

On the Grid: The Cost of Climate Policy 4/1/22



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For weeks, Ukraine has mounted fierce resistance to a brutal invasion by a despotic Russian regime. “*Slava Ukraini*”, once a simple national salute, now invokes pride and admiration across the world, as we witness everyday citizens band together to confront the Russian tanks pouring into their cities. We’ve also seen a stunning global response as nations ratchet sanctions in an attempt to isolate and cripple the Russian economy.

Not only are nations unilaterally imposing penalties, but also collectively cutting ties with Russian oil and gas with intentions to embrace a clean energy transition. The United States, less dependent on Russian energy and already a clean energy powerhouse, has the capacity to help Europe scale up decarbonization efforts in a big way.

Last week we explored steps the United States could take to solidify global leadership abroad and become the Arsenal of Clean Energy. This week, we'll discuss steps the federal government is taking in our own clean energy rollout, as evident in President Biden's newly released budget proposal, and address additional policy pathways the United States, and Europe, should take to accelerate decarbonization.

1. A Carbon-Free European Future



This week, Third Way officially launched Carbon-Free Europe, our transatlantic partner organization, focused on building technology-inclusive climate and clean energy policy pathways to rapidly decarbonize and reach long-term net-zero goals.

Our launch in Brussels featured the first look at first-of-its-kind modeling that showcased the most feasible, cost-effective pathway for the United Kingdom and the European Union (EU) to reach net-zero by 2050. Here are some highlights:

- The EU must utilize an optimal mix of carbon-free energy sources to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. This includes generating 20% of its electricity from nuclear, 18% from offshore wind, 27% from onshore wind, 27% from solar, and 8% from other resources such as biomass, geothermal, and hydro.
- A diverse mix of low-carbon technologies, rather than a 100% renewables approach, will save the EU approximately €80 billion.
- Clean hydrogen and carbon capture technologies are instrumental in decarbonizing hard-to-abate industry sectors.

At the moment, the EU's energy needs are met by Russian oil and gas companies, whose profits are funding an unjust and immoral bombardment of Ukrainian cities. EU-member nations must cut their reliance on Russian energy and aggressively push towards energy independence by building out a diverse portfolio of clean energy technology.

Catch up on highlights from our launch event [here](#).

2. Biden's Budget Blueprint for a Clean Energy Transition



On Monday, President Biden released his FY2023 budget proposal, which stands as a testament to the Administration's commitment to tackling climate change through ambitious emissions reduction policies.

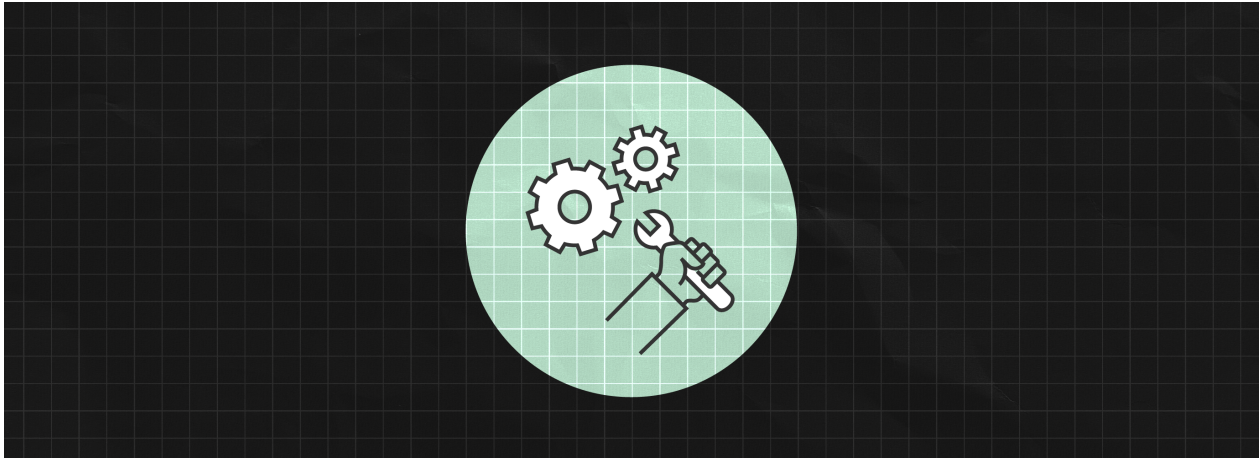
Within the \$5.8 trillion budget, \$45 billion are allotted across federal agencies to build capacity and administer funding that will reduce carbon pollution. While there is a lot to unpack in the budget proposal, here are some line items we were most excited about:

