

PROJECT 2025

A BOLD ATTACK ON CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & JUSTICE, AND DEMOCRACY

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Executive Summary

Project 2025 is a detailed plan for the Heritage Foundation and its allies to “take the reins of government” after the election of the next conservative president. Project 2025’s aggressive plans to reverse U.S. commitments on climate change and dismantle environmental protection infrastructure led columnist Will Bunch to call it a “blueprint for destroying the planet.” It is also a blueprint for undermining democracy.

In many ways, Project 2025 is already well on its way to being implemented. Organizers have published a 900-page policy agenda that serves as an action plan for undermining federal agencies’ ability to regulate corporate behavior and protect communities. They have recruited and screened thousands of ideological warriors for loyalty to the MAGA movement, so that they will be prepared to replace professional civil servants they plan to purge as soon as a like-minded president is inaugurated.

We hope this briefing paper will serve as a wake-up call to funders and movement leaders to pay greater attention to the very clear threats posed by Project 2025 and to support a broad range of efforts to educate Americans and mobilize resistance to the Project 2025 agenda.

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Introduction

Project 2025 is a campaign plan for the right-wing movement in the United States to “take the reins of government” after the election of a like-minded president. Project 2025 asserts that such a president should assume virtually dictatorial control over the executive branch, and use that power to impose the long-standing anti-regulatory priorities of fossil-fuel industries and allied anti-federal-government ideologues.

The plan reflects the broad and destructive ambitions of the Heritage Foundation and the more than 100 participating organizations from across the anti-regulatory, anti-environmentalist, anti-choice, anti-equality, anti-immigrant, and anti-democracy political infrastructure that has built power in the United States over the past half-century, largely with funding from the fossil-fuel industry and the Koch brothers’ political networks. Many of the organizations backing Project 2025 have declared war on the “administrative state” — which they are waging with help from the Supreme

Court majority they engineered — and are preparing to dismantle federal agencies from within.

Project 2025's policy agenda runs more than 900 pages, with specific recommendations affecting virtually every department and agency of the executive branch, including specific "day one" executive orders. Project 2025 director Paul Dans has called the plan a "one-in-a-hundred-year deep gut renovation" of the federal government.

The eradication of the current administration's climate and environmental policies is a major focus of the agenda, which calls for "unleashing" the fossil fuel industry and reversing policies designed to encourage an economy-wide transition to renewable forms of energy. Indeed, Project 2025 would amount to a "fundamental shift" of federal agency activities "away from public health protections and environmental regulations in order to help the industries they have been tasked with overseeing," according to an [analysis](#) published by Politico.

A "one-in-a-hundred-year deep gut renovation" of the federal government.

Paul Dans, Director, Project 2025

One thing that distinguishes Project 2025 from previous policy wish lists is its plan to flood federal agencies with ideological warriors who are prepared to ensure that its directives are carried out without question. Project 2025 leaders envision a massive purge of professional civil servants, enabled by an executive order reclassifying tens of thousands of civil service positions so that career employees could be summarily fired and replaced with Project 2025's pre-vetted candidates. In the words of director Dans, Project 2025 is "systematically preparing to march into office and bring a new army: aligned, trained, and essentially weaponized conservatives ready to do battle against the deep state."

The authors of Project 2025's policy agenda recognize that some long-run changes they want to make would require legislative change, but that is not their primary focus. They have identified immediate steps an authoritarian president could take to eliminate, dismantle, disrupt, reverse, or redirect the energies of federal departments, including independent agencies. Their explicit strategy is to move so quickly and so broadly as to overwhelm any legal or political opposition.

The fundamental dismantling of federal infrastructure built to protect people and the planet should make every funder and movement leader pause and consider the severity of this plan, which threatens past progress and drastically undermines the potential for positive change. There is too much on the line for us not to act now.

The Project 2025 Agenda on Climate Change: Denial, Reversal, and Rhetorical Warfare



Project 2025's agenda is a propaganda tool as well as a policy wish-list. It disparages climate change policies as "left-wing social engineering." It dismisses environmentalism as "a pseudo-religion meant to baptize liberals' ruthless pursuit of absolute power in the holy water of environmental virtue." It is deeply troubling to consider the consequences of people with such contempt for the environmental health and justice movements having the power to ignore or actively undermine hard-won protections.

