

# California plots to fight 'AWOL' Trump on climate

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California stands poised to fill the US leadership vacuum in the battle against climate change, analysts say, as the state's governor Jerry Brown headed to China on Friday for a high-profile visit largely centered on environmental issues.

No sooner had President Donald Trump made his announcement on Thursday to pull out of the landmark Paris climate deal, that Brown fired off a statement decrying the decision and vowing to push ahead with ambitious climate policies.

"Donald Trump has absolutely chosen the wrong course. He's wrong on the facts... he's wrong on the science," said Brown before embarking on his weeklong China trip.

"California will resist this misguided and insane course of action," added the 79-year-old politician who has long championed environmental causes. "Trump is AWOL but California is on the field, ready for battle."

Experts said the Golden State, which has the sixth largest economy in the world, was well placed to pick up the mantle of leadership on the international stage given its aggressive policies on [climate issues](#).

## **'Beacon of sanity'**

"California has had a remarkable history already of leading the way on climate change, especially on climate change regulation, and it has the most ambitious economy-wide climate target in the United States," said Cara Horowitz, co-executive director of the Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at UCLA.

"So it has served as a beacon of sanity in some way for the United States and through the world on climate policy," she added.

The state—which has some of the worst air pollution in the country—in the last decade has dramatically slashed its climate-warming emissions.

It has pledged to cut [greenhouse gas emissions](#) to 1990 levels by 2020

and to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.



California Governor Jerry Brown is heading to China for a high-profile visit largely centered on environmental issues

California also has its own vehicle-emissions standards—exceeding federal standards—which have been adopted by more than a dozen other states.

In addition, it has led the way in promoting solar energy and electric cars and has the largest fleet of zero-emissions vehicles in the country.

Experts say such aggressive action, which has served as a blueprint for the rest of the country as well as other nations, including China, puts the western state in a prime position to continue leading the charge against [climate change](#).

"In some ways, California has been leading all along... and the governor, by sheer force of will and passion, will continue to accelerate that work," said Evan Gillespie, deputy director at the Sierra Club, where he oversees California's clean energy program.

"I think the administration in (Washington) DC has only emboldened both the public and elected officials in the state to step up and go bigger."

He added that California's long struggle with air quality and its reputation as the nation's green trailblazer meant there was no turning back for the state.

"There's a lot of momentum that is already built into our economy that is propelling us toward a cleaner future," he said. "I think the cost (of turning back) is too high not only from a climate perspective but from an economic perspective."

Experts also noted that despite all the theatrics surrounding Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement and efforts by his administration to undermine clean energy policies, individual [states](#) and cities still make their own decisions on a host of issues, including [climate](#), and California is a prime example.

"The world will now be looking at California, China, the European Union and others who are willing to take up the mantle of leadership," Horowitz noted.

"California is certainly at the forefront now of US [climate policy](#) and there is tremendous political will to continue to serve that role."

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