

# Climate Research under Trump 2.0

The Future of NOAA, USAID, EPA and  
the Leadership Shift in Global Climate Research

February 2025



# Agenda

---

## 1. Prospects for U.S. Federal Agencies and Climate Research 3

---

1. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
2. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
3. United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
4. Trump and Climate Change Research

## Contact

**Seungmin Ryu** Researcher  
Department of Climate Diplomacy, U.S. Bureau  
seungmin@yonsei.ac.kr  
official.gbsi@outlook.com

# 1. Funding Cuts in NOAA

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

### ■ NOAA focuses on monitoring and protecting the environment, particularly in relation to oceans, atmosphere, and weather.

- Includes the National Hurricane Center, National Weather Service, and oceanic research. Provides critical weather forecasts, climate data, and fisheries management.

### ■ NOAA has been heavily involved in climate change research and initiatives.

- NOAA operates the Global Monitoring Laboratory (GML) to track greenhouse gas levels at sites worldwide.
- The Sea Level Rise Viewer, Blue Carbon Initiative, Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (GFDL), Antarctic Ecosystem Research Division (AERD) and much more initiative are aimed at climate change research.

### ■ Concerns Over Trump Administration Changes

- Potential staff and funding cuts affecting NOAA's climate research and operations.
- Executive orders may restrict climate-related terms (e.g., "climate change," "pollution," "natural resources") in grants and programs.
- Project 2025, backed by conservative groups, calls for breaking up NOAA, slashing its budget, and privatizing weather forecasting.
- Trump's first administration explored privatizing NOAA's weather forecasting services and moving the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Critics argue NOAA's dismantling would prioritize political agendas over scientific integrity and public safety.

### ■ NOAA's Climate Reporting Under Trump Administration

- January 2025 was the hottest January on record, continuing a decade-long trend of extreme heat. However, NOAA scientists refused to attribute it to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Instead of discussing climate change, NOAA officials pointed to reductions in air pollution and cloud cover as potential causes of warming.
- When directly asked if human-caused climate change played a role in rising temperatures, NOAA officials abruptly ended the press briefing.
- The Trump administration has removed references to "climate change" from thousands of government websites and ordered reviews of climate-related grants.

## 2. Executive Order on EPA

### Environmental Protection Agency

■ **EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment by enforcing environmental laws, regulating pollution, and conducting scientific research.**

■ **Executive Order Targeting EPA (Jan. 20, 2025)**

- Trump's "Unleashing American Energy" order directs the EPA to review the 2009 endangerment finding, which legally classifies greenhouse gases as pollutants.
- Rescinding the endangerment finding would require overturning a strong scientific record proving climate change's harmful effects.

■ **Legal and Policy Challenges**

- Alternative approach: Set an emissions threshold for sectors subject to regulation, limiting oversight to only power plants, while exempting transportation, oil, and gas industries.
- Another strategy: Delay or weaken existing climate regulations instead of outright eliminating them.

■ **EPA Leadership & Supreme Court Considerations**

- Incoming EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin suggests EPA may not be obligated to regulate greenhouse gases, citing past Supreme Court dissents.
- Court composition has changed since *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007), potentially opening legal challenges.
- Supreme Court's *West Virginia v. EPA* decision already limited EPA's authority to regulate emissions broadly.

■ **Potential Business & Economic Impacts**

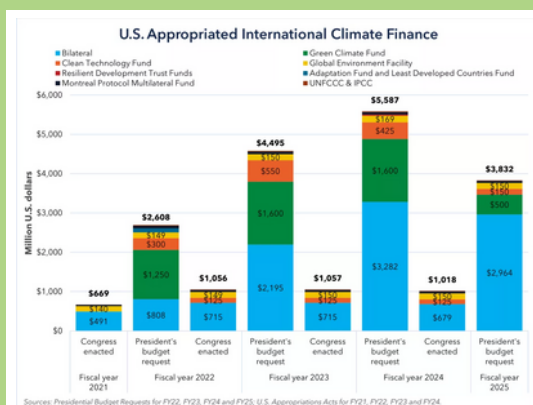
- Regulatory uncertainty may harm U.S. businesses, such as the auto industry competing with Chinese EV makers.
- Power sector concerns: Balancing fossil fuel deregulation while maintaining grid resilience amid rising climate risks.
- EPA's deadline is Feb. 19, 2025, to recommend changes to the endangerment finding.
- The administration is likely to weaken climate standards or attempt to block EPA's regulatory authority permanently.
- Expect legal battles from states, industries, and environmental groups over any rollback of climate regulations.

