



Trump's EPA wants to eliminate regulation for greenhouse gases

"This cynical one-two punch allows Trump's Flat Earth EPA to slam the brakes on reducing auto pollution and ignore urgent warnings from the world's leading scientists about the need for climate action," wrote Dan Becker of the Center for Biological Diversity, in a statement to NPR. "By revoking this key scientific finding Trump is putting fealty to Big Oil over sound science and people's health."

Jeff Brady

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The Trump administration announced its plan today to overturn a key [2009 Environmental Protection Agency finding](#) that underpins much of the federal government's actions to rein in climate change.

The EPA argues it doesn't have the legal authority to regulate greenhouse gases. The agency proposes to undo the government's "endangerment finding," a determination that pollutants from developing and burning fossil fuels, such as methane and carbon dioxide, can be regulated under the Clean Air Act.

"With this proposal, the Trump EPA is proposing to end sixteen years of uncertainty for automakers and American consumers," EPA administrator Lee Zeldin said in an [agency press release](#).

The EPA also plans to [eliminate rules to reduce climate pollution from cars and trucks](#). Transportation is the [largest source of direct greenhouse gas emissions](#) in the United States.

The announcement, made by Zeldin at a car dealership in Indiana, is for now only a proposal. Climate advocates vow to challenge it, first in comments during the process to finalize the proposed rule on the endangerment finding and then in court, if necessary.

"As Americans reel from deadly floods and heat waves, the Trump administration is trying to argue that the emissions turbocharging these disasters are not a threat," said Christy Goldfuss,

executive director of Natural Resources Defense Council. "It boggles the mind and endangers the nation's safety and welfare."

The administration's effort comes in the wake of the [hottest year](#) humans have ever recorded on Earth, [dangerous flooding](#) in communities across the U.S., [climate-fueled wildfires](#) that destroyed thousands of homes in Los Angeles and [hotter ocean temperatures](#) that made Hurricane Helene stronger and more likely to cause damage inland.

If the decision is upheld, it would speed President Trump's efforts to end former President Biden's ambitious climate agenda, and make it more difficult for future administrations to limit the human-caused greenhouse gas pollution that's heating the planet.

A cornerstone of U.S. climate action

In 2007 the [Supreme Court found in Massachusetts v. EPA](#) that the agency is required to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. Then in 2009 the EPA, during the Obama administration, [declared that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere were a hazard to people](#).

The endangerment finding is the basis for rules regulating climate pollution from [coal and gas-fired power plants](#), [car and truck exhaust](#), and [methane from the oil and gas industry](#).

The EPA has repeatedly reaffirmed the 2009 endangerment finding. In 2022 Congress included language in the climate-focused Inflation Reduction Act that labels greenhouse gases as pollutants under the Clean Air Act. That makes abandoning the finding more difficult. Still, President Trump has made doing that a priority.

On the first day of his second term, Trump signed an executive order [asking the EPA administrator to submit recommendations](#) "on the legality and continuing applicability" of the endangerment finding. That echoes recommendations laid out in the [Heritage Foundation's Project 2025](#), a conservative plan that aims to limit the government's ability to regulate climate pollution.

[Zeldin first announced](#) the EPA's intention to eliminate the endangerment finding in March, in what [the agency called](#) the "most consequential day of deregulation in U.S. history."

"We are driving a dagger straight into the heart of the climate change religion to drive down cost of living for American families, unleash American energy, bring auto jobs back to the U.S. and more," Zeldin [said in a news release](#) at the time.

The Trump administration's position

The [Trump administration argues](#) the EPA, under then-President Barack Obama, established the endangerment finding in "a flawed and unorthodox way" and "did not stick to the letter of the Clean Air Act."

In seeking to reverse the endangerment finding, the Trump EPA is [making a legal argument](#) that previous administrators overstepped their legal authority and "imposed trillions of dollars of costs on Americans." The agency repeats past Republican arguments that the 2007 Massachusetts v. EPA decision "explicitly did not hold that EPA was required to regulate these emissions from these sources." And the EPA argues that more recent Supreme Court decisions raise further questions about the legality of the 2009 endangerment finding.

[The U.S. is the largest historical emitter](#) of man-made climate pollution and, under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, has agreed to contribute to the global effort to reduce emissions and limit warming. Trump has signed a directive to have the U.S. withdraw from that agreement.

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In 2024, Trump [suggested oil executives should raise \\$1 billion for his presidential bid](#) because he would roll back environmental rules.

"NRDC's lawyers and scientists are not going to let that happen without a fight. If EPA finalizes this illegal and cynical approach, we will see them in court," Goldfuss wrote in a statement.

<https://www.npr.org/2025/07/29/nx-s1-5482966/trump-climate-change-epa>