

## Combat Climate Change, Build a Clean Energy Economy, and Secure Environmental Justice

### **Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time.**

Fifteen of the 16 hottest years on record have occurred this century. While Donald Trump has called climate change a “hoax,” 2016 is on track to break global temperature records once more. Cities from Miami to Baltimore are already threatened by rising seas. California and the West have suffered years of brutal drought. Alaska has been scorched by wildfire. New York has been battered by superstorms, and Texas swamped by flash floods. The best science tells us that without ambitious, immediate action across our economy to cut carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases, all of these impacts will be far worse in the future. We cannot leave our children a planet that has been profoundly damaged.

Democrats share a deep commitment to tackling the climate challenge; creating millions of good-paying middle class jobs; reducing greenhouse gas emissions more than 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050; and **meeting the pledge President Obama put forward in the landmark Paris Agreement**, which aims to keep global temperature increases to “well below” two degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We believe America must be running **entirely on clean energy by mid-century**. We will take bold steps to slash carbon pollution and protect clean air at home, lead the fight against climate change around the world, ensure no Americans are left out or left behind as we accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, and be responsible stewards of our natural resources and our public lands and waters. Democrats reject the notion that we have to choose between protecting our planet and creating good-paying jobs. We can and we will do both.

### *Building a Clean Energy Economy*

We are committed to getting **50 percent of our electricity from clean energy sources within a decade**, with half a billion solar panels installed within four years and enough renewable energy to power every home in the country. We will cut energy waste in American homes, schools, hospitals, and offices through energy efficient improvements; modernize our electric grid; and make American manufacturing the cleanest and most efficient in the world. These efforts will create millions of new jobs and save families and businesses money on their monthly energy bills. We will **transform American transportation** by reducing oil consumption through cleaner fuels, vehicle electrification increasing the fuel efficiency of cars, boilers, ships, and trucks. We will make new investments in public transportation and build bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across our urban and suburban areas. Democrats believe the tax code must reflect our commitment to a clean energy future by eliminating special tax breaks and subsidies for fossil fuel companies as well as defending and extending tax incentives for energy efficiency and clean energy.

Democrats believe that carbon dioxide, methane, and other **greenhouse gases should be priced to reflect their negative externalities**, and to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy and help meet our climate goals. Democrats believe that climate change is too important to wait for climate deniers and defeatists in Congress to start listening to science, and support using every tool available to reduce emissions now. Democrats are committed to defending, implementing, and extending **smart pollution and efficiency standards**, including the Clean Power Plan, fuel economy standards for automobiles and heavy-duty vehicles, building codes and appliance standards. We are also committed to expanding clean energy research and development.

Democrats recognize the importance of **climate leadership at the local level** and know that achieving our national clean energy goals requires an active partnership with states, cities, and rural communities where so much of our country's energy policy is made. We will ensure that those taking the lead on clean energy and energy efficiency have the tools and resources they need to succeed. The federal government should lead by example, which is why we support taking steps to power the government with 100 percent clean electricity.

Democrats are committed to **closing the Halliburton loophole** that stripped the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of its ability to regulate hydraulic fracturing, and ensuring tough safeguards are in place, including Safe Drinking Water Act provisions, to protect local water supplies. We believe hydraulic fracturing should not take place where states and local communities oppose it. We will **reduce methane emissions from all oil and gas production** and transportation by at least 40 to 45 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 through common-sense standards for both new and existing sources and by repairing and replacing thousands of miles of leaky pipes. This will both protect our climate and create thousands of good-paying jobs.

We will work to **expand access to cost-saving renewable energy** by low-income households, create good-paying jobs in communities that have struggled with energy poverty, and oppose efforts by utilities to limit consumer choice or slow clean energy deployment. We will streamline federal permitting to accelerate the construction of new transmission lines to get low-cost renewable energy to market, and incentivize wind, solar, and other renewable energy over the development of new natural gas power plants.

We support President Obama's decision to **reject the Keystone XL pipeline**. As we continue working to reduce carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gas emissions, we must ensure federal actions do not "significantly exacerbate" global warming. We support a comprehensive approach that ensures all federal decisions going forward contribute to solving, not significantly exacerbating, climate change.

