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2021 Brings A New Approach to Environmental Issues: The Biden Agenda

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With the 2020 election over and Joe Biden declared the winner, dramatic changes are expected in a number of significant national policies, perhaps most dramatically in the area of the environment. Immediately upon being sworn in as the 45th President, Donald Trump via Executive Order revoked virtually all Obama-era environmental policies, perhaps most significantly pulling the United States out of the Paris Climate Accord. Other major changes included rollbacks in restrictions on the oil and gas industry, loosening of air emissions standards for stack industries and automobiles, reducing protection of endangered wildlife species, expansion of energy exploration and logging in national parks, expanding development in wetlands, registration of previously banned pesticides, construction of a border wall through environmentally sensitive lands, and other sea changes impacting the environment and public health. President Biden has announced that he will immediately upon taking office begin the elimination of virtually all Trump-era orders on the environment. This see-saw is not uncommon when a new Administration takes office, but the pendulum swing this time is expected to be perhaps the most dramatic in modern history. The following is a summary of some of the most significant policy positions of the incoming Biden Administration.

- Immediately rejoin the Paris Climate Accord.
- Spend \$1.7 trillion on green energy technologies over the next ten years, with the ultimate goal of putting the U.S. on track to eliminate net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- Ban fracking and other drilling on public land.
- Target and seek to reduce dramatically airline emissions.
- Development of carbon-capture sequestration technologies.
- Re-evaluate the role of nuclear power generation.
- Improve the energy-efficiency of buildings.
- Accelerate the use of electric vehicles.
- Support local government transportation projects.
- Work with farmers and ranchers to develop better agricultural practices.
- Address urban sprawl.
- Develop a low-carbon manufacturing sector.
- Stop construction of and possibly tear down the border wall with Mexico.
- Initiate rulemaking and Congressional action on PFOS-containing chemical compounds.

Arguably the industry sector most likely to be affected is oil and gas, as the Biden Administration will re-establish the Obama-era policies of discouraging fossil fuel use and promoting and supporting renewable and sustainable energy resources. With a Democrat-controlled Congress, the Biden Administration is certainly poised to see through on the above initiatives. The key for affected businesses and industries will be to monitor closely these developments and participate in the legal process, whether through lobbying, rulemaking or other mechanisms to make sure their voices are heard at the federal and state levels. For more information, contact a member of [Baker Donelson's Environmental Group](#).