

# European scientists, officials warn against US climate plan

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In this Oct. 12, 2012 file photo, the windmill of windfarmer Jan Marrink is pictured in Nordhorn, Germany. Scientists and officials in Europe say the United States will be damaging its own interests if it rolls back the previous U.S. administration's efforts to curb climate change. President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday March 28, 2017 that will rescind, suspend or review Obama-era regulations, including those restricting greenhouse gas emissions at coal-fired power plants. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner,file)

Scientists, officials and environmental campaigners in Europe said Tuesday that the United States would be damaging its own interests if it rolls back the previous administration's efforts to curb climate change.

U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday that would rescind, suspend or review Obama-era regulations, including those restricting greenhouse gas emissions at [coal-fired power plants](#).

The regulations are a key part of America's contribution toward meeting global goals agreed at an international climate change summit in Paris two years ago.

Thomas Stocker, a [climate scientist](#) at the University of Bern, Switzerland, said Trump's plan to halt decommissioning of old and polluting coal-fired power stations would hurt the United States in the long run.

"If 'America First' means you want to lead, then you can't turn the clock back and rely on a century-old technology. You're missing the train," he said.

Stocker, a former co-chair of the U.N.'s scientific panel on climate change, noted that the Obama administration had been a driving force behind securing the Paris agreement in 2015.

"They are giving up that leadership position and I suspect that it will be taken up by other competitive countries," said Stocker, adding that China was well-placed to do so.

That view was echoed by Myles R. Allen, a climate scientist at the University of Oxford. "If China saw the U.S. as being short-sighted (...) they might even welcome this as a chance to take over climate

leadership," he said.

Allen, who co-authored a recent report for the U.S. National Academies of Sciences on measuring how much greenhouse gas emissions cost society, said Trump's plan could undermine a crucial mechanism by which the United States government wanted to mitigate global warming.



In this Nov. 30, 2011 file photo photovoltaic modules and a windmill of a wind farm are pictured at the village of Feldheim near Berlin, Germany. Scientists and officials in Europe say the United States will be damaging its own interests if it rolls back the previous U.S. administration's efforts to curb climate change. President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order Tuesday March 28, 2017 that will rescind, suspend or review Obama-era regulations, including those restricting greenhouse gas emissions at coal-fired power plants. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File)

Under U.S. regulations, authorities calculate the "social cost" of carbon

emissions in order to compare it to the cost of complying with regulations aimed at curbing [greenhouse gas emissions](#).

Drastically reducing the estimated social cost of carbon, as the Trump administration has indicated, would increase profits from burning oil, coal and gas in the United States.

Allen said that could send a signal to developing countries, such as Indonesia and Bangladesh, that fossil fuels are a viable source of energy in the coming decades.

"It will definitely chuck sand in the wheels of efforts to control [global climate change](#)," he said.

Germany, which plans to get most of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, said ambitious policies on [climate](#) change are in the United States' very own interests.

Germany's environment minister, Barbara Hendricks, said promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency is already creating large numbers of jobs around the world. "Whoever tries to change into reverse gear is only going to harm themselves when it comes to international competitiveness," she said.

Sweelin Heuss, the chief executive of Greenpeace Germany, said Trump's plan is "bad news, but it's not the end of the Paris agreement."

She urged German Chancellor Angela Merkel to speak out against the plan and emphasize Europe's commitment to combating [climate change](#).

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