

# On the Grid: Beating the Heat 7/21/23



**Mary Sagatlova**

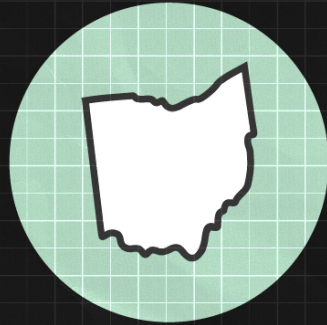
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This week, another scorching heat wave is rattling Europeans and Americans alike. The record-breaking temperatures aren't just making the headlines, but rather, as our friends at [Heat Map](#) have noted, they're making history.

Amid the heat, our aging infrastructure electrical grid system is [straining under the pressure](#). That's why in this week's *On the Grid*, we're focusing on upgrading and innovating, defining the pragmatic solutions we can deploy to build resilience for the hot days ahead.

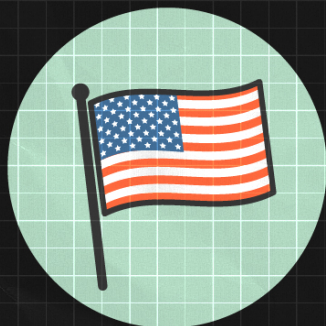


## DISPATCHES FROM THE HEARTLAND

In the past two years, the US has made the single-largest investment in climate and clean energy in our history, leveraging \$500 billion in federal funding to restore manufacturing, rebuild our energy infrastructure, and capture large parts of the clean energy supply chain. But just as we're gaining momentum—revitalizing the American economy, driving decarbonization, and reinforcing our global leadership—some in Congress are calling for a full stop.

They argue that America is not ready to transition to clean energy. That our industries are not equipped to compete for lucrative markets and that our workers don't have what it takes to win back supply chains controlled by the Chinese government. But it's not a problem of our potential like they claim—it's a crisis of confidence. This set of Republicans appears to have lost faith in American workers.

America has never been a nation that shies away from big challenges. We rise to them. In the newest edition of his monthly "*Dispatches from the Heartland*" column in *The Liberal Patriot*, Third Way Visiting Fellow Tim Ryan pushes back on this emerging narrative, outlining how American workers stand ready and eager to tackle the challenge, and why you should never bet against America.



## POLITICS

Third Way has been sounding the alarm on No Labels, the dark-money group working to get a third-party presidential candidate on the ballot in 2024. Our analysis of their strategy, supposed

“path to victory,” polling, and historical data shows clearly—a third-party candidate has *no chance* of clinching a victory. Instead, No Labels will be a spoiler, fracturing the vote and clearing the path for Trump or a Trump-Like Republican to win.

But this effort moved closer to the campaign trail, as No Labels released their new policy agenda this week in New Hampshire. But our review finds they leave many critical issues conspicuously untouched or blatantly take credit for things the Biden Administration already enacted. You can read Third Way’s breakdown of No Labels’ “Common Sense” agenda [here](#), but let’s walk through some of the more glaring issues with their climate and energy platform.

**No Labels Claim #1:** *“Washington is prohibiting exploration of America’s fossil fuel resources and discouraging investment in the sector, weakening our country and strengthening other oil- and gas-producing countries like Russia.”*

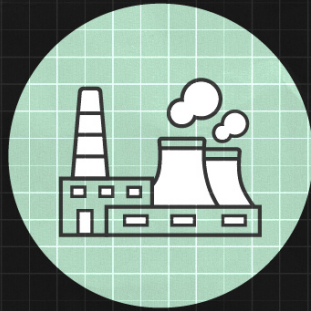
**Third Way Fact Check:** The Biden Administration has not restricted access to fossil fuel resources—in fact, Biden directed the exact opposite. Outpacing the Trump Administration’s permit approval rate, the Biden Administration approved thousands of new drilling permits, ramping up domestic oil and gas production to lower prices and exporting record-breaking amounts of liquefied natural gas to our allies to counter Russia’s influence on the world stage.

**No Labels Claim #2:** *“As America accelerates the transition to cleaner energy sources, we are trading our overreliance on foreign oil for an overreliance on the foreign metals, minerals, and refineries needed for clean energy technologies.”*

**Third Way Fact Check:** When it comes to some of the critical minerals and metals needed for our clean energy technology, the US currently lags behind other countries. But the Biden Administration is not idling. Rather, it is turning this challenge into an opportunity. The trifecta of investment—the Inflation Reduction, Bipartisan Infrastructure, and CHIPS and Science Acts—is ushering in a new era of US manufacturing, innovation, and industrial competitiveness that will develop the domestic supply chains we need, reduce our dependence on foreign suppliers, and position our industries on top.

**No Labels Claim #3:** *“Neither Democrats nor Republicans in Washington have done enough to champion the expansion of carbon-free nuclear power.”*

**Third Way Fact Check:** No Labels is pointing fingers while blatantly overlooking the landmark investments the Biden Administration has already laid down for America’s civilian nuclear industry. With a set of ambitious tax credits and billions of dollars to preserve our existing fleet of nuclear reactors and expand the next generation of reactor technology, we’re creating a foundation for reliable, secure, and clean American-made nuclear power.

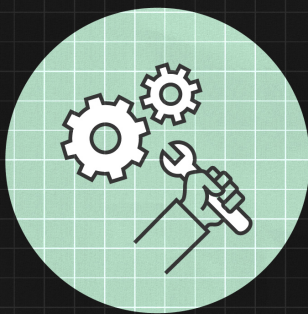


## NUCLEAR

Advanced nuclear technology is a key component of our clean energy future, generating the affordable, reliable, and secure clean power we need to cut emissions and strengthen our energy security. As we work to expand our nuclear footprint and challenge competitors like Russia and China, we need a supportive legislative framework that's not only up-to-date but future-focused and capable of adapting quickly to license, regulate, and provide oversight to a rapidly advancing nuclear industry.

To begin building that framework, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security held a [legislative hearing](#) this week to review 15 House bills and make changes that will advance the American nuclear industry.

Many of the discussed proposals are essential to quickly and efficiently deploying new advanced nuclear reactors at home and abroad and strategically expand our influence and leadership in the global nuclear market. That includes policies that would modernize the mission of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, eliminate requirements for uncontested mandatory hearings, and streamline arduous environmental reviews. Now it's on Congress to ensure that any legislation they enact serves as an engine of progress, driving the industry forward. And any policy that falls short of that goal—like one on the table now that would establish an independent public engagement office and introduce an added level of bureaucracy—should be avoided.



## CLEAN ENERGY INNOVATION



When it comes down to it, it's going to take every tool in our toolbox to cut emissions and meet future energy demand with affordable, reliable, secure, and clean power. Innovation is our most powerful vehicle in this, pioneering new solutions while expanding existing technology to be more efficient and scalable.

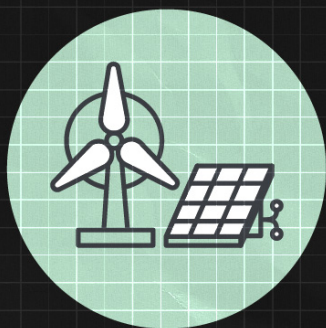
The Department of Energy's Energy Earthshots Initiative is playing a big role in this innovation ecosystem, establishing clear targets and breaking down the biggest technical, regulatory, and financial barriers keeping the next generation of clean energy technologies on the bench.

Reaching these Earthshots will not only help the US reclaim and maintain its leadership role in clean energy innovation, it will be a boon for our economy. Analysis from Third Way and Evolved Energy Research shows that accelerating innovation and deploying critical clean energy technologies will help avoid over 3,900 million metric tons of carbon pollution and save \$850 billion in energy costs for businesses and families by mid-century.

To delve further into the enormous potential of the Earthshots Initiatives, Third Way hosted a Hill briefing this week, featuring Congresswoman Deborah Ross (NC-02), Under Secretary for Science and Innovation Dr. Geri Richmond, and a panel of policy experts, discussing the importance of the Energy Earthshots, the role of fundamental research in driving clean energy innovation, and the steps we need to take to maintain our technical leadership in various clean energy solutions.



*Congresswoman Deborah Ross (left) and Ryan Fitzpatrick, Senior Director for Domestic Policy for Third Way's Climate and Energy Program.*



## RENEWABLE ENERGY

China's wind and solar sectors are growing at an extraordinary rate, set to add 1,200 GW of utility-scale wind and solar power by 2025, five years ahead of their initial target. Meanwhile, once a pioneer in wind and solar energy, America is seeing its leadership slipping. How can the US step up its efforts and shift the balance? Third Way's newest set of policy recommendations offers some insight.

Based on the results of a landmark Boston Consulting Group (BCG) study, commissioned by Third Way and Breakthrough Energy, we identified opportunities for US industries to gain a durable competitive advantage in the offshore wind and solar power sectors. Through strategic investments, incentives, and policies, we can challenge China's global leadership in renewable energy, create 200,000 good-paying jobs per year through 2050, and vie for a large share of a \$10 trillion global market.



## WHAT WE'RE READING & LISTENING TO

- Jacob Stern, in *The Atlantic*, emphasizes how extreme weather is driving a new shift in public perception about climate change, helping reshape public understanding of climate change as a present reality, not just a future threat.
- Robinson Meyer, in *The New York Times*, comments on how the US can approach a collaborative relationship with China to deploy clean energy solutions and how an isolationist approach would set the US back.

- Jason Bordoff, host of Columbia's *Energy Exchange* podcast series, discusses permitting reform with Christy Goldfuss, chief policy impact officer for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), unpacking the implications of permitting reform proposals currently under consideration and the balance between environmental protection and expanding much needed clean energy infrastructure.

## ON SOCIAL

Third Way's Climate and Energy Program puts the defeatists within the Republican ranks on blast.



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Republicans don't have faith in America's ability to lead.

Democrats do.