# 3. Shutdown of USAID

## U.S. Agency for International Development

- **USAID plays a major role in global climate action by funding programs that help developing countries adapt to climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and transition to clean energy.**
- **Legal Challenges to Foreign Aid Freeze**
  - Trump ordered a 90-day freeze on foreign aid to align projects with the “America First” policy.
  - A federal judge ruled on Feb. 13 that funding must be restored, but the administration has not complied.
  - Judge Amir Ali ordered the administration to cease its blanket suspension but stopped short of holding officials in contempt.
- **Trump Administration Cuts USAID Climate & Clean Energy Programs**
  - At least 10 climate and clean energy programs shut down as part of broader efforts to dismantle USAID.
  - Affected programs include: \$85 million initiative to expand affordable clean energy access in Southern Africa, \$18.7 million Nepal energy program supporting power sector efficiency and electric vehicle adoption, \$12 million program helping electric utilities transition to solar and clean energy auctions.
- **State Department Response**
  - Claims each program is under review to ensure it serves U.S. national interests.
  - Funding cuts targeted awards with terms like “energy” and “consulting”, suggesting ideological influence on terminations.

### USAID and Climate Finance: A Not-so-positive Appropriation



- **Drastic decline in U.S. climate finance commitments has already been consistent before Trump 2.0.**
  - Cuts in USAID funding further limit developing countries' access to clean energy and climate resilience programs.

# Trump and Climate Change Research

Up-to-date news on IPCC and beyond

## ■ Trump Administration Blocks U.S. Scientists from IPCC Climate Report

- The administration banned U.S. government scientists from contributing to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report set for release in 2029.
- The IPCC is the world's leading climate science authority, and its reports shape global climate policy and action.
- The U.S. has been a key contributor to past IPCC reports, providing essential climate data and expertise.
- NASA's top climate scientist, Kate Calvin, was supposed to co-chair an IPCC planning meeting in China but was blocked from attending.

## ■ Climate Research Defunded and Censored

- Federal research grants are being withdrawn if they mention "climate change" or other politically sensitive terms.
- A U.S. scientist had to rename their climate adaptation grant to keep funding from the Department of Transportation.
- National Science Foundation (NSF) is reviewing projects for banned terms like "women," "equality," and "biased," while grants supporting climate research are being frozen.
- University of Helsinki lost a Fulbright grant due to new restrictions on terms like "climate change," "equitable society," and "women in society."

## ■ Purging Climate References from Education & Public Programs

- National Disaster Preparedness Training Center at the University of Hawaii has been ordered to delete "climate change" from its course materials.
- Trump's executive orders have removed climate-related language from government websites and blocked funding for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.

# References

- Blanchard, J. (2025, February 20). Trump's climate policy rollback: A shock and awe campaign. Lawyers for Good Government.
- Bittle, J. (2025, February 8). Gutting USAID will have a monumental effect on combating climate change. WIRED. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com>
- Dinneen, J. (2025, February 20). NOAA scientists refuse to link warming weather to climate change. New Scientist. Retrieved from <https://www.newscientist.com>
- Lustgarten, A. (2025, February 21). Trump order shifts the financial burden of climate change onto individuals. ProPublica. Retrieved from <https://www.propublica.org>
- Milman, O. (2025, February 21). Outcry as Trump withdraws support for research that mentions 'climate'. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com>
- Nilsen, E., & Paddison, L. (2025, February 21). Trump bars federal scientists from working on pivotal global climate report. CNN. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com>
- Storrow, B., & Chemnick, J. (2025, February 20). How Trump gutted climate policy in 30 days. E&E News by Politico. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com>
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). (2024). Climate strategy: Supporting global adaptation and mitigation efforts. Washington, DC: USAID.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2025). Review of greenhouse gas regulations under the Trump administration. Washington, DC: EPA.
- U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). (2025). January 2025 global climate report. Washington, DC: NOAA.