

NEWSLETTER *Published September 25, 2026 · 9 minute read*

On the Grid: A Fuelish Idea

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ON THE GRID



Hi Friend!

Welcome back to *On the Grid*, Third Way's bi-weekly newsletter, where we'll recap how we're working to deploy every clean energy technology as quickly and affordably as possible.

We're excited to have you join us!



Diesel prices are hitting record highs because of President Trump's war of choice in Iran and Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. Some lawmakers have urged the administration to keep more US-produced diesel at home in hopes of lowering domestic prices. The White House has sent mixed signals in response: President Trump said he was considering export restrictions. While reports surfaced that the Administration was preparing a 90-day ban, the White House quickly denied that any blanket ban was in the works.

The Price Break Wouldn't Last: The US produces more diesel than it consumes, but we can't easily get that extra diesel everywhere it's needed. An export ban would briefly create an oversupply – *and temporarily lower prices* – in parts of the country well connected to Gulf Coast refineries. But there's only so much excess diesel we can move or store. Once tanks start filling up, refiners would have to cut production, bringing diesel supply back down, while also producing less gasoline and jet fuel. Regions that depend more heavily on diesel imports, like the East and West Coasts, would see diesel prices rise as US supply disappears from the market and imported fuel gets more expensive. And with refiners producing less gasoline and jet fuel along with diesel, prices at the pump and the cost of flying will likely rise as well. That's why Trump's Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright, has publicly pushed back, warning that a ban "definitely doesn't work," and the oil industry and major energy groups have lined up against it.

It's Bad Energy Diplomacy: The diesel crunch isn't just an American problem. Russian refineries are damaged and under an extended export ban because of its invasion of

Ukraine, while the war in Iran has constrained supplies in the Middle East. Countries are competing for a smaller pool of diesel on the global market. As one of the world's largest diesel exporters – with exports reaching 1.6 million barrels a day – the US has become an important backstop for allies and partners facing supply disruptions. Cutting those exports would leave them scrambling for fuel and undermine the US's role as a reliable energy supplier when they need us the most.

What We're Doing: Third Way has been making the case to policymakers and in the media for months that restricting American energy exports is the wrong response to high prices. We'll keep making it as new restrictions get floated. The US energy system is deeply connected to global markets. Walling off American supply only creates new problems without fixing the disruptions driving prices up in the first place. We're continuing to push policymakers toward solutions that increase supply and lower prices, such as expanding cleaner alternatives to reduce our dependence on volatile fuel markets.

Permitting reform is critical to unlocking the new electricity generation, transmission, and other energy infrastructure projects the United States needs to remain secure and grow the economy. A Congressional deal has repeatedly come within reach but fallen short. Negotiators are close to a bipartisan agreement. Getting a Senate deal done before the election – let alone final passage of legislation – on an issue as complicated and politically fraught as permitting reform was always incredibly difficult. That's why so many issues inevitably get pushed to lame duck Congresses. This shouldn't be treated as a failure, but as what was always the most likely outcome.

The Need Has Only Grown: The pressures on the power system have only intensified for permitting reform. Electricity demand is growing, driven in large part by data centers and other large new loads, just as aging infrastructure needs to be replaced. The country needs significantly more generation and transmission to meet that demand without furthering

further pressure on reliability and affordability. The longer it takes to build, the harder – *and more expensive* – it becomes to keep up.

Our Role: Third Way continues to lead the efforts to get bipartisan permitting reform across the finish line. Behind the scenes, we're working with policymakers, advocates, unions, and business leaders to help shape the permitting deal. This is informed by the [Pathways to Accelerating Clean Energy \(PACE\)](#) research and analysis we began in 2024, which identified the permitting chokepoints that delay energy infrastructure projects. We're also helping to make the public case and conduct modeling to show how the most likely permitting reform plans will result in more affordable electricity and reduced emissions. We expect this to culminate in a bill after the November election, but are realistic that much more work will be needed in 2027 and beyond to truly unclog the system.

Americans don't have much faith in the leaders and institutions responsible for keeping their energy reliable and affordable. And after years of rising costs, big promises, and an energy system that too often hasn't delivered, that frustration is understandable. The result is a growing disconnect between what policymakers and advocates say the energy system can deliver and what Americans *actually* experience. In a [new op-ed in Heatmap](#), Third Way Senior Vice President Josh Freed lays out how this growing energy trust gap is taking hold, and why it's threatening clean energy progress.

