

The [Washington Post](#) reports that Mitt Romney will announce a new energy plan centering on explosive increases in oil and gas development, combined with greater use of coal. I've read the staff briefing [paper](#), and the Post's account is an accurate summary:

Mitt Romney on Thursday will outline a plan that he projects would achieve North American energy independence by 2020 by opening new areas for offshore oil drilling, starting in Virginia and the Carolinas, and by empowering the states to lease federal lands for oil, coal and natural gas development.

Under the plan, environmental statutes and regulations would be removed or loosened to green-light more coal production and other industry priorities, and the United States would reach agreements for energy production with Canada and Mexico, including to build the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Probably the most radical proposal in the plan would be to transfer control of leasing on federal lands to the states. The staff paper projects immense economic benefits from making the United States an "energy superpower." I have my doubts about that — energy superpowers like Saudi Arabia and Russia don't otherwise have very healthy economies.

Whether or not the plan is good for the economy as a whole, the environment, or the average American, there's no doubt it will be good for Romney's donor base:

Romney's plan caters heavily to oil and coal interests, and oil executives are some of his biggest benefactors. Romney spent Tuesday raising an estimated \$7 million across Texas, including \$3 million at a dinner at the Petroleum Club of Midland. He spent the night at the home of Miles Boldrick, founder of Statewide Minerals Co., which has stakes in more than 25,000 oil wells.

If nothing else, this plan should make Romney a very popular guy at next year's [Oil Baron's Ball](#).