

7 Reasons Trump is Right to Scrap the Paris Climate Deal

Reuters [reports](#) that President Donald Trump will withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement. And writers are apoplectic.

Todd Stern at The Atlantic [says](#) such a move would be “indefensible.” [At Slate](#), David McKean and David Wade said pulling out would be a huge mistake “because our planet is currently on a collision course with Mother Nature.” At the Washington Post, Greg Sargent [complains](#) that Trump’s rationale is “based on lies.”

You can read for yourself the claims of these authors, but here are a few facts you are unlikely to find.

1. The Senate never signed the agreement

This is kind of a big deal in a democratic republic. At least America’s Founders thought so.

The U.S. Constitution states that the president “shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur” (Article II, section 2).

When the deal was completed in 2015, President Obama never sent it to the Senate to be ratified. (“Visionary thinkers like Obama cannot be bound by normal constitutional strictures,” Charles Krauthammer [dryly observed](#) at the time.)

2. Emission reduction targets are not binding

Then Secretary of State John Kerry made this fact quite plain. Reporting is mandatory, but actual reductions in fossil fuel emissions are not. Why? Because most nations are not interested in actually reducing their carbon footprints.

“[If] there had been a penalty, we wouldn’t have been able to get an agreement,” Kerry bluntly [said](#). “So we did the best we could...”

This is precisely why climate activists, such as former NASA scientist James Hansen, [called the agreement](#) “a fraud”: “It’s just bullshit for them to say: ‘We’ll have a 2C warming target and then try to do a little better every five years.’”

3. It Costs Roughly \$100 billion (Annually)

You’ll not find this fact in many of the stories you read. But as the Wall Street Journal [reported](#) at the time, “developed countries have to help provide at least \$100 billion annually from a variety of sources after 2020 to help developing countries cut their emissions.” (As a point of reference, Trump’s wall was projected to cost about \$33 billion less than this.)

Anyone have a guess who will be picking up the bulk of the check on this one?

4. The (non-binding) targets are totally arbitrary

The emission targets are not just non-binding; they are self-made. As John Cassidy of the New Yorker [gloomily pointed out](#) at the time, nations can select their own emission targets.

“Not only is the accord voluntary but countries got to set their own targets for carbon emissions. As I noted a couple of weeks ago, the Paris talