

Don't fix what's not broken: keep energy policy with renewables that doesn't slash jobs



By U.S. Rep. Ralph Norman

The phrase “Green New Deal” is often a ploy by both sides of the political spectrum and the media to deliver sharp blows to the opposing party on their respective environmental platforms. Democrats in Congress accuse Republicans of not caring enough about the environment, while Republicans call out the plan for what it is – an overreaching boondoggle that would kill millions of American jobs and surrender our energy independence.

While more can certainly be done to clean up our great outdoors and reduce our CO2 emissions, environmental strides in the last four years prove Americans don't have to choose between environmental stewardship and heavy government red tape that would strangle our economy.

Under the Trump Administration criteria, air pollutant emissions fell more than 7%, 82 partial and full superfund sites have been removed, and our national recycling rate target was increased to 50%—up from roughly 32% under President Obama. These reforms, and more, were all implemented while our economy grew at a rate of 285%. Now, instead of building on these victories, the Biden Administration is spending their time and trillions of taxpayer dollars undoing progress and imposing more regulations at the cost of South Carolina businesses. Reinstating the Obama-era Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule, for example, will devastate family-run farms across South Carolina. A blatant power grab, this rule drastically exceeds the authority granted to the EPA by Congress over navigable waters in the Clean Water Act. As a businessman by trade, I have seen the negative effects of onerous federal regulations, like WOTUS, firsthand.

Further, Biden's energy plan for net-zero emissions by 2050 will be catastrophic for our way of life – from

our cars, to our refrigerators and homes, to our grocery and electric bills, but most importantly, your pocketbooks. As the Co-chair of the Congressional Solar Caucus, I recognize the benefits of renewable energy. Solar energy has created thousands of jobs in South Carolina and has the capability to help over 5,500 families and businesses save on their monthly energy bills. Additionally,

winners and losers.

As the Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Environment, cutting red tape while protecting safety for all Americans will be my top priority. The federal government's role in protecting our environment should be to promote private and public sector partnerships, ensure that policy decisions are based on data,

innovation in the name of overzealous and nebulous environmental protections is the moment we relinquish our role as drivers of the global economy. By laying down an environmental foundation that builds upon – instead of repeals – the last Administration's policies and sets a more realistic and inclusive emissions goal, it will be much more likely that the garden that is America will yield a beautiful and



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nuclear power is responsible for generating nearly 56% of the entire state's electricity according to the Department of Energy Office of Nuclear Energy. However, we must continue promoting jobs in the solar, wind, and nuclear sectors as a complement, not necessarily a substitute, to the oil and gas industry.

If we quit oil and gas cold turkey, we will inevitably have to rely on foreign countries that are hostile to American interests and aren't held to the same stringent environmental regulations. We need to promote innovation in the energy sector. Not stifle it by picking

not ideology, and to implement energy and environmental initiatives that are affordable, clean, and demonstrate free market viability.

Many who know me know that outside from being a Congressman, I find tremendous tranquility when tending to my home garden. I've learned that cultivating a truly great soil can take years. It doesn't happen all at once, and if I let someone else do the planting or stop giving them water and sunlight, I wouldn't have the best tomatoes in the state of South Carolina.

The moment we handcuff American

plentiful crop. Like my tomatoes with no water and sunlight, the American economy will not grow under President Biden's regulatory scheme.

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U.S. Representative Ralph Norman, South Carolina Republican, serves as the Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Environment, the Co-chair of the Congressional Solar Caucus, and on the House Homeland Security Committee. He began representing the 5th Congressional District, of which he is a lifelong resident, in 2017.