

# Climate Policy Update

April 25, 2022

**Good Evening!** This is Akin Gump's weekly policy newsletter on all things **climate change**. Below are the major federal climate policy headlines of the past week:

- **President Biden Signs Executive Order to Protect Old-Growth Forests** *(The New York Times)*  
On Earth Day, Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, President Joe Biden signed a new executive order to strengthen domestic and international forest protection commitments made in the United States. The order directs the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to partner on a range of conservation strategies to protect forests on federal lands. It also requires federal agencies to develop 2030 targets for reforestation and to compile the first-ever U.S. National Nature Assessment.
- **Council on Environmental Quality Issues Final Rule on NEPA**  
On Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published a final rule as part of its efforts to restore provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act's (NEPA) implementing regulations that were changed by the Trump administration. Among other modifications, the final rule restores the prior definitions of "effects" and "reasonable alternatives" that were amended in an attempt to streamline the NEPA review process. The final rule is the first action in a two-phase NEPA reform approach taken by the CEQ.
- **National Climate Task Force Holds April Meeting**  
On Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, the National Climate Task Force held its April Meeting and discussed "how the Administration's efforts were aligned with the IPCC's findings — focused on tackling emissions sector-by-sector by deploying record amounts of clean energy; electrifying our cars, trucks, and buses; decarbonizing industrial processes; and phasing down super-polluting HFCs." The Task Force has yet to publish a National Climate Strategy that was announced in November 2021.

Check out below for key quotes, federal agency news, and a look at the week ahead in congressional hearings and think tank events...

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## Quotes of the Week

"My pen is ready. My pen is ready to sign. I'm anxious to sign these. Get some of these bills to my desk."

– **President Joe Biden *discussing climate legislation in his Earth Day remarks***

*(The White House – April 22, 2022)*

"I think our [national pledge] is strong enough for the 2030 target, but I think we need to review how we're going to get there more. I think there's got to be some taking stock right now of what's happened to us in terms of the Ukraine situation, the gas demand, the production levels — and we've got to take a hard look at it, because it's definitely having an effect."

– **Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry *speaking with The Washington Post***

*(The Washington Post – April 20, 2022)*

"We know that Congress is interested in moving. What we want to make sure we do is have enough conversations with Senator Manchin that we can be assured that we can move this forward in reconciliation."

– **National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy *on advancing domestic climate policy***

*(Yahoo Finance – April 22, 2022)*

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## Upcoming Congressional Hearings (April 25-29, 2022)

### Senate

#### Full Committee Hearing to Consider Pending Nominations

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Thursday, April 28, 10:00 a.m. EST

366 Dirksen Senate Office Building

### House of Representatives

#### Science and Energy Research Infrastructure Needs of the U.S. Department of Energy

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Wednesday, April 27, 11:00 a.m. EST

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

#### Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the United States Forest Service

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Wednesday, April 27, 2:00 p.m. EST

#### Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the United States Department of the Interior

House Committee on Appropriations

Thursday, April 21, 11:00 a.m. EST

**[Now or Never: The Urgent Need for Ambitious Climate Action](#)**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Thursday, April 28, 10:00 a.m. EST  
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

**[The Fiscal Year 2023 DOE Budget](#)**

House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Thursday, April 28, 10:00 a.m. EST  
2123 Rayburn House Office Building

**[Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the Department of Energy](#)**

House Committee on Appropriations  
Thursday, April 28, 2:30 p.m. EST

**[Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the Environmental Protection Agency](#)**

House Committee on Appropriations  
Friday, April 29, 9:00 a.m. EST

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## Federal Agency Earth Week News

### The White House

- The White House issued [A Proclamation on Earth Day, 2022](#).
- President Biden signed a new [Executive Order to Strengthen America's Forests, Boost Wildfire Resilience, and Combat Global Deforestation](#) and released a [fact sheet](#) on the order.
- The National Climate Task Force released a [Compendium of Federal Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal Communities, States, Tribes, and Territories](#).
- The Council on Environmental Quality finalized the [first phase of changes](#) to the National Environmental Policy Act.
- The National Climate Task Force held their [April Task Force Meeting](#).

### **U.S. Department of Energy**

- The U.S. Department of Energy launched a new [\\$20 million rebate program](#), under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to upgrade grid and commercial equipment.

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

- The Environmental Protection Agency announced a [\\$542 million investment](#) to reduce pollution and plastic waste in waterways and oceans.

### **U.S. Department of State**

- The U.S. Department of State published a [statement](#) from Secretary Antony Blinken on Earth Day.
- The U.S. Department of State announced [commitments](#) made by the United States at the Seventh Our Ocean Conference.

### **U.S. Agency for International Development**

- The U.S. Agency for International Development announced a new [Climate Strategy](#) to guide agency efforts to address climate change between 2022-2030.

### **U.S. Department of the Interior**

- The U.S. Department of the Interior announced a [roadmap](#) for continued renewable energy deployment on public lands.

### **U.S. Department of Transportation**

- The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration announced the launch of the new \$6.4 billion [Carbon Reduction Program](#), created under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to help states develop carbon reduction strategies.

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that the Department will invest nearly [\\$800 million in critical infrastructure](#) to address climate change in rural America as part of the Building a Better America Rural Infrastructure Tour.

### **U.S. Department of Commerce**

- The U.S. Department of Commerce announced a [Department Administrative Order](#) to establish the U.S. Department of Commerce Climate Council to coordinate and oversee the integration of climate considerations into department policies, strategic planning, and programs.

### **Office of the U.S. Trade Representative**

- U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai released a [statement](#) on Earth Day.

### **U.S. Department of Defense**

- The U.S. Department of Defense published a [statement](#) from Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks on Earth Day.

### U.S. Department of Justice

- The U.S. Department of Justice published a [statement](#) from Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke on Earth Day.
- The U.S. Department of Justice published the [Accomplishments Report for Fiscal Year 2021](#) for its Environment and Natural Resources Division.

### U.S. Department of the Treasury

- Secretary Janet Yellen provided [remarks](#) at the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action.

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published a [fact sheet](#) on actions taken by the department to advance climate policy.

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## Upcoming D.C. Climate Events (Registration)

### [Energy Workforce and Community Participation in the New Energy Economy](#)

**Bipartisan Policy Center**

Tuesday, April 26, 2022, 2:00 p.m. EDT

### [CEO Series: A Conversation with National Grid CEO, John Pettigrew](#)

**The Atlantic Council**

Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 10:00 a.m. EDT

### [Green Hydrogen: Scaling Up Innovation to Drive Down Emissions](#)

**Environmental and Energy Study Institute**

Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 1:00 p.m. EDT

### [The Transition to Net Zero: Making Good on COP26 Commitments](#)

**Foreign Policy**

April 27-28, 2022

### [The Sustainability Imperative](#)

**The Hill**

April 27-28, 2022