

Biden’s updated climate agenda has the markings of a **Green New Deal**

The campaign’s recent additions to its climate plan are closely aligned with the targets set in Data For Progress’s Green New Deal roadmap

In September 2018, Data For Progress released a report entitled *A Green New Deal: A Progressive Vision for Environmental Sustainability and Economic Stability*, designed to fill in the details of the progressive climate agenda. The report translates the emerging consensus on the Left — that the climate, jobs, and justice crises are inextricably intertwined — into concrete targets informed by what science and technology said were necessary and possible. Joe Biden’s evolving presidential climate plan has come to embrace and echo that consensus and converge with many of the targets we laid out two years ago. In other words, it is a Green New Deal in all but name.

Here’s a snapshot of alignment between targets in our Greenprint and Biden’s plan:

DFP’s Numerical Targets	Selections from Joe Biden’s 2020 Climate Plan ^{1,2,3}	Alignment
Net-zero emissions economy by 2050	“At this moment of profound crisis, we have the opportunity to build a more resilient, sustainable economy – one that will put the United States on an irreversible path to achieve net-zero emissions, economy-wide, by no later than 2050. ”	Complete
Net-zero energy emissions by 2050	“At this moment of profound crisis, we have the opportunity to build a more resilient, sustainable economy – one that will put the United States on an irreversible path to achieve net-zero emissions, economy-wide, by no later than 2050. ”	Complete ; covered by the economy-wide target
100% clean and renewable electricity by 2035	“Move ambitiously to generate clean, American-made electricity to achieve a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035. ”	Complete

DFP's Numerical Targets	Selections from Joe Biden's 2020 Climate Plan ^{1,2,3}	Alignment
100% fossil-free transportation by 2050	<p>“...put the United States on an irreversible path to achieve net-zero emissions, economy-wide, by no later than 2050.”</p> <p>“Set a goal that all new American-built buses be zero-emissions by 2030”</p> <p>“Biden will also transform the energy sources that power the transportation sector, making it easier for mobility to be powered by electricity and clean fuels... The resulting reduction in air pollution will save thousands of lives and millions in medical costs burdening families.”</p> <p>“Biden...will pursue measures to incentivize the creation of new, sustainable fuels for aircraft, as well as other changes to aircraft technology and standards, and air traffic management.”</p> <p>“Biden will make sure that America has the cleanest, safest, and fastest rail system in the world — for both passengers and freight. His rail revolution will reduce pollution, connect workers to good union jobs, slash commute times, and spur investment in communities... Biden will work with Amtrak and private freight rail companies to further electrify the rail system, reducing diesel fuel emissions.”</p>	Complete; covered by economy-wide target and detail on ambitious measures deployed across modes of transit
Expand sustainable farming & soil practices to 70% of agricultural land by 2050	<p>“Partnering with farmers and ranchers so that better agriculture practices and deployment of digesters generate new sources of revenues.”</p> <p>“Partnering with farmers to make American agriculture first in the world to achieve net-zero emissions, giving farmers new sources of income in the process. Many farmers are some of the best stewards of our land, air, and water. The government needs to partner with them to accelerate progress toward net-zero emissions.” (Rural Plan)</p>	Complete; likely to exceed Data For Progress target
Create 10 million new jobs over 10 years	<p>“If executed strategically, our response to climate change can create more than 10 million well-paying jobs in the United States that will grow a stronger, more inclusive middle class enjoyed by communities across the country, not just in cities along the coasts.”</p>	Complete
Cut methane leakage by 50% by 2025	<p>“Requiring aggressive methane pollution limits for new and existing oil and gas operations.”</p>	Complete; assuming Biden is at least reinstating Obama-era methane rules, he likely hits our target.