How We Got Here: The Energy Trust Gap didn't appear out of nowhere. The Trump Administration has only made it worse by obstructing new renewable energy, keeping aging fossil fuel plants online, and dismissing affordability concerns – all while Americans are being told their energy bills will come down. But clean energy advocates have contributed a fair share, too. For years, parts of the clean energy movement have overpromised on how quickly and cheaply the transition could happen, backed policies that were expensive or unrealistic, and pushed Americans toward cleaner technologies, like electric vehicles, before affordable alternatives were ready. We also overpromised on

economic benefits, too. As Josh notes, “*Voters didn’t see an IRA-driven jobs boom in their communities, didn’t feel its impact in reducing costs amid a crisis, and didn’t see it improving their lives.*” When the promises people hear don’t match what they see in their communities or their bills, trust erodes.

Why This Matters: Trust is essential to making clean energy progress last. Americans are being asked to support new infrastructure in their communities, major investments in the energy system, and policies that can change how they power their homes and cars. If they don’t believe those changes will lower costs, keep the lights on, or improve their lives, then building durable support for the clean transition becomes much harder. That skepticism also gives opponents an opening to roll back progress. Rebuilding trust starts with delivering results people can see.

What We’re Doing: We have long argued that the clean energy transition has to make energy more affordable and reliable for the people being asked to support it, and we’ve built our policy work around delivering on that promise. We’ve pushed for an all-of-the-above approach to bring more clean and firm power onto the grid, championed permitting reform to make it faster and cheaper to build the energy infrastructure we need, and argued that cleaner technologies need to be affordable before asking consumers to adopt them. We’ve also paired that with public opinion research to understand where voters are skeptical, and where advocates need to change course. We’ll continue to push for pragmatic solutions that lower costs and deliver tangible benefits for Americans, while being clear-eyed about the trade-offs it will take to get there.

This week, Third Way joined policymakers, advocates, business leaders, and energy wonks in New York City for Climate Week. We spent the week talking about what bold pragmatism looks like in practice, from building more clean energy and bringing down costs to keeping the US competitive. Here’s a quick look at where we showed up:

- **Talking Carbon Removal:** Third Way joined conversations on the future of carbon removal, including a Carbon180 panel on opportunities for state and regional carbon dioxide removal policy. We shared lessons from our recent work in North Carolina on how states can help emerging CDR technologies gain a foothold, and how focusing on local economic benefits, trusted messengers, and meaningful community engagement can build support and help get projects built faster and more cheaply.
- **Talking Permitting Reform:** We brought together federal and state policymakers, advocates, and industry leaders for a conversation on what it will take to get America building faster. We dug into the path toward bipartisan federal permitting reform and lessons from states already putting new approaches into practice, focusing on how faster permitting can help lower costs, strengthen reliability, and unlock new energy and infrastructure investments.
- **Talking Clean Tech Investment:** We brought together early-stage climate investors to get a clearer picture of how today's policy environment is shaping investment decisions. The conversation surfaced how federal uncertainty is changing deal economics and capital deployment, and what policymakers can do to keep investment flowing to promising energy and resilience technologies.

We're bringing what we heard back to DC and will keep working with policymakers and partners to turn these ideas into action.

The clean energy policy conversation is expanding...and so are we! The Climate and Energy Program is looking for people with talent and a passion for climate solutions to fill three new roles on our team.

- [Director, Communications](#)
- [Philanthropy Manager](#)

- Senior Policy Advisor, Fusion Energy

- Josh Freed, in *Heatmap News*, argues that Americans no longer trust leaders on energy because both parties have promised lower costs and major benefits but failed to deliver, and that rebuilding trust requires honest trade-offs.
 - Ari Peskoe, in *Utility Dive*, outlines that FERC has the legal authority to modernize PJM's governance to limit utility companies' influence and help prevent unfair electricity price increases as data center growth continues.
 - Bill Loveless, on Columbia's *Energy Exchange* podcast, talks with Erica Downs and Michal Meidan about China's response to the Iran oil shock and what that means for the future of energy security.
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