

Biden, Warren propose new plans to combat climate change

June 4 2019, by Janet Hook And Evan Halper



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Former Vice President Joe Biden on Tuesday unveiled a \$1.7-trillion, 10-year plan to combat climate change, the latest entry in a spate of proposals from Democratic White House hopefuls to address a global environmental issue that was rarely addressed in past presidential campaigns.

Biden's plan calls for cutting net emissions of [greenhouse gases](#) to zero

by 2050—a goal set out in the Green New Deal, the policy framework backed by many progressive Democrats. He calls for covering the cost of the plan, which includes \$400 billion for clean energy research, with revenues gained from repealing the [tax cuts](#) enacted by President Donald Trump in 2017.

Also entering the [climate change](#) debate Tuesday was Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who called for spending \$2 trillion over 10 years on research and development and other federal spending to speed the transition to a clean-energy economy.

Warren proposes paying for the plan with a previously unveiled tax on corporate profits over \$100 million. She embraces the 2050 zero-emissions goal, but says that projected global emissions would have to be cut in half by 2030 to meet that goal.

Biden's plan has been keenly anticipated in recent weeks as an indicator of how far he would move toward the goals set by the party's progressive wing. Last month, a Biden adviser told a reporter from Reuters that the former vice president would seek a "middle road" on [climate](#), setting off days of controversy.

That dispute provided a subtext of the speech by Sen. Bernie Sanders at last weekend's California Democratic Party convention in which he declared that "we have got to make it clear that when the future of the planet is at stake, there is no 'middle ground.'"

Biden's campaign said the report was not accurate, and Biden promised to give a major speech on the subject.

Biden's plan stops short of imposing a carbon tax or a "cap and trade" market system, which many leading climate experts consider crucial to keeping the Earth's temperature from warming more than 2 degrees

Celsius, the goal laid out in the Paris agreement on climate change.

Instead, the plan calls more broadly for an "enforcement mechanism" to be passed by Congress and enacted by 2025. It would be based on the principle that "polluters must bear the full cost of the carbon pollution they are emitting," according to the campaign.

"Our economy must achieve ambitious reductions in emissions economy-wide instead of having just a few sectors carry the burden of change," the Biden plan says. "The enforcement mechanism will achieve clear, legally-binding emissions reductions with environmental integrity."

The plan leaves open the possibility that the mechanism could be a carbon tax, which many economists see as the most efficient way to transform the economy from one based heavily on fossil fuels to one powered by renewable sources.

But others argue that many of the same results could be achieved by toughening up the existing regulatory system without the politically debilitating fight over imposing a broad new tax.

Climate change has dramatically risen in prominence as a political issue over the last two years as research has provided increasingly alarming reports of the impending economic and environmental consequences and as impacts of a warming climate have become more visible. The issue has emerged as an especially important issue among younger Democratic primary voters.

Biden's 22-page policy paper is described as a "plan for a clean-energy revolution." The paper gives a long list of proposals—some vague and some specific—that seem designed in part to make clear how his plans would be more than a repeat or restoration of policies of the Obama presidency.

The plan is not as ambitious as the one unveiled by Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, who called for eliminating net carbon emissions by 2035. He too did not call for a carbon tax.

The Biden plan is in its broad outlines more like that of former Rep. Beto O'Rourke, who also set a 2050 goal and called for \$1.5 trillion in [federal spending](#) over 10 years for his climate change plan.

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Citation: Biden, Warren propose new plans to combat climate change (2019, June 4) retrieved 21 March 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-06-biden-warren-combat-climate.html>

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