Democrats believe that our commitment to meeting the **climate challenge must also be reflected in the infrastructure investments** we make. We need to make our existing infrastructure safer and cleaner and build the new infrastructure necessary to power our clean energy future. To create good-paying middle class jobs that cannot be outsourced, Democrats support high labor standards in clean energy infrastructure and the right to form or join a union, whether in renewable power or advanced vehicle manufacturing. During the clean energy transition, we will ensure landowners, communities of color, and tribal nations are at the table.

### *Securing Environmental and Climate Justice*

Democrats believe clean air and clean water are basic rights of all Americans. Yet as we saw in Flint, Michigan, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately home to environmental justice “hot spots,” where air pollution, water pollution, and toxic hazards like lead increase health and economic hardship. The impacts of climate change will also disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities, tribal nations, and Alaska Native villages—all of which suffer the worst losses during extreme weather and have the fewest resources to prepare. Simply put, this is environmental racism.

Democrats believe we must make it a **national priority to eradicate lead poisoning**, which disproportionately impacts low-income children and children of color and can lead to lifelong health and educational challenges. We will prioritize hiring and training workers from affected communities to clean up toxic brownfields and expand clean energy, energy efficiency, and resilient infrastructure. The fight against climate change must not leave any community out or behind—including the coal communities who kept America’s lights on for generations.

Democrats will fight to make sure these workers and their families get the benefits they have earned and the respect they deserve, and we will make new investments in energy-producing communities to help create jobs and build a brighter and more resilient economic future. We will also oppose threats to the public health of these communities from harmful and dangerous extraction practices, like mountaintop removal mining operations.

All **corporations owe it to their shareholders to fully analyze and disclose the risks they face, including climate risk**. Those who fail to do so should be held accountable. Democrats also respectfully request the Department of Justice to investigate allegations of corporate fraud on the part of fossil fuel companies accused of misleading shareholders and the public on the scientific reality of climate change.

### *Protecting Our Public Lands and Waters*

Democrats believe in the conservation and collaborative stewardship of our shared natural heritage: the public lands and waterways, the oceans, Everglades, Great Lakes, the Arctic, and all that makes America's great outdoors priceless. As a nation, we need policies and investments that will **keep America's public lands public**, strengthen protections for our natural and cultural resources, increase access to parks and public lands for all Americans, protect native species and wildlife, and harness the immense economic and social potential of our public lands and waters.

Democrats will work to establish an **American Parks Trust Fund** to help expand local, state, and national recreational opportunities, rehabilitate existing parks, and enhance America's great outdoors—from our forests and coasts to neighborhood parks—so "America's Best Idea" is held in trust for future generations, and all Americans can access and enjoy natural spaces. Democrats are committed to doubling the size of the outdoor economy, creating nearly hundreds of billions of dollars in new economic activity and millions of new jobs. Democrats will approach conservation of our public lands and waters in a way that reflects the diversity of our country, by actively engaging all Americans in the great outdoors and protecting natural landscapes and cultural sites that tell the story of America's complex history. To help meet these goals, we will work to build a diverse workforce in agencies that manage America's public lands, waters, and cultural sites.

We **oppose drilling in the Arctic and off the Atlantic coast**, and believe we need to reform fossil fuel leasing on public lands. We will phase down extraction of fossil fuels from our public lands, starting with the most polluting sources, while making our public lands and waters engines of the clean energy economy and creating jobs across the country. Democrats will work to expand the amount of renewable energy production on federal lands and waters, from wind in Wyoming to solar in Nevada.

Because the **Bristol Bay drainages of Alaska** produce the world's largest salmon fisheries, we support efforts by the EPA under the Clean Water Act to establish proactively science-based restrictions on discharges of dredged or fill material associated with a potential Pebble mine and urge that such restrictions must apply to potential mines at other metallic sulfide deposits in those drainages.

Agricultural lands account for nearly half of the total land area in America and our agricultural practices have a significant impact on our water, land, oceans, and the climate. Therefore, we believe that in order to be effective in keeping our air and water clean and combating climate change, we must **enlist farmers as partners in promoting conservation and stewardship**.