

Presumably, no one actually *wants* rising seas, dangerous heat waves, severe droughts, runaway wildfires, and floods. Nor, I assume, are there many who want those climate disasters for their children and grandchildren. Still, there are all too many politicians and public figures who act *as if* their goal was to foment climate change. No doubt the real motives are more mundane: ignorance, financial gain, political ambition, or fear of change. Regardless of motive, the result has been a relentless campaign to wipe out any sign of progress in controlling climate change.

Donald Trump is, of course, the poster child for this campaign. His administration attempted to eliminate every regulation limiting carbon emissions, promoting energy efficiency, or expanding renewable energy. One [website](#) cites 176 climate-related rollbacks. It would be much easier to list the few regulations that somehow slipped through the net and *weren't* rolled back.

Then there's the debt ceiling bill that House Republicans initially put forward. The GOP caucus is far from cohesive, but one thing that he seemed sure they could unite around was repealing as much of the Inflation Reduction Act as possible – that law having been the first real effort by Congress to tackle the climate problem. On top of that, the House proposed draconian cuts at EPA and crippling new restrictions on EPA regulation. Seemingly, any effort to blunt global warming is anathema to the House GOP caucus and must be immediately stamped out.

The IRA has also been a target on the campaign trail. Presidential candidate Nikki Haley calls it “a communist manifesto filled with tax hikes and green subsidies that benefit China and make America more dependent on Beijing.” [*Factcheck: The 1848 Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels did not, in fact, advocate tax credits or grants for electric vehicles or renewable electricity.]

Other candidates focus on electric vehicles. Ron DeSantis has made the defense of gas-guzzlers his personal Alamo: “we will eliminate subsidies for EVs, and we will support Americans’ right to drive the cars they want. We will save the traditional American automobile.” Trump, too, is at war with EVs, [accusing](#) them of destroying the car industry and saying rather weirdly that they run out of power in fifteen minutes. At least, unlike windmills, he does not accuse them of causing cancer, but perhaps that will be next.

There's also a backlash at the state level. According to [FiveThirtyEight](#), “Across the country, bills pushing back against climate policy have been a trend this legislative session, with multiple states proposing — and passing — laws that would undermine efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions.” In Texas, the legislature seems ready to abandon the idea of

competitive electricity markets because it thinks too many renewables are winning out in the market place. As a result, the state plans to build a new string of natural gas plants that could [cost](#) consumers up to \$18 billion.

Finally, many conservatives seems crazed by the thought that the private sector might voluntarily try to cut emissions. Thus, the current hysteria about corporate ESG programs (which promote sustainability) and the fear that major investors may support them. Again, while free markets used to be an article of faith among conservatives, that commitment fades away next to their fear that some corporations may not be doing their part to maximize world carbon emissions and drive up global temperatures as much as possible. As a result, some corporations [are](#) now forced to engage in “greenhushing,” where they feel the need to conceal their efforts to reduce emissions.

It's easiest to attack climate policies when they are relatively new and are not yet protected by economic interests or familiarity. That's the time when we need to be most on guard against counterattacks. There's a lesson here for program design: The faster that programs can be rolled out, the safer they are from attack.

There's also a lesson for politics: We cannot afford to have our focus waver for a single second when we are faced by these implacable enemies of progress.