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Trump's War on Solar & Wind: A Timeline of Recent Federal Actions

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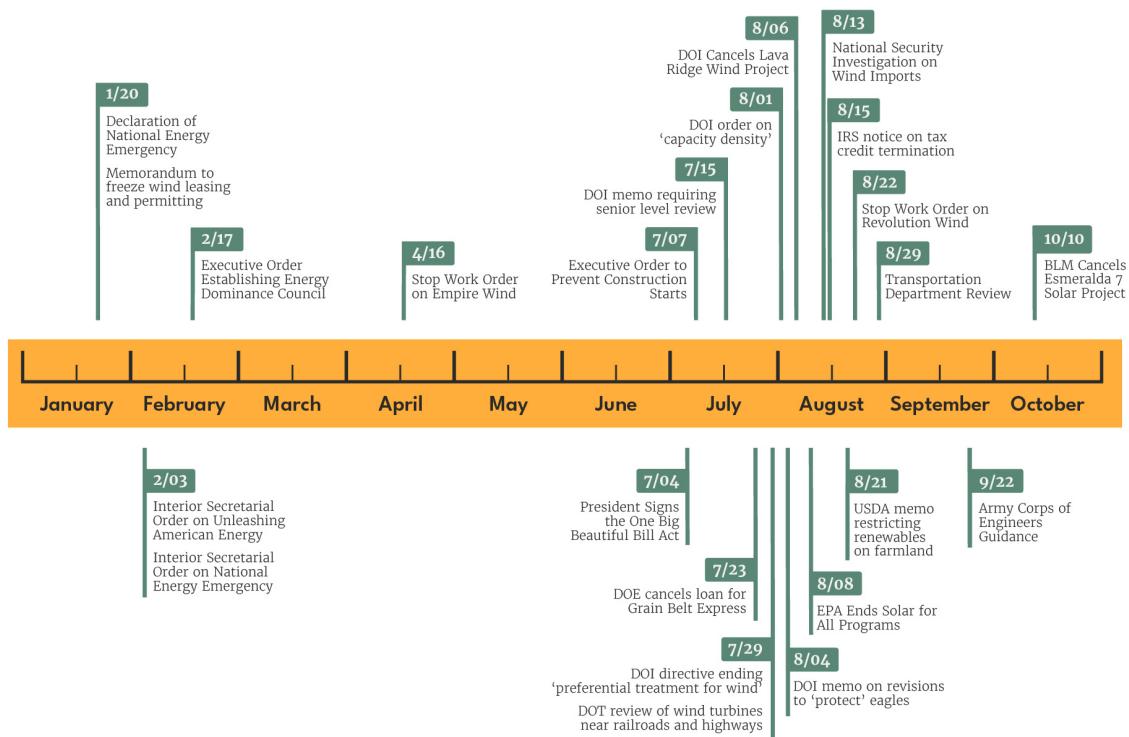
Less than a year into his second term, the Trump Administration has launched a series of policy and regulatory attacks on American clean energy. The timeline below highlights the federal actions that directly or indirectly harm the solar and wind industries in particular. Through executive orders, agency rulemakings, and administrative decisions, these actions demonstrate a coordinated effort to systematically target renewable energy projects.

Residential electricity rates will likely hit a 10-year high in 2026, thanks in part to fast-growing demand for power. Blocking technologies that can quickly put more power on the grid and help lower energy costs across the country runs directly counter to President Trump's campaign promise to "cut energy costs in half within 12 months." Instead of making good on their promise to the American people, Republicans are tying up wind and solar projects in bureaucratic red tape, blocking the electricity needed to reduce costs from reaching homes and businesses. Furthermore, these actions are jeopardizing thousands of American jobs, deterring investment, and ceding global leadership in energy technology.



23 Administration Actions Targeting Wind and Solar

January to October 2025



Source: Third Way. "Trump's War on Solar & Wind: A Timeline of Recent Federal Actions." www.thirdway.org/memo/trumps-war-on-solar-wind-a-timeline-of-recent-federal-actions. Accessed 16 Oct. 2025.

January

Declaration of National Energy Emergency (Jan. 20, 2025): Excluded solar, wind, and energy storage from the definition of “energy” or “energy resources”—making expedited permitting processes unavailable to those resources.

Wind Memorandum to freeze wind leasing and permitting (Jan. 20, 2025): Immediately stalled wind energy permitting for both onshore and offshore projects.

- Initiated a “temporary” withdrawal of wind energy leasing areas within the offshore continental shelf.
- Froze permitting of onshore and offshore wind projects on both public and private land while “comprehensive assessment and review of Federal wind leasing and permitting practices” is conducted. The review has yet to occur and there is little indication of any urgency to complete it.
- Placed a moratorium on the Lava Ridge wind project.

February

Interior Secretarial Order on National Energy Emergency (Feb. 3, 2025): Described a “precariously inadequate and intermittent energy supply” as contributing to grid unreliability and national security risks—serving as the justification for later actions to block solar and wind deployment.

Interior Secretarial Order on Unleashing American Energy (Feb. 3, 2025): Required a review of previous energy-related permitting policy directives,

revoking past rules and executive orders related to renewable energy and climate change.

Executive Order Establishing Energy Dominance Council (Feb. 17, 2025): Excluded solar and wind from the list of “our amazing national assets,” therefore omitting two of the cheapest and fastest forms of energy from an affordable energy agenda.

April

Stop Work Order on Empire Wind (Apr. 16, 2025): the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) issued an order, citing previous executive orders, to cease permitted construction activities on the 810 MW Empire Wind Project that is expected to power 500,000 homes in New York. This order was later dropped.

