



## This Week's Climate Policy Update | September 9-13, 2024

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After a recent permitting reform bill was passed out of a Senate Committee, House Republicans took steps to draft their own permitting reform legislation. Rep. Westerman (R-AR) held a hearing to discuss his draft bill, which most notably places limitations on the environmental permitting process for energy projects. This comes as both parties position energy policy as a key election issue, with Vice President Harris recognizing a role for oil and gas production during the Presidential debate in response to Republican criticism of her climate policies. Meanwhile, former President Trump vowed to pull back unspent dollars approved for greenhouse gas reduction and energy transition projects under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The IRA has already spurred significant renewable energy investment, particularly in rural electric co-ops using the funds to replace coal generation with clean energy and battery storage.

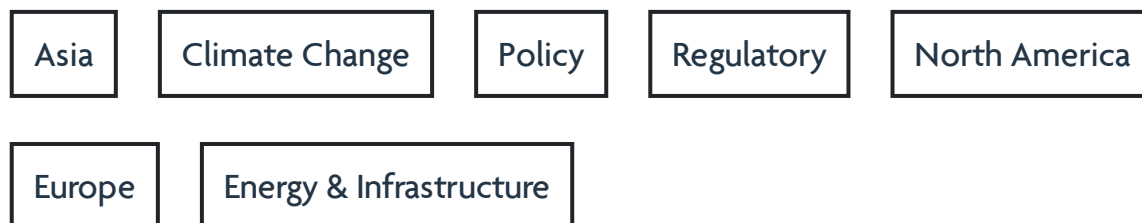
Challenges to environmental permitting, the IRA and federal authority more broadly are progressing through the courts. The Supreme Court has been asked on several occasions to limit federal reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act, increase the ability of presidents to fire heads of independent agencies like the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and restrict how Congress may grant authority to agencies through the nondelegation doctrine. In addition to limiting federal authority, these changes could jeopardize important safeguards for environmental justice and protection. Simultaneously, California and the Biden-Harris administration have petitioned the Supreme Court to uphold its ability to waive federal preemption for California to establish stricter vehicle emissions standards under the Clean Air Act, which are followed by 17 other states.

Governors of Nevada and Arizona are urging California Gov. Gavin Newsom to reconsider fuel storage requirements on oil refiners, fearing that the proposal could raise gas prices in their states. California's environmental regulatory efforts continue with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approval of a rule requiring Los Angeles-area warehouses to mitigate truck-related emissions, setting a potential precedent for rail yards and ports. In New York, Gov. Kathy Hochul is exploring nuclear power to meet the state's renewable energy goals amid rising demand, while Washington State Senator Joe Nguyen defends the state's cap-and-invest climate program against efforts to repeal it alongside criticisms of increased gas prices. Meanwhile, Texas has surpassed California in large-scale solar capacity, highlighting the state's role as a major hub for renewable energy due to favorable climate and regulatory conditions. These events collectively underscore the tension between state-level climate leadership, economic concerns and federal regulatory frameworks in shaping the future of U.S. energy policy.

Abroad, bilateral negotiations have advanced between the U.S. and China bringing attention to methane and non-CO2 gases ahead of COP 29. Meanwhile, China recently expressed its openness to collaborating with Norway on green energy, shipping, agriculture and electric vehicles, while the former president of the European Central Bank called for the empowerment of Brussels and the unification of a European energy strategy.

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