

EVOLVING POLICY

With a new Congress and new administration settling in, Washington will undoubtedly have a different look and feel in 2021. Throughout his campaign, President Joe Biden signaled that addressing climate change will be a priority, and he promised to push policies that move the country toward achieving net-zero carbon emissions from the power sector by 2035, and economy-wide by 2050.

But Congress may have other ideas. A severely diminished Democratic majority in the U.S. House of Representatives and a narrowly divided Senate present a challenging federal landscape that the Biden administration team will need to navigate. Attempting to

take action without Congress may be in the cards for our new president, as a key trend of the modern presidency has been the increased use of executive orders.

The new administration is likely to focus on rolling back many of President Trump’s actions on energy and climate, replacing them with new, ambitious orders focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions with an emphasis on “environmental justice.” Other top priorities, including the economy and healthcare, are likely to take precedence over sweeping legislative action to combat climate change.

KEY CABINET MEMBERS



USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack

- U.S. Dairy Export Council president and CEO, 2017-2020
- USDA secretary, 2009-2017
- Iowa governor, 1999-2007
- Strong supporter of ethanol and other renewable fuels



EPA Administrator Michael Regan

- NC Department of Environmental Quality secretary, 2017-2020
- Environmental Defense Fund, various roles, 2012-2016
- EPA staff on air quality and energy issues, 1998-2008



Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm

- Michigan governor, 2003-2011
- Has previously supported renewable fuels
- Deeply knowledgeable about auto industry





RFA'S FOCUS: FIVE POLICY AND REGULATORY SOLUTIONS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

“The Renewable Fuel Standard marks our bond with our farmers and our commitment to a thriving rural economy. ... A Biden-Harris Administration will promote and advance renewable energy, ethanol, and other biofuels to help rural America and our nation’s farmers, and will honor the critical role the renewable fuel industry plays in supporting the rural economy and the leadership role American agriculture will play in our fight against climate change.”

– Presidential candidate Joe Biden,
August 2020



Maximize the Low Carbon Benefits of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

EPA’s failed implementation of the RFS under the Trump administration resulted in numerous missed opportunities for immediate greenhouse gas reductions, lower fuel prices, and decreased petroleum imports.



Build Upon the RFS with New Low Carbon, High Octane Fuel Policies.

While the RFS has created a durable policy foundation for reducing GHG emissions from the transportation sector, complementary policies could deepen and accelerate the decarbonization of our nation’s transportation fuels.



Optimize Vehicle Technologies for Low Carbon, High Octane Fuels.

Because fuels and vehicles operate as integrated systems, policy and regulation designed to increase the consumption of more efficient low carbon liquid fuels must be accompanied by policies that compel or incentivize the production and purchase of vehicles capable of operating on those fuels.



Modernize our Nation’s Transportation Fuel Infrastructure.

Rapid proliferation of low carbon liquid fuels will require modest improvements to our nation’s fuel infrastructure.



Renew and Reset Trade Relationships in Key International Ethanol Markets.

Despite aggressive efforts by the U.S. ethanol industry to expand international market access, trade disputes with several key markets for ethanol have severely hamstrung U.S. export volumes. Resetting trade relationships with China, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia would help remove new barriers and drive a return to free and fair trade with these countries and others.