Contrary to overwhelming scientific consensus, the Heritage Foundation [contends](#) that climate change is "mild and manageable." Project 2025 charges that "the Left" overstates the threat of climate change "to scare the American public into accepting their ineffective, liberty-crushing regulations, diminished private property rights, and exorbitant costs."

Project 2025 declares that “the Biden Administration’s climate fanaticism will need a whole-of-government unwinding.” It spells out in great detail what that unwinding would mean. “The plan calls for shredding regulations to curb greenhouse gas pollution from cars, oil and gas wells and power plants, dismantling almost every clean energy program in the federal government and boosting the production of fossil fuels,” [summarized](#) the New York Times.

The impact would not only be felt in the United States. Also on the Project 2025 chopping block are [efforts by the U.S. Agency for International Development](#) to promote climate change policies abroad. USAID “must cease collaborating with and funding progressive foundations, corporations, international institutions, and NGOs that advocate on behalf of climate fanaticism,” the agenda declares. It calls for doing away with USAID’s Climate Strategy 2022-2030 and all programs that advance the Paris Climate Agreement, and [calls on the State Department](#) to “rescind all climate policies from its foreign aid programs.”

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Reviewing the attacks on climate action that are woven throughout the Project 2025 agenda, Politico concluded that it provides a future president with a plan to “[purge climate action from the federal government](#).” The plan “could decimate the federal government’s climate work, stymie the transition to clean energy and shift agencies toward nurturing the fossil fuel industry rather than regulating it.”

Project 2025 vs. the Environmental Protection Agency

“EPA’s structure and mission should be greatly circumscribed to reflect the principles of cooperative federalism and limited government,” declares the Project 2025 agenda.

It proposes a “Day One executive order” setting up “pause and review” teams to put the brakes on rules and guidance materials in the works, reassess any “sue and settle” cases, and look for ways to cut staffing levels.

Project 2025 criticizes what it calls the Environmental Protection Agency’s “top-down, coercive approach” and complains about “unachievable standards designed to aid in the ‘transition’ away from politically disfavored industries and technologies and toward the Biden Administration’s preferred alternatives.” It denounces “job-killing regulations that serve to depress the economy and grow the bureaucracy but do little to address, much less resolve, complex environmental problems.” EPA should, it declares, “implement an approach that defaults to less restrictive regulatory outcomes.”



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Among the many structural changes Project 2025 envisions is replacing scientific expertise with management experience in senior positions. “Organizational and personnel proposals all have the same objective: to ensure that even the smallest EPA decisions are controlled by a tight corps of political officials under no obligation to heed the scientific and technical expertise of dedicated EPA career staff,” former acting deputy administrator Stan Meiburg [told EE News](#), saying the EPA envisioned by Project 2025 “would be a pale imitation of an agency charged with protecting human health and the environment for all Americans.”

Chemical Safety

Project 2025 calls for an industry-friendly approach to regulating chemicals, most of which are petrochemicals. For industries committed to the extraction of fossil fuel and minerals, expanding the use of petrochemicals is a strategy to ensure market demand for oil and gas as energy production shifts toward renewable sources. That growth strategy is reflected in the massive expansion of plastic pollution. “More plastic has been produced in the last ten years than in the entire 20th century,” [according to Earth Day organizers](#), “and the industry plans to grow explosively for the indefinite future.” As the American Prospect has recently [noted](#), “The chemical industry is inextricably tied to the fossil fuel industry via the over \$500 billion petrochemical market, and there is major overlap in the policy priorities and trade associations of each industry.”

Project 2025 is rife with language suggesting that current regulation of chemicals is overly cautious. The Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention is “constantly pressured to ban the use of certain chemicals, typically based on fear as a result of mischaracterized or incomplete science,” Project 2025 claims. It urges quick evaluation of new chemicals “to ensure the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers.”

Project 2025 calls for the EPA to “revisit the designation of PFAS chemicals as ‘hazardous substances’ under CERCLA.”

