



Energy & Infrastructure Program

Energy Project

The Executive Branch and National Energy Policy: Time for Renewal

Why A New Approach Is Needed

ENERGY PLANS VARY FROM ADMINISTRATION TO ADMINISTRATION WITH MIXED RESULTS.

Every U.S. president since Richard Nixon has produced a national-level energy plan or strategy, though plans have varied considerably in their vision, emphasis, form, durability and degree of implementation. U.S. federal policy has been instrumental in contributing to sustained gains in energy productivity and in developing new technologies. However, we still face significant energy challenges that have large implications for our future prosperity and security. These challenges include navigating a new set of geopolitical tensions driven by growing global competition for energy resources, addressing a range of environmental issues and mobilizing the resources for energy R&D at a time of unprecedented fiscal pressure on states and the federal government alike.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IS CURRENTLY NOT WELL-EQUIPPED TO DEVELOP, COORDINATE AND IMPLEMENT NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY.

Energy-related responsibilities fall under at least 20 distinct federal agencies and departments. As a result, no single entity is in a position to implement, coordinate and assess all of the federal government's energy-related activities and initiatives. This has increased the potential for failure in coordination, incompatible agendas, duplication and inconsistency across the federal complex.





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Recommendations

To create more resilient, coordinated policy that can address short-term needs as well as longer-term goals, we recommend the Executive Branch develop a high-level *National Energy Strategy*, through a new National Energy Security Council, and a companion *Quadrennial Energy Review*.

National Energy Strategy Council (NESC). The NESC should:

- Develop a National Energy Strategy (NES), which should be a brief, high-level document outlining the administration's broad energy goals, budget priorities, and legislative agenda;
- Lead cross-agency coordination for all major energy-related decisions, including those that address short-term energy crises, and for resolving interagency disputes; and
- Produce a publicly available annual report to the nation assessing progress toward meeting short- and long-term goals and objectives laid out in the NES.

Quadrennial Energy Review (QER). The QER should focus on specific steps to implement the NES, such as:

- Developing a multiyear roadmap of measurable energy objectives and metrics;
- Conducting a review of existing federal energy policies and programs, as well as federal agencies' existing roles and responsibilities;
- Assessing the quality and frequency of federal energy and environmental data collection efforts and of federal RD&D programs, as well as options for improvement of management and effectiveness; and
- Proposing executive actions, new legislation needed to meet the goals of the NES, as well as provide recommendations for federal energy budgets.

The Bottom Line

- Creating a more inclusive, balanced, resilient and enduring energy policy path requires a new structure and approach that builds on White House and Cabinet leadership and the expertise of nearly 20 federal agencies.
- Pairing the strategy with a well-coordinated implementation plan that can respond to often unpredictable economic, political, and technological conditions and regularly tracking and reporting progress is key to meeting strategic energy goals.

