

Trump's EPA is ending one of the nation's biggest climate protections

Agency chief Lee Zeldin had planned the repeal of carbon emissions limits as part of a slew of proposals he called “the largest deregulatory announcement in U.S. history.”

September 14, 2026 By [Jake Spring](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency on Monday repealed Biden-era rules to limit the carbon dioxide emissions from power plants that drive climate change, arguing it will save consumers money on electricity bills, while environmentalists say it will take a toll on public health.

The regulation aimed to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new gas and existing coal plants, with the Biden administration's EPA estimating it would have saved thousands of lives. Power plants are the second-largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States, after transportation.

The limits on power plants now revert to a weaker 2015 standard set under President Barack Obama, although the EPA proposed an additional regulation that when finalized would eliminate all previous greenhouse gas standards for power plants.

That proposal would further solidify the repeal in February of the agency's “[endangerment finding](#),” which states that climate-related emissions endanger human health. That policy underpinned the vast majority of the federal government's climate policies.

In a statement announcing the changes, the EPA said repealing the Biden standards would save \$310 billion over roughly the next 20 years. Biden officials in 2024 had said that the regulation would [bring \\$370 billion in climate and public health benefits](#).

“For over 15 years, the Obama and Biden administrations implemented a war on coal to destroy reliable and affordable energy. The Trump Administration has come in to protect American energy and to make sure you can afford to keep the lights on,” EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin said in the statement, issued during the meeting of Group of 20 energy ministers in Houston.

“Americans will see a decrease in electricity prices,” he said.

Zeldin signaled last year that the agency would repeal the Biden-era power plant rules among a raft of several dozen proposals that he called “the largest deregulatory announcement in U.S. history.”

Environmental groups say the decision would benefit the very companies that drive pollution, noting the health risks of eliminating the emissions rules.

“By eliminating the power plant pollution standards, Trump is choosing to allow preventable asthma attacks, heart disease, and even deaths,” said Zealan Hoover, a former EPA senior adviser under President Joe Biden, in a statement.

“With more coal and gas being burned to power data centers, the impacts of this rollback will hit particularly hard in states like Texas, Georgia, Ohio, and Arizona where developers are racing to take advantage of this pro-polluter EPA,” Hoover added.

Environmental groups have pledged to challenge the repeal in court.

The regulatory changes announced Monday apply only to greenhouse gas emissions and not to air emissions that are directly harmful for humans to breathe. **The EPA has separately sought to weaken controls on toxic air pollution, including [mercury](#) and [particulate matter](#).**

America’s Power, a group that represents the coal industry, praised the Trump administration’s policy moves. Coal production for use in the power sector is expected to increase more than 10 times, the EPA said in its announcement, without providing details.

“Overturning these examples of EPA overreach will help preserve and strengthen the U.S. coal fleet, protect grid reliability, and shield electricity consumers from higher costs at a time of surging demand from data centers, artificial intelligence, and advanced manufacturing,” said Michelle Bloodworth, chief executive at America’s Power.

Trump officials and many industry groups argue that the Biden-era limits went beyond the law by requiring power plants to use technology that was not adequately demonstrated to be feasible. The standards required coal plants to shut by 2039 or install costly carbon-capture technology to reduce their emissions by 90 percent by 2032.

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In arguing for a broader repeal of all prior standards, administration officials say the greenhouse gas emissions of U.S. power plants do not “significantly contribute” to the overall level of warming but instead constitute a small portion of the global phenomenon. Therefore, they say the EPA does not have the legal authority to regulate them under the Clean Air Act.

Pete Wyckoff, vice president for policy at Evergreen Action, a climate change advocacy organization, disagreed with that assessment.

“If the U.S. power sector were its own country, it would rank as the world’s fifth-largest emitter of climate pollution,” he said in a statement. “American families will pay the price of this rollback in dirtier air and higher health care bills, while Trump’s fossil fuel donors rake in higher and higher profits.”

The public can submit comments on the proposal for 45 days, after which the EPA can finalize the policy.

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