

Environmentalists have a tendency to focus on the environmental harm we haven't been able to prevent and the frustrations of making further progress. Once in a while, though, it's good to look at the progress we've made.

Take a few minutes this holiday weekend to be thankful for some of this year's steps forward on climate change — and to the people whose years of hard work made these forward steps possible. And be grateful to all the people who worked very hard, this year and in the past, to head off some of the very things that could have happened instead.

Among the positive accomplishments of the past year.: First and foremost is the Inflation Reduction Act. Finally — finally! — Congress has gotten off its tail and done something about climate change. The IRA's \$370 billion in environmental spending covers just about dimension of carbon emissions you can think. It won't get the U.S. quite all the way to meeting Biden's ambitious commitment under Paris Agreement, but it will come close. Continued Democratic control of the Senate eliminates any likelihood of a rollback by the new Congress.

As the marshmallow on that sweet potato casserole, the Senate then ratified the Kigali Protocol, which commits the US to cutting super-powerful greenhouse gases. (Don't worry, I'm not going to try to carry the culinary metaphor any further). This is the first support for international cooperation by the Senate on climate change since the early 1990s when it ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Also on the international level, this year's global conference on climate change was frustrating in some ways but had one big achievement. For the first time, developed countries agreed in principle to compensate the world's poorest countries for climate harms. Those poor countries will bear the brunt of climate change but generally have contributed almost nothing to creating the problem.

Turning to the White House, our tracker (now appearing on Grist) shows that Biden has underdone about 40% of Trump rollbacks and is in the process of undoing about the same number. Biden has also been on a fast clip in terms of nominating federal judges and getting them confirmed, which will be especially important as the lower courts start to review the actions of his agencies. Environmental spending from last year's big infrastructure law is starting to rollout to its recipients, covering new transmission, public transit, charging stations, and much more.

Just to round things out, we can also be grateful for a lot that's happening at the state level. Nearly half the states have now adopted some kind of carbon neutrality target, with varying

degrees of coverage and legal force. Nearly half the U.S. population is covered by these. And states are getting more and more serious about reaching their goals. California has just adopted a slew of new climate measures, most notably a 2035 deadline for eliminating sales of new gasoline cars that other states are ready to adopt.

So sit down, relax, and enjoy the day, hopefully with good food and family. And then after Thanksgiving, be ready to roll up your sleeves again and get back to work. The planet's not going to save itself, you know.