrialized and disadvantaged communities." Should Democrats regain control of the Senate, the report could act as a blueprint for rapid development of clean energy, energy storage, electric vehicles, improved efficiency, cleaner industrial processes, an advanced electric grid and broader use of natural solutions for mitigating emissions.

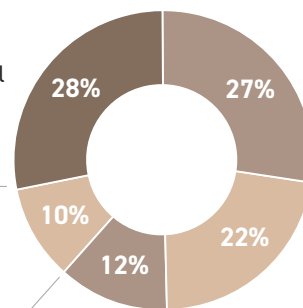
Proposed legislative solutions to the climate crisis

ECONOMIC SECTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR EMISSIONS

TRANSPORTATION

- Fund smart growth planning and public transit
- Set stronger vehicle emissions standards
- Zero-emissions vehicles: Increase access; invest in infrastructure
- Support public ZEV fleets, including school buses
- Fund infrastructure that lowers emissions
- Support R&D to create next-generation liquid fuels
- Incentivize electrification of shipping and rail; support high-speed rail
- Regulate aviation emissions; support R&D for aviation batteries and advanced fuels

U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, BY ECONOMIC SECTOR, 2018



ELECTRICITY

- Fund and finance rapid deployment of clean energy generation
- Invest in long-distance interconnection of electricity transmission
- Set federal clean energy standards, emission standards and a price on carbon to ensure the rapid adoption of proven technologies
- Establish tax incentives for emission reductions
- Fund research, development and deployment that will lower costs for technologies that provide on-demand net-zero carbon emissions electricity

AGRICULTURE

- Expand agricultural conservation programs; incentivize soil health and soil carbon storage
- Fund technical assistance and apprenticeship programs supporting farmers and ranchers adopting regenerative practices
- Support R&D of low-cost methods for measuring soil carbon
- Fund RD&D for advanced biofuels and bio-based products from waste products
- Incentivize the use of methane digesters
- Support clean power generation; reduce costs and barriers of connecting to the grid
- Invest in and ensure rural connection to broadband

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL

- Fund/finance green infrastructure, microgrids, smart growth and smart, efficient buildings
- Improve resilience and coordination of existing federal projects and programs
- Incentivize progressive building/zoning codes
- Provide climate data and planning tools for local leaders building resilience projects; support resilience investment in low-income communities
- Disincentivize new development in flood-prone areas and address existing at-risk properties

INDUSTRY

- Incentivize industrial efficiency and support new clean jobs, especially in communities that have lost manufacturing jobs
- Use tax credits and other policies to reward 'clean' products and discourage high emissions; create a market for lower-emission materials
- Develop infrastructure systems supporting low-carbon technologies
- Set emission standards with protections for American manufacturers from competition from environmentally 'dirty' goods produced elsewhere
- Set policies protecting communities from co-pollutants
- Support RD&D in novel materials and processes, industrial carbon capture, smart manufacturing, low-carbon fuels and other technologies
- Invest in demonstration projects for new technologies

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OTHER PROPOSED LEGISLATION

WILD AND WORKING LANDS

- Create a Civilian Conservation Corps
- Incentivize management practices that naturally capture and store carbon, creating new income streams
- Support carbon management and climate adaptation, focusing on producers with limited resources and historically underserved communities
- Increase funding for programs supporting conservation and protection of coastal wetlands, open spaces and forests from conversion and development
- Support programs mitigating risk of catastrophic wildfires, enhancing drought resilience and addressing invasive species and pests
- Fund RD&D of landbased carbon sequestration/monitoring

INTERNATIONAL

- Support climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience through enhanced US aid programs, financing and investments
- Integrate climate change into foreign policy, national security and humanitarian assistance
- Reengage in international agreements to reduce global emissions, including the Kigali Amendment
- Work with international organizations reducing emissions from aviation and shipping
- Increase R&D funding to promote international collaboration and global climate monitoring

HEALTH CARE

- Strengthen and enforce emissions standards for vehicles, power plants and other pollution sources
- Create standards and incentives for health care facilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Fund programs providing essential health services
- Implement early warning systems for climate disasters
- Require health care facilities to prepare for extreme events; provide support for health care professionals, first responders and communities developing climate preparedness and response plans
- Support infrastructure that reinforces health, such as low-cost public transit, more green space and energy-efficient buildings

RESEARCH

- Set framework for a national clean energy and climate innovation platform
- Assess existing RD&D programs and projects related to climate and clean energy
- Create a multiagency and stakeholder innovation council to conduct the systematic assessment and help develop and guide the innovation platform
- Expand funding for innovation research, development, demonstration and deployment
- Expand financing, federal loans and tax incentives to help drive investments