- \$1 billion for a new DOE Clean Energy Manufacturing program to build out domestic clean energy supply chains, simultaneously expanding economic opportunities for Americans and strengthening our resilience to fluctuating markets.
- \$150 million for DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstration, supporting the development of a diverse fleet of cutting-edge clean energy solutions including hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, and advanced nuclear.
- \$95 million for DOE's Office of Nuclear Energy High Assay, Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU) Availability Program, supporting the domestic demonstration, commercialization, and export of HALEU, a necessary fuel source currently only produced in Russia.
- \$1.45 billion across several programs within the Environmental Protection Agency to advance environmental justice and protect disenfranchised communities.
- Over \$2 billion to support a national transition to electric vehicles (EVs). This includes \$745 million for federal procurement of EVs and EV charging infrastructure, as well as \$1.4 billion in grant funding to finance the equitable build-out of charging infrastructure across the country.

President Biden’s budget proposal, if enacted, will build on the investments within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, drastically reducing our carbon footprint while driving down energy costs, creating good-paying union jobs for Americans in every region of the country, and strengthening our energy independence and sovereignty.

Read Third Way’s statement on the President’s budget proposal [here](#).

3. Clean Procurement



Construction materials are responsible for a significant portion of US climate pollution; 55% of our emissions can be traced back to goods the government purchases. John Milko, Third Way’s Climate and Industry Consultant, penned a [new report](#) detailing how the federal government can leverage its massive purchasing power to accelerate emissions reduction within our heavy-polluting construction and manufacturing sectors.

As the world’s largest buyer, the US government has the capability to drive down industry-related emissions through the power of their example. Raising production standards for goods like cement, concrete, and steel will help drive down carbon emissions in heavy-polluting sectors. As global emissions standards tighten, federal incentivization for a national shift towards low-carbon production will help give American manufacturers a competitive edge within global markets.

Read the report [here](#).

4. We’re Hiring

JOIN OUR TEAM

The clean energy policy conversation is expanding...and so are we! The Climate and Energy Program is looking for people with talent and a passion for climate solutions to fill two new roles on our team. If you've got anyone in your mental rolodex who you think might be a fit, please send them our way. And if you wanted to circulate these job postings more broadly with your networks, we wouldn't mind that either!

Executive Coordinator: This person will manage scheduling, meeting set-up, and meeting and calendar logistics for the Senior Vice-President, as well as provide background research in preparation for meetings and events, plan logistics of online and in-person events, prepare expense reports, and file consultant invoices and reimbursements. *(1 year of relevant work experience preferred)*

Communications Coordinator: This person will craft and implement communications rollout strategies for clean energy products and research, pitch to and manage relationships with climate and energy press, manage our social media strategy, and support the email and marketing needs of the climate and energy program. You'll also get to work on this very newsletter! *(1 year of experience in communications or clean energy work preferred)*

Deputy Director for Innovation and Industry: This person will help set policy, advocacy, and product strategy and supervise multiple team members working on issues surrounding energy innovation, carbon management, and industrial decarbonization. *(5+ years of experience in clean energy policy)*

5. What We're Reading



- Julia Simon writes in *NPR* how misinformation campaigns mislead the public and derail the build-out of clean energy technologies.
- Ronald Brownstein writes in *The Atlantic* the states that are most resistant to the clean energy transition are also the states that have been skeptical about other cultural and demographic shifts in the country - namely Red States. But as Third Way's Lindsey Walter tells Brownstein in the piece, "This messaging that deploying electric vehicles or transitioning toward wind and solar and other clean-energy technologies will be damaging to economies in Republican states is a misconception."
- Ted Nordhaus at the Breakthrough Institute offers a perspective on climate extremism and the ways in which a coalition focused on alarmist messaging can be counterproductive to climate policy.