The National Defense Act was a Korean war measure. As behooves a wartime law, it seems to contemplate fairly heavy-handed economic control by the government. (If we were ever to get a truly socialist president, they'd do well to give the DPA a careful read.) Even though it's been amended since then, it's not a source you would expect be a support for clean energy. You would be wrong, however.

The DPA's purpose is to ensure that the U.S. industrial base is supplying what's needed for the U.S. military and national security. President Trump, in fact, has delegated his powers under the DPA to various cabinet secretaries to ensure an adequate, reliable energy supply. That's entirely legitimate. Section 2(a)(5) states that "in order to ensure national defense preparedness, it is necessary and appropriate to assure the availability of domestic energy supplies for national defense needs." Trump and his subordinates have used the DPA to pursue his "anything but renewables" energy policy.

They should have kept reading. The very next subsection prioritizes use of clean energy. To the "maximum extent possible," it says, the energy system should include "reliance on renewable energy sources (including solar, geothermal, wind, and biomass sources), more efficient energy storage and distribution technologies, and energy conservation measures." Thus, the DPA's goals include expansion of clean energy sources to the greatest possible extent.

That language was added by Public Law 111-67 in 2009. Maybe Trump was using an older copy of the law and missed this?

Although President Biden did make some use of the DPA to support renewables, a resolute future President could do a lot more. In the meantime, Trump & Co. have some explaining to do about why they've ignored the clear policy directive of the statute in their quest to promote coal and oil while killing wind and solar. What are they trying to do, undermine national defense?