MILITARY

- Incorporate climate projections into planning for all US military installations
- Develop uniform guidance on how to use climate projections in planning
- Include climate provisions in every National Defense Authorization Act
- Improve interagency cooperation on climate change issues
- Support continued DoD research into technologies that reduce military dependence on fossil fuels

DARK MONEY

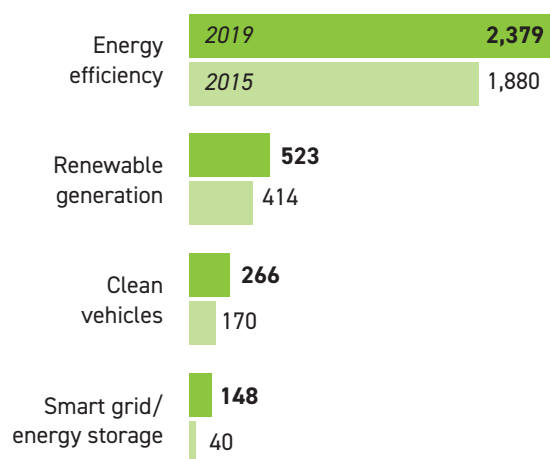
- Expose the role of the fossil fuel industry in funding and organizing groups trafficking in climate denial obstruction
- Reform federal laws and regulations to require greater transparency and reduce the influence of money in politics
- Alert industries supporting climate action to the pitfalls of covert fossil fuel political influence

Committee report highlights green jobs and the lagging U.S. adoption of clean energy

U.S. clean energy jobs surpass 3 million

Senate Democrats say another 10 million jobs could be created with their plan.

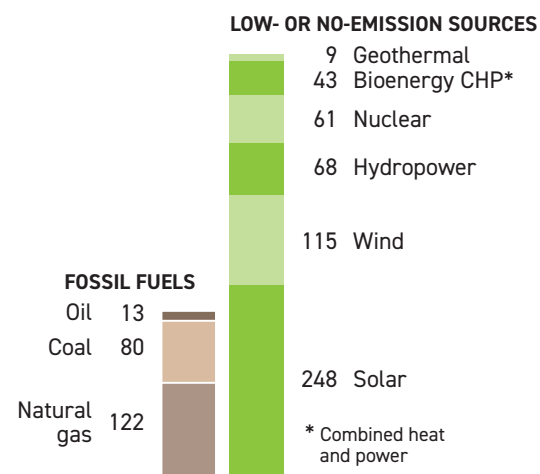
IN THOUSANDS OF JOBS



Clean energy dominates electric sector jobs

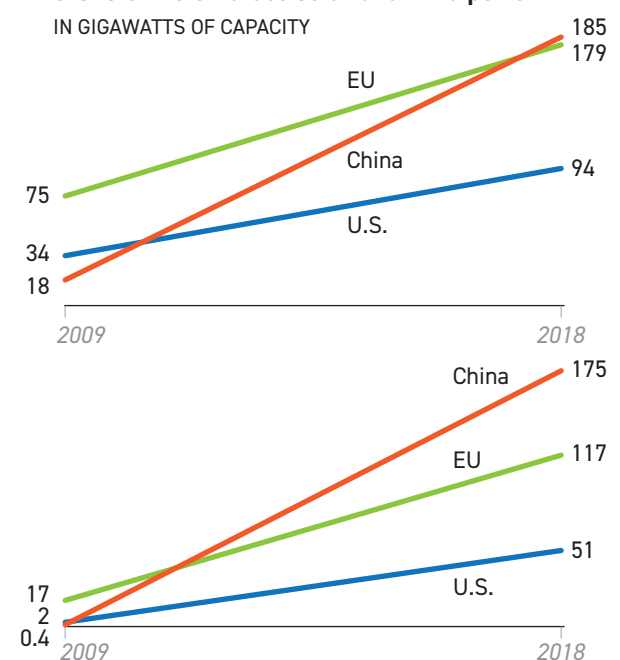
In the power sector, 72 percent of jobs are currently in low- or no-emissions generation.

IN THOUSANDS OF JOBS, 2019



U.S. slow to embrace solar and wind power

IN GIGAWATTS OF CAPACITY



Source: "The Case for Climate Action: Building a Clean Economy for the American People," Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis

By Patterson Clark, POLITICO Pro DataPoint