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On January 20, 2025 — otherwise known as Day One of Trump 2.0 — the president signed a barrage of Executive Orders, including one [declaring a national energy emergency](#). While it is unsurprising that his policy priorities will reflect his long-standing antipathy toward climate protections and renewables — not to mention the fossil fuel industry's [financial support](#) during his campaign — his attempt to frame this policy by declaring a “national energy emergency” is beyond disingenuous. We have faced real threats to energy security in the past and have weathered them through democratic processes, not by executive fiat, and this isn't one.

The US started to worry about our position in global oil markets in 1948, when we began importing oil. To protect domestic production, President Eisenhower instituted the Mandatory Oil Import Program in 1959. The reaction in the Middle East was strong and swift as five countries formed the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries. OPEC wreaked havoc on our energy economy in the 1970s, and every presidential administration until the Obama administration made energy independence a key part of their policymaking.

During the 1970s, The United States experienced two oil shocks at the hands of OPEC that devastated the economy. At the same time, the natural gas industry was in disarray, coal burning was damaging the environment, and the nuclear power industry collapsed. We were clearly in a period of energy crisis, but no energy emergency was called. Instead, President Carter initiated two sets of major legislation that created the Department of Energy and restructured energy industries addressing both conventional fossil fuels and alternative and renewable energy resources. (Note that congressional legislation, not unilateral executive order, was the legitimate, democratic response to national concerns about energy independence.)

After Carter, energy independence continued to occupy presidential administrations and bipartisan energy policies prevailed until roughly 2008, when energy markets changed dramatically — and, accordingly, so did our focus on energy independence. Horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing opened huge domestic natural gas and petroleum markets. The resulting fall of natural gas prices made it the fuel of choice for electricity producers, and coal use declined. Additionally, in the 2010s, solar and wind generated electricity became cost competitive with, if not outright cheaper than coal, natural gas, and nuclear power. This trend of comparative affordability of renewables has continued as technology improves and continued wind and solar development advances to economies of scale.

There have been two significant consequences of those economic activities. First, and most importantly, the United States became energy independent. Second, the US was on the path to a clean energy transition.

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What, then, are we to make of this new “crisis?” Quite simply, the latest statistics from the Department of Energy clearly refute this claim. Energy exports began to increase in 2004, and around 2008 imports began to decline. By 2018, energy exports exceeded imports, and that trade balance has [stayed in our favor](#) ever since. Today, energy production exceeds energy consumption by approximately 10 percent. Petroleum consumption peaked roughly in 2005, then declined about 10 percent. Solar and wind power have enjoyed steep increases since 2010, and [now produce](#) more power than coal.

In short, the United States simply is not facing a national energy emergency, which obviates the ostensible rationale for enacting sweeping policy reforms through an executive order. However, it remains instructive to consider what is contained within this executive order, and the means it uses addresses the “emergency.” In 2008, as markets shifted towards natural gas and renewables, energy policy was politicized, encapsulated in Sarah Palin’s declaration to “drill baby drill.” Energy policy became a topic of partisan politics, and energy, the environment, and clean energy sources were treated as antagonistic policy arenas. Trump’s energy Executive Order is a direct descendant of that politicization.

Although the US is the world’s largest natural gas and oil producer, Trump’s Order asserts that the US energy capacity is “far too inadequate to meet our Nation’s energy needs” and that “[w]e need a reliable, diversified, and affordable supply.” The Order pays lip service to the need for a diversified supply, but specifically [omits wind and solar](#).

Unsurprisingly, the Order adopts the language and policies of *Project 2025*. That notorious manifesto recommends increased fossil fuel development, the curtailment of support for renewable energy projects, and [falsely identifies](#) “extreme ‘green’ policies” as the cause of a crisis which does not exist. It calls for the full repeal of President Biden’s Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, which are [on track](#) to reduce CO₂ emissions and energy costs, increase the deployment of wind and solar technologies, and strengthen our power grids — especially during extreme weather events.

Earlier in January, the DOE [released projections](#) that renewable resources will increase their share of our energy portfolio from 23 percent in 2024 to 27 percent by 2026. More notably, they expect solar power to supply most of the increase in new electricity generation

for the country. The cost of electricity for renewable energy technologies [continues](#) to drop globally, particularly in North America.

In short, the Executive Order has fabricated an energy emergency and is doubly wrongheaded. First, as the statistics bear out, there is neither a domestic energy emergency nor an energy crisis. The U.S. has effectively secured energy independence. More significantly, Trump's politically driven, fossil fuel-dependent energy portfolio is neither diversified nor economically sound. By constraining renewable resource development, the policy is less diversified, more costly, curtails a robust clean energy transition, and is in denial about climate change and its horrific effects as California continues to burn.