



Energy under the Trump Administration

The Trump Administration's Impact on U.S. Energy Policy and R&D

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President-Elect Trump's major upset victory over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race may have significant impacts on U.S. energy policy priorities. U.S. energy policy may completely flip in a few areas (red cells: renewable energy, climate change, fossil fuels, etc.) and could continue on some issues (blue cells).

SUMMARY: US Energy Policy Outlook [+++ or XXX = Strong; fewer symbols less so]

Fuel / Policy Area	Obama	Trump with Rs in Congress
Renewables	Strongly favor + + +	Oppose X X
Urban Energy Efficiency	Strongly favor + + +	Favor + (led by cities)
Hydropower	Stalled (Enviro/Local opposition)	Neutral
Coal	Strongly oppose X X X	Favor + +
Natural Gas	Favor as transition + +	Strongly Favor + + +
Oil & Exploration	Strongly oppose X X X	Strongly Favor + + +
Nuclear	Favor (for Climate) + +	Favor (for Nat'l Security) + +
EPA Clean Power Plan	Strongly favor + + +	Strongly Oppose X X X
COP / Climate Change	Strongly favor + + +	Strongly Oppose X X X
Use of Fed Lands	Mixed	Favor + +
Biofuels / Agriculture	Favor (for Climate) +	Favor + (Ag state development)
Devolution to States	Favor + with Fed support	Favor + with Fed support
Infrastructure Invest	Favor + with Fed support	Strongly Favor + + +

For Efficiency/Renewable Energy (EE/RE)

Support for energy efficiency and renewable energy, although it will not be eliminated, will likely diminish going forward, representing a shift from policy under the Obama Administration. Renewable energy policy will largely devolve to the state-level, particularly in "blue" states with Democrat Governors and state legislatures (West Coast, New England, etc.)

There are a number of factors that may harm the prospects for renewable energy under the Trump Administration: President-Elect Trump has threatened to revoke the EPA Clean Power Plan, and if regulations are not tightened, older coal-fired units may continue to operate for years. Moreover, the cost of natural gas and fossil fuels remain low, and production/supply of these fuels will be "unleashed" by the Trump Administration. Furthermore, the Republicans have maintained control of Congress, and possible tax reform may eliminate federal subsidies for renewable energy. On the state-level, Republicans also control 33 Governorships and two-thirds of state legislatures. Democratic power has consolidated to the major cities, where there are few sites for renewable sources such as wind and geothermal.

On a positive note for EE/RE, progressive state governments will maintain favorable rules for efficiency and renewables, and many cities will keep local rules to encourage energy efficiency measures, deployment of solar panels and electric vehicles, etc. Pro-renewable groups (NRDC, Sierra Club, etc.) and states will likely litigate to keep EPA rules.

For Energy R&D, Advanced Reactors & Storage

The direction and focal points for energy R&D are likely to change significantly under the Trump Administration. R&D in renewable energy, which doubled (or better) under President Obama, will be cut down by Republicans in the House and Senate; ultimately, Congress will carry more influence on energy R&D than the Trump Administration. Restoration of fossil R&D will likely to concentrate on better use of coal (conversion to chemicals) and on fossil fuel infrastructure. The Keystone Pipeline will likely gain approval given U.S. political shifts and Canada's continued support for the project.

For Energy R&D, Advanced Reactors & Storage

R&D only, by Fuel	Obama	Trump with Rs in Congress
Renewables	Strongly favor + + +	Cutback X X X
Urban Energy Efficiency	Strongly favor + + +	Favor + (led by cities)
Hydropower	Stalled (Enviro/Local opposition)	Neutral
Coal	Favor R&D for CCS +	Favor + +
Natural Gas	Favor as transition +	Favor + + (NG vehicles)
Oil & Exploration	Strongly oppose X X X	Led by Industry; not much R&D
Nuclear	Favor (for Climate) + + Favor international coop	Favor (for Nat'l Security) + + Some focus on fuel cycle Favor joint ventures

Moreover, State Governors are intimately involved in actual energy operations, grid investment, and electricity for cities--more so than the federal government. With 33 Republican Governors, energy and infrastructure priorities are likely to shift noticeably.

The Trump Administration will likely also present opportunities for nuclear power. Nuclear R&D, particularly on advanced reactors, could remain stable or increase, especially if nuclear power is presented as a matter of U.S. global leadership. The Trump Administration will be much more proactive on nuclear proliferation issues and industrial competitiveness with respect to America's global position in nuclear technology. The current commercial reactor fleet could also see life extensions to 80 years in perhaps 40%-60% of the units. Economic pressure on commercial units may subside if wind subsidies are curtailed, but state policy support will likely also be needed to ensure the economic viability of the reactors.

With respect to the nuclear fuel cycle, Yucca Mountain may possibly move forward, particularly as the chief opponents of the project--Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)--will be retired. Representative John Shimkus (R-IL), who is vying for leadership of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, would likely move legislation to open Yucca Mountain as E&C Chairman. Additionally, DOE should be more responsive to joint international R&D efforts in nuclear materials handling with no opposition from the White House.

U.S. Election Results

http://www.realclearpolitics.com/elections/live_results/2016_general/senate/

President Trump's Cabinet - some possible nominees

<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/who-is-in-president-trump-cabinet-231071>

What might President Donald Trump do? Predicting his policy agenda

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/09/donald-trump-president-policy-immigration-agenda-healthcare>

EEI: U.S. Electricity Sources

http://www.eei.org/issuesandpolicy/generation/fuelediversity/Documents/map_fuel_diversity.pdf

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