The US Struggle to Implement a Comprehensive National Climate Change Policy

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June 2nd, 2022
4 parts

● What might a comprehensive *mitigation* policy framework include?
● How far is the US from a comprehensive policy?
● Potential Explanations for the US struggle
  ○ Political polarization
  ○ Political science professor Matto Mildenberger’s “double representation” hypothesis in *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics* (2020)
  ○ Low salience of climate change?
  ○ State of technology
● Opportunities
1. What might a comprehensive policy cover?
Total U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Economic Sector in 2020

- Transportation: 27%
- Industry: 24%
- Electricity: 25%
- Commercial & Residential: 13%
- Agriculture: 11%

Source: EPA
EU Efforts to Reduce GHG Emissions

● Transportation
  ○ Emissions standards for new vehicles since 2009
  ○ Reducing GHG intensity of fuels
  ○ Ban on sale of new fossil-fuel cars starting in 2035

● Electricity
  ○ EU ETS covers power plants and industrial facilities
  ○ Energy efficiency standard
  ○ EU targets for renewables

● Industry
  ○ EU ETS covers major industrial sources

● Buildings
  ○ Proposal to set minimum energy performance standards for existing buildings (Dec. 2021)

● Agriculture
  ○ LULUCF regulation sets net removal targets for member states to promote carbon sinks
  ○ Changing food systems (Farm to Fork Strategy, part of European Green Deal)
2. How far is the US from a comprehensive policy?
The leading markets for the top 3 car manufacturers in the US in 2021

Toyota: 24% US, 20% China, 11% Europe

General Motors: 40% US, 50% China

Ford: 43% US, 17% China, 6% Canada, UK 6%

As of 2035, the EU is banning the sale of new gas-fired cars, and China will allow the sale of only new energy cars.

Statista
50% of GHG emissions from 10 states. 5/10 have binding GHG targets.

75% of GHG emissions from 22 states. 10/22 have binding GHG targets.
3. Explanations
Political polarization

- Intense concentration of opposition
THE NEW YORK TIMES/SIENA COLLEGE POLL

**National:** How concerned are you about your community being harmed by climate change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY CONCERNED</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT</th>
<th>NOT TOO CONCERNED</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biden voters</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trump voters</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [NY Times (2020)](https://www.nytimes.com)
Estimated % of adults who think global warming is happening (nat'l avg. 72%), 2021
Estimated % of adults who think global warming is mostly caused by human activities (nat’l avg. 57%), 2021
Estimated % of adults who support taxing fossil fuel companies while equally reducing other taxes (nat'l avg. 66%), 2021
Mildenberger’s “Double Representation” Hypothesis

- Climate policy is redistributive
- There is opposition across the political spectrum (double representation)
- There are many veto points in the US that opponents can use to block change
- Need to build coalitions of supporters over time

- Examples
  - Failed legislative efforts (due to Senate opposition): 1993, 2009, 2021
  - Judicial blocks on regulation: Clean Power Plan (2016), West Virginia v. EPA?

### State petitioners in West Virginia v. EPA (2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plaintiffs</th>
<th>Annual CO₂ Emissions Per Capita (in 2019, in metric tons)</th>
<th>Governor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>Ivey (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>Dunleavy (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Hutchinson (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>Kemp (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>Holcomb (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>Kelly (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>Edwards (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>Parson (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>Reeves (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>Gianforte (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>Ricketts (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>DeWine (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>Stitt (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>McMaster (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>Noem (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>Abbott (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>Cox (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>Justice (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>101.9</td>
<td>Gordon (R)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Emissions data source: [EIA](https://www.eia.gov). Table shows energy-related CO₂ emissions. Average GHG emissions per capita in the U.S. is 15.7._
Other Potential Explanations?

- Low salience?
- State of technology
  - Fracking
  - Increased availability of renewables
  - Ease of integrating renewables through demand response etc.
  - Electric vehicles
Quarterly light-duty vehicle sales by powertrain (2014–2021)

percentage of total

- Hybrid: 6.1% of 4Q2021 sales
- Electric: 3.4%
- Plug-in hybrid: 1.4%

Source: Graph by the U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on data from Wards Intelligence
4. Broadening Political Support
Some promising efforts

- Climate policy seeks to benefit disadvantaged communities
  - Justice40: vulnerable communities to receive at least 40% of benefits of climate and clean energy investments
  - Under New York State law, disadvantaged communities to receive at least 35% of benefits of spending on clean energy etc (goal is 40%)
  - In California, at least 25% of the funds raised from the state’s cap and trade program must go to projects that benefit and are within disadvantaged communities; plus “low-income households and communities” must receive at least 10%
The Diffusion of State and Local Government Policies

U.S. State Greenhouse Gas Emissions Targets

Executive Target
Statutory Target
Statutory & Executive Targets

C2ES
A big question …

What the Ukraine War Means for the Future of Climate Change

March 16, 2022

Will the momentum to decarbonize accelerate in the US, or will US production of fossil fuels increase?
Reactions? Questions?