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- 2. It generates additional fissionable material that can promote nuclear proliferation.**
- 3. We can't safely dispose of the waste and don't even have a language to tell people tens of thousands of years hence of the danger.**
- 4. And, I think, least serious: accidents. Since reactors are designed and run by humans, it is hard to see how to eliminate this element of risk."**

Biden kicks the climate can

By [ARIANNA SKIBELL](#)
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President Joe Biden's actions today to reduce the United States' share of planet-warming pollution was, for many, rather underwhelming.

The president's commitment to boost offshore wind, reduce energy prices and protect communities from heat comes as the world is glimpsing the future reality of an increasingly warming world.

Lethal [heat waves are scorching](#) large swaths of the planet, wildfires have [prompted mass evacuations](#) and [unprecedented floods](#) are swallowing entire cities.

Biden said [his commitments today](#) are merely the start. But they still fall short of what climate scientists say is necessary to make a meaningful dent in the nation's carbon pollution.

Deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by decade's end — which would increase current commercial capacity a thousandfold — is still a far cry from the zero-carbon electricity system Biden pledged to achieve by 2035.

The move also highlights the widening gap between his campaign promises and the reality of what he has been able to accomplish so far.

When Biden was elected president, his supporters hoped he would get the country back on track to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement after former President Donald Trump withdrew from the global plan, tried to save coal and went on an environmental regulation rollback spree.

The country was set to rejoin its wealthy peers in pledging to quickly and dramatically reduce their share of greenhouse gas emissions while helping poorer countries that bear the brunt of that pollution.

Biden proposed a sweeping \$550 billion plan to revolutionize the power sector and propel the country toward a net-zero carbon future by midcentury.

It was always going to be a tall order — one that would need cooperation from every Senate Democrat. Blaming Republican opposition, Biden said this afternoon in Somerset, Mass., that Congress "has failed in its duty."

"In the coming weeks, I'm going to use the power I have as president to turn these words into formal, official government actions," Biden added.

Biden has so far hesitated to declare a climate emergency, which could unlock billions of dollars to put toward the nation's emission reduction targets. Even that is unlikely to move the needle far enough. Plus, it might not withstand judicial scrutiny.

In short, this is not a hopeful moment that the country will act quickly enough to do its part in preventing catastrophic warming. Still, it's not a zero-sum game: Every bit of emissions reduction helps.

Power Centers

Pie crust promises

Biden today announced steps to address the climate crisis that are far more modest than the promises he made when he ran for office two years ago, writes **Zack Colman** and **Lisa Kashinsky**. [Read the story here.](#)

While Biden framed the fight as one of his highest priorities, he stopped short of declaring a national climate emergency, which would enable him to exert even more presidential power to address the issue, writes **Robin Bravender**. [Here's the story.](#)

Trouble in gas land

Pipeline companies are refuting claims that they are artificially inflating the price of natural gas, urging the administration to allow them to continue their current sales practice, writes **Miranda Willson**.

But critics say the current method forces shippers to purchase gas that they cannot use. [Read the story here.](#)

It's too dang hot

Extreme heat shattered records in the United Kingdom as temperatures surpassed 104 degrees Fahrenheit for the first time in recorded history, writes **Chelsea Harvey**. [Here are the details.](#)

The record-smashing heat wave in the UK and across Europe has exposed a divide between workers who can escape the heat and those who can't, writes **Zia Weise** and **Karl Mathiesen**.

Those unable to decamp to air-conditioned offices sweltered in buses and bakeries, on fields and construction sites as a brutal heat wave gripped the continent. [Here's the story.](#)

In Other News

Dirty little secret: Researchers are [struggling to identify](#) unreported methane leaks, as methane is colorless, odorless and responsible for more than 25 percent of the global warming the Earth is experiencing today.

Climate rewrite: The Republican candidate running for Pa. governor [deleted a Facebook video](#) from his page that referred to climate change as "pop science."

Today in POLITICO Energy's podcast: Zack Colman [explains the Biden administration's strategy](#) and why Saudi Arabia is so important when it comes to climate change.

Question Corner

Nuclear pitfalls

In Tuesday's edition of Power Switch, we brought you [a story of how global leaders](#) are reconsidering their plans to close nuclear power plants. Some of you wanted to know more about the potential pitfalls of nuclear power.

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The science, policy and politics driving the energy transition can feel miles away. But **we're all affected** on an individual and communal level — from hotter days and higher gas prices to home insurance rates and food supply.

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/power-switch/2022/07/20/biden-kicks-the-climate-can-00046876>