



MEMO Published September 26, 2023 • 4 minute read

Perception v. Reality on US Clean Energy Policy



Josh Freed

Senior Vice President for the Climate and Energy Program

[@jsfreed](https://twitter.com/jsfreed)

In the same week that Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John F. Kerry took the podium at New York Climate Week to voice robust support for Net-Zero Nuclear, centrist pundit [Ruy Teixeira](#) took to the *Liberal Patriot* to accuse the Biden administration of advocating for a radical renewables-only environmentalist agenda.

You would be right to pick up on some dissonance here.

While we strongly agree with him on many things and deeply respect his work and thinking, we have to agree to disagree on Teixeira's latest article. In it, he brands the Biden administration as beholden to far-left environmentalists, asserting that the administration's signature climate policy the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) is simply a 'softer version of the Green New Deal proposals.' This observation comes despite the fact that the IRA, authored by noted left-wing antagonist Joe Manchin, is the kind of pragmatic, market-based approach to climate policy that would make Green New Deal advocates shudder. Indeed, it did.

No one in the Democratic ecosystem would dispute that communicating our ideas to voters—and especially those without a college degree—is a major imperative. But Teixeira's latest analysis simply doesn't withstand scrutiny. Biden and Democrats are implementing an all-of-the-above approach to clean energy that is backed by science and supported by the public. Teixeira's assertions about the Biden administration's positions on climate and energy gives excessive credence to right-wing attacks when there is substantial evidence to rebut the charges.

Below, we unpack some of these mischaracterizations and correct the record on US climate and energy policy.

THEY SAY: The Biden Administration is forcing an aggressive renewables-only energy agenda.

REALITY: Biden and Democrats are implementing a technology-inclusive climate strategy.

Under President Biden, the federal government is providing more than \$500 billion to a broad range of clean energy technologies, and the majority of the investments in the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are directed to technology-inclusive tax credits. These bills empower US companies to develop and deploy technologies that reduce emissions now, develop clean energy technologies for the future, and don't limit our investments to a

renewables-only model. The Green New Deal, by contrast, would rule out many of the technologies—including nuclear and carbon capture—that the Biden administration is aggressively supporting.

THEY SAY: Democrats are forcing support for electric vehicles to protect the environment, despite costs to the US auto industry and working families.

REALITY: Democrats are giving US automakers and workers the tools to ensure the vehicles of the future are MADE IN AMERICA!

China has spent almost two decades and \$29 billion dollars to develop their EV manufacturing capacities, and they're dominating this rapidly growing market. Without US investment in EVs, we risk a future where China owns the auto manufacturing space and US autos—and the critical jobs they bring to communities across the heartland —will die.

While EVs have huge climate benefits, their more immediate value is economic. By investing in domestic EV manufacturing and consumer tax credits, the Biden administration is simultaneously increasing our competitiveness with China, protecting US manufacturing jobs, and helping more families access EVs. The Administration's support for EVs is a far cry from the 'Green Dream' and more aligned with a pragmatic commitment to US leadership in the global marketplace.

THEY SAY: The Biden Administration wants to ban fossil fuels.

REALITY: President Biden ensured US oil and gas production could protect Americans from global price shocks.

Far from crusading to eliminate the use of fossil fuels as some claim, the Biden Administration has approved a record number of permits for oil and gas permits, because the Administration is focused on lowering the cost of energy prices and reducing our vulnerability to authoritarian states. In fact, the US produced MORE domestic oil in the first six months of 2023 than the first six months of any year in history, producing 2 billion barrels of oil total. This administration has taken

action to cut costs for American families, and its policies on fossil fuel production, balanced by pragmatic efforts to lower the cost of clean energy, reflect that commitment. The high price of gas in America reflect that this is a global market and there is a war in Europe involving a major producer of oil and natural gas.

As the examples above show, this is not a difference of opinion.

On one side of this debate, we have a group of pundits and operatives playing into right-wing tropes that could compromise the United State's ability to compete in the global economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect domestic manufacturing.

On the other side, we have reality, and a truly center-left presidential administration that has managed to balance fighting climate change with maintaining a strong and durable economy.

At Third Way, we're on the side of reality.

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