July

President Signs the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Jul. 4, 2025): Created a competitive imbalance in the technology neutral tax credits by establishing an earlier expiration date for wind and solar energy facilities. Established unworkable foreign entity of concern (FEOC) requirements that restrict a developer’s ability to qualify for clean energy tax credits.

- Modeling from Rhodium group forecasts the provisions in OBBBA will reduce generating capacity of new clean power by 53-59% over the next ten years, increasing household energy costs nationwide.

Executive Order to Prevent Construction Starts (Jul. 7, 2025): In apparent response to House hardliners’ demands, President Trump issued an

Executive Order to tighten IRS requirements for wind and solar facilities and impose new permitting barriers.

- Instructed the Treasury Secretary to “strictly enforce the termination” of clean energy tax credits for wind and solar energy under sections 45Y and 48E by revising beginning of construction guidance to prevent circumvention by restricting “broad use of safe harbors” unless facilities are substantially built.
- Instructed the Interior Secretary to review regulations, guidance, policy, and practices in order to eliminate the “preferential treatment” wind and solar energy receive compared to “dispatchable energy sources.”

Interior Department Memorandum (Jul. 15, 2025): In response to previous Presidential and Secretarial orders, the Interior Department required “all decisions, actions, consultations, and other undertakings” related to wind and solar energy facilities to be submitted to the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs, and the Offices of the Deputy Secretary and Secretary for review. This included, but is not limited to, a list of 69 types of permits and actions.

- Analysis from American Clean Power Association (ACP) found that 27 of the 69 federal actions listed in the memo would directly affect projects on private land.

DOE cancels loan for Grain Belt Express (Jul. 23, 2025): The Department of Energy terminated the \$4.9 billion loan commitment for the Grain Belt Express project. This 800-mile transmission line planned to deliver 5 GW of power—including affordable solar and wind capacity from Kansas—for homes and businesses along its route.

Interior Department Directive (Jul. 29, 2025): Department of Interior Secretary Burgum announced four policy measures aimed at further restraining the solar and wind industry.

1. Ending “preferential treatment” for solar and wind projects
2. “Restoring” multiple use mandates and endangering designated offshore wind areas
3. “Enhancing stakeholder engagement” on offshore wind development
4. Reviewing consequences of wind turbines on migratory birds.

Transportation Department Review (Jul. 29, 2025): Transportation Secretary Duffy and the FAA initiated an investigation into the dangers associated with wind turbines near railroads and highways. At a recent cabinet meeting, Secretary Duffy reiterated his interest in pursuing this issue.

August

Interior Department Order (Aug. 1, 2025): Department of Interior Secretary Burgum ordered consideration of the “capacity density” (MW/Acre) of an energy project as part of permitting decisions. Under the appendix’s calculation, offshore and onshore wind, solar, and geothermal energy all score low.

Interior Department Memo (Aug. 4, 2025): Gregory Wischer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, instructed the U.S. FWS to review existing wind energy projects and applications for new projects for compliance with the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

DOI Cancels Lava Ridge Wind Project (Aug. 6, 2025): The Department of Interior canceled the approval of the 1GW Lava Ridge Wind Project in southern Idaho which was anticipated to power up to 500,000 homes.

EPA Ends Solar for All Program (Aug. 8, 2025): Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Zeldin announced the elimination of the \$7 billion Solar for All program that aimed to lower energy bills for recipients across the country.

National Security Investigation on Wind Imports (Aug. 13, 2025):

Commerce Secretary Lutnick initiated an investigation under section Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act to assess the national security implications of importing wind turbines and their components.

IRS Notice 2025-42 (Aug. 15, 2025): In response to the President's July 7th Executive Order 14315, the IRS issued a guidance notice changing the beginning of construction requirements for wind and solar facilities.

- Guidance was effective as of Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2025.
- Eliminated the 5% safe harbor, *except* for solar systems at or below 1.5 MWAC.
- Physical work became the sole option to demonstrate beginning of construction for larger systems. Requirements for physical work were substantially in line with previous guidance, including the 4-year continuity safe harbor.
- Provided no FEOC related guidance.

Agriculture Department Memo (Aug. 21, 2025): Echoing the Interior Department order, called for using “efficiency screening criteria” for power generation projects on U.S. Forest System Lands, essentially restricting renewable energy projects on farmland.

- Directed the Forest Service to evaluate projects based on “land use efficiency metrics” to optimize the per acre energy production of facilities.

- President Trump also took to social media to call for preventing solar projects on farm land.
- Several bills have been proposed to exclude such projects from ITC/PTC eligibility (e.g. H.R. 1080 and H.R. 3313).

Stop Work Order on Revolution Wind (Aug. 22, 2025): In alignment with previous Executive Orders, BOEM issued an order to halt ongoing construction on the 704 MW Revolution Wind Project that is expected to power over 350,000 homes in Connecticut and Rhode Island. This order was later dropped.

Rescission of Offshore Wind Funding (Aug. 29, 2025): Department of Transportation Secretary Duffy canceled \$679 million in offshore wind funding, threatening to withdraw the grants for 12 projects across the US.

September

Army Corps of Engineers Guidance (Sept. 22, 2025): Assistant Secretary Telle directed the Corps to prioritize energy generation projects based on their “energy density or energy-generation-per-acre” as it makes permitting decisions, further extending permitting timelines for wind and solar projects.

October

BLM Cancels Esmeralda 7 Solar Project (October 10, 2025): The Bureau of Land Management quietly canceled the 6.2 GW Esmeralda 7 Solar Project in Nevada, a project expected to generate enough electricity to power around two million homes.



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