DFP's Numerical Targets	Selections from Joe Biden's 2020 Climate Plan ^{1,2,3}	Alignment
Cleanup Brownfields and All Hazardous Sites	"Cleaning up and redeveloping abandoned and underused Brownfield properties, old power plants and industrial facilities, landfills, abandoned mines, and other idle community assets that will be transformed into new economic hubs for communities all across America"	Complete
100% net-zero building energy standards by 2030	<p>"Paired with legislation to set a new net-zero emissions standard for all new commercial buildings by 2030, these steps ... will accelerate progress to Joe Biden's target of cutting the carbon footprint of our national building stock in half by 2035."</p> <p>"He will direct [HUD] to make housing for low-income communities more efficient. He will direct [DOE] to redouble efforts to accelerate new efficiency standards for household appliances and equipment. And, he will repair and accelerate the building code process and create a new funding mechanism for states and cities to adopt strict building codes and train builders and inspectors."</p>	Partial; Biden matches our standard for commercial, but not residential, buildings. However, his goal to cut the carbon footprint of the national building stock in half by 2035 is ambitious and would require rapid decarbonization of residential buildings.
100% zero-emission passenger vehicle sales by 2030	<p>"Using the Federal government procurement system – which spends \$500 billion every year – to drive towards 100% clean energy and zero-emissions vehicles."</p> <p>"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation – the fastest growing source of U.S. climate pollution – by preserving and implementing the existing Clean Air Act, and developing rigorous new fuel economy standards aimed at ensuring 100% of new sales for light- and medium-duty vehicles will be electrified and annual improvements for heavy duty vehicles."</p>	Partial; Biden's plan does not include the target date of 2030, but has clear intent and specific measures to reach 100% zero-emissions vehicles.
Reforest 40 million acres of public and private land by 2035	"Protecting America's natural treasures by...establishing targeted programs to enhance reforestation and develop renewables on federal lands and waters."	Partial; Biden has no specific target, but similar intent.
Restore 5 million acres of wetlands by 2040	"Mobilizing the next generation of conservation and resilience workers through a Civilian Climate Corps... These workers will use sound, science-based techniques to... restore wetlands to protect clean water supplies and leverage greater flood protection... protect and restore coastal ecosystems, such as wetlands... enhance the carbon intake of natural and working lands, wetlands, reefs, and underwater mangrove and kelp forests."	Partial; Biden has no specific target, but similar intent.

DFP's Numerical Targets	Selections from Joe Biden's 2020 Climate Plan ^{1,2,3}	Alignment
Protect 2 million new miles of waterways	"...protecting our watersheds and clean water infrastructure from man-made and natural disasters by conserving and restoring wetlands and developing green infrastructure and natural solutions."	Partial; Biden has no specific target, but similar intent.
Capture 50% of wasted methane by 2040	"He will create new opportunities to support deployment of methane digesters to capture potent climate emissions and generate electricity."	Partial; Biden has no specific target, but similar intent.
Zero Waste by 2040	N/A	None; Biden's plan does not address economy-wide waste.

Tracking the evolution of the Biden climate plan

Earlier this year, Data For Progress released a [Green New Deal scorecard](#) to identify which candidates have released plans to address Data For Progress's 48 elements of a Green New Deal. We believe reasonable people can disagree on the appropriate policy design or theory of political change, so we do not pass a value judgment on the merits of candidates' approaches, just their thoroughness in meeting the mantle of a GND.

In our first scorecard in summer 2019, Joe Biden scored 29/48, good enough for a *Thorough* score. With the release of his Build Back Better platform, Biden's [updated scorecard](#) reflects a plan that is *Very Thorough*, scoring 39.5/48. In particular, the Biden plan improved in its focus on building sustainable and resilient communities, restoring working lands, providing high-quality jobs, and environmental justice. It also dramatically increased the speed and scale of federal investment and clean energy deployment.

The Green New Deal demands that we tackle the climate crisis through processes and programs that dismantle our history of environmental racism and the disproportionate threat that fossil fuel use poses to low-income, elderly, and minority communities. Back in January, when we released a frontrunner comparison, we created a sub-rubric to dig deeper into Democratic candidates' approach to **environmental justice (EJ)** in their climate plans. Originally, Biden's scored a 6 out of 14 on that rubric; he now clocks in at a more respectable 9 out of 14, getting additional credit for Clean Water Infrastructure, Toxic Waste Cleanup, EJ/Equity Principles, Green Affordable Housing, and Climate & Public Health.

	Summer 2019	Summer 2020
Green New Deal Rubric	29/48 THOROUGH	39.5/48 VERY THOROUGH
Environmental Justice Sub-Rubric	6/14 INCOMPLETE	9/14 THOROUGH