

A new chapter began when Joe Biden took the oath of office. That moment also marked the end of Donald Trump's presidency, which featured efforts to roll back over a hundred environmental regulations. Biden campaigned on an ambitious plan to curb climate change, which he must now try to implement with a razor-thin control of Congress. At the same time, he will have to try to clean up the regulatory carnage left by Trump and move forward with new, aggressive protections for the environment. He has already assembled a high-powered team to lead the effort.

President Biden's [inaugural address](#) spoke of "a climate in crisis." He also said, "a cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now."

After the inauguration, Biden turned immediately to the task of implementing his plans. He has begun the process by issuing a proclamation rejoining the Paris Agreement. He [revoked](#) Trump's executive orders that had "reformed" (meaning weakened) the regulatory process. He also issued a sweeping [executive order](#), entitled "Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis." Besides repealing a bevy of Trump's executive orders, Biden's order takes action on several fronts:

- Biden directed agencies to revisit vehicle fuel economy and emissions standards, methane emissions standards, and appliance and building efficiency standards, all of which Trump had rolled back.
- He ordered reconsideration of Trump's order cutting the size of sites like the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.
- He imposed a temporary moratorium on all oil and natural gas leasing activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- He reestablished a working group to revise the government's estimate of the social cost of carbon, a measure of the harm done by carbon emissions.
- He revoked the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline.
- He directed the Council on Environmental Quality to resend recent changes that were designed to undermine the use of environmental impact statements.

According to his Chief of Staff, Ron Klain, between now and the end of the month Biden "will sign additional executive actions to address the climate crisis with the urgency the science demands and ensure that science guides the administration's decision making." Biden is moving quickly to set the agendas of EPA and other agencies to reverse some of Trump's most destructive rollbacks.

Biden's task won't be easy. Congressional Democrats cover a broad spectrum from coal-

state Senator Joe Manchin to Green New Deal advocates like Senator Ed Markey. Biden, tie-vote breaker Harris, and congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer will have to hold this coalition together. Regulations from agencies like EPA will have to face review by a judiciary packed with conservative Trump appointees. Biden also has to be thinking about maintaining congressional control in the 2022 off-year elections, and about the next presidential race in 2024.

All this, while trying to cope with a pandemic, a massive recession, and a deeply polarized nation! Biden and his team have their work cut out for them, but they've already gotten off to a fast start.