For example, over the past few years, the Environmental Protection Agency has been [moving to address](#) threats posed by PFAS — so-called “forever chemicals” — and regulate their use and cleanup. PFAS are now widespread in U.S. drinking water and are now linked by many studies to cancer, hormone disruption, and infertility, among other health risks. Environmental advocacy group Earthjustice [argues](#), “The EPA must move faster and expand regulations to stop the approval of new PFAS chemicals, prevent pollution at the source, keep PFAS out of all environmental media, and ensure polluters pay for cleanup.” But Project 2025 takes the opposite stance, calling for the EPA to “revisit the designation of PFAS chemicals as ‘hazardous substances’ under CERCLA” (commonly known as Superfund.).

Environmental Justice

Project 2025’s approach to environmental justice reflects its broader hostility to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which it seeks to purge from federal policy. Project 2025 proponents conflate their aversion for diversity, equity, and inclusion with their narrow view of environmental justice and will call for a review of any environmental justice actions in light of Supreme Court action equating affirmative action with racial discrimination. The agenda calls on the next administration to stop backing loans under the bipartisan infrastructure bill that are designed to address environmental justice and equity priorities. To the extent that loan programs cannot be repealed by executive order the plan calls for limiting new loans and loan guarantees to “projects that will promote the reliability and resilience of the electric grid and other energy infrastructure and support national security objectives.”

Project 2025 would also limit access to healthcare for many people and communities that experience disproportionate health impacts from pollution and climate change. Project 2025 is critical of the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and calls for restricting eligibility and imposing work requirements, time limits and lifetime caps on Medicaid benefits. Project 2025 calls for further privatization of

Medicare and calls for repeal of the provision in the Inflation Reduction Act that authorizes Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices.

Project 2025 calls for a review of any environmental justice actions in light of Supreme Court action equating affirmative action with racial discrimination.

Summary of Key Impacts of Project 2025:

- Expand the production and use of fossil fuels and “unleash private-sector energy innovation by ending government interference in energy decisions”
- Restrict the use of research on pollution risks to public health
- Eliminate funding for EPA’s environmental justice work
- Withdraw from the US Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement and abolish U.S. Agency for International Development climate change projects
- Dismantle and downsize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration because Project 2025 proponents see NOAA as “one of the main drivers of the climate change alarm industry”
- Prevent other states from adopting California standards on greenhouse gases
- Roll back fuel efficiency standards for cars and eliminate them for appliances
- End Department of Energy support for an expanded electrical grid, renewable resources and low-carbon energy generation

Project 2025’s Broader Threat

A disturbing aspect of the Project 2025 plan is that it would enable a future president’s worst authoritarian impulses by removing institutional guardrails. MAGA movement leaders involved in Project 2025 explicitly mention searching out and seizing pockets of independence within the executive branch. That would include the independence of the Justice Department’s law enforcement decision-making, which has protected the

rule of law with bipartisan support for decades, but which would be dismantled under Project 2025.

Under the “[unitary executive theory](#)” of presidential power, a constitutional interpretation that has been promoted by some right-wing legal advocates for decades, presidents have virtual dictatorial powers over the entire executive branch. Turning that theory into policy would allow a future president to use the FBI and Justice Department as weapons against their personal and political enemies, and even to use independent agencies like the Federal Communications Commission to silence media outlets.

If the Project 2025 agenda is adopted by a future president and backed by a majority of the Supreme Court, extractive industries would be “unleashed” on communities and the environment, and an authoritarian president would be empowered to undermine democratic governance, the rule of law, and individual freedom not only during a Trump term but going forward

Public Sentiment Against Project 2025

Most Americans do not support the policy changes planned by Project 2025 leaders. Polling last year by Climate Power and Data for Progress [found](#) that more than half of voters — including 71 percent of Black voters and 61 percent of voters under 45 — believe climate change is “serious and urgent.” Data for Progress concluded that voters “broadly reject many of the goals laid out in Project 2025.”

Project 2025, if adopted by a future president and backed by a majority of the Supreme Court, would unleash extractive industries on communities and the environment.

Since most Americans oppose plans that Project 2025 would put in motion, calling Americans’ attention to the scope and catastrophic impact of the Project 2025 agenda has a strong potential to mobilize resistance to it. Funders committed to environmental health, environmental justice, climate action, and democracy should share the information in this briefing paper and urgently support a variety of efforts to educate Americans about the threat posed by Project 2025.

Call to Action



Since Lewis Powell's notorious 1971 memo called on corporate America to invest aggressively in an educational, cultural, legal, and political infrastructure to shape public opinion and public policy, anti-regulation interests have played the long game in advancing their agendas at all levels of government. They have enormous resources and they have been patient, relentless, and, when useful, stealthy. As a result, they have won many major victories. And now, at the precipice of a massive, unprecedented power grab, they are confident enough to be open about the alarming extent of their ambitions. It can no longer be seen as remote or impossible that this movement's leaders will achieve their stated goal of seizing the reins of government, ushering in a radical change in America that would adversely affect all people and issues we care about. Once enacted, Project 2025 will be much harder to reverse. As funders we have the resources to support resistance to its deployment.

If you are a funder:

- Fund your grantees to learn more about Project 2025, create their own materials for dissemination or provide access to tool kits
- Fund organizations that are working to limit this threat even if these organizations do not 'fit' your program silo
- Talk to other funders and let's educate each other about Project 2025
- Coordinate strategies to push back on Project 2025
- Fund a robust communications strategy that includes the creation and distribution of social media infographics, short videos, and outreach to influencers, reporters and producers.
- Fund outreach to environmental activists, organizers and campaigners who are or want to engage their constituents on Project 2025.

If you are an NGO fighting for environmental health, environmental justice, a just transition and a fossil-free society:

- Deepen your institutional knowledge on Project 2025 and how it impacts your community
- Develop and disseminate information about Project 2025 to your constituents and community

- Talk about how Project 2025 will directly and negatively impact our daily lives
- Let the other side know that we know about their plan and let's call them out on it
- Organize, organize, and organize!

Potential projects include:

- Production and distribution of social media infographics
- Production and distribution of explainer videos
- Production and distribution of activist toolkits
- Outreach to reporters and producers
- Outreach to environmental activists and organizers
- Organizing campaigns to educate and mobilize individuals

The Heritage Foundation and many of the other organizations collaborating on Project 2025 and promoting its policy agenda are 501c3 organizations. Analyzing the Project 2025 agenda, calling attention to the harmful consequences of its policy proposals, and planning ways to disrupt its potential implementation can be carried out as 501c3 projects. Some organizations may develop and carry out 501c4 campaigns focused on the electoral aspects of Project 2025 in the context of this year's elections. There is a need for both.

Project 2025 seeks to undo many of the greatest policy accomplishments of the 20th century, including those in the New Deal, civil rights and environmental legislation. Please join us in protecting them.

Funders and others looking for more information or to partner in countering Project 2025 are welcome to reach out to Heeten Kalan (hkalan@newwf.org) at the New World Foundation, and Carolyn Fine Friedman (cffriedman@aol.com) at The Fine Fund.

Additional Resources:

- “Project 2025: How Trump Loyalists and Right-Wing Leaders Are Paving a Fast Road to Fascism,” Peter Montgomery, The Public Eye magazine, Political Research Associates, Fall 2023/Winter 2024. <https://politicalresearch.org/2024/02/14/project-2025>
 - “Conservatives have already written a climate plan for Trump’s second term,” Scott Waldman, Politico, July 28, 2023 <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/28/far-right-climate-plans-00107498>
 - “A Republican 2024 Climate Strategy: More Drilling, Less Clean Energy,” Lisa Friedman, The New York Times, Aug. 4, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/04/climate/republicans-climate-project2025.html>
 - “Conservatives gear up for EPA revamp in 2025: Plans eye a return to Trump-era policies that elevated deregulation and downsized the agency,” Kevin Bogardus, E&E News, Feb. 26, 2024 [Conservatives gear up for EPA revamp in 2025 - E&E News by POLITICO \(eenews.net\)](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1094747)
 - “5 Reasons Leftists HATE Project 2025”, The Heritage Foundation, [5 Reasons Leftists Hate Project 2025 eBook THF.pdf \(heritage.org\)](https://www.heritage.org/publications/5-reasons-leftists-hate-project-2025)
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Project 2025 Watchdogs

- [People for the American Way](https://www.pforaw.org/)
- [Global Project Against Hate and Extremism](https://www.gpah.org/)
- [Political Research Associates](https://www.politicalresearch.org/)
- [Council for Global Equality](https://www.councilforglobalequality.org/)
- [Media Matters for America](https://www.mediamatters.org/)
- [Accountable.US](https://www.accountable.us/)
- [Stop the Coup 2025](https://www.stopthecoup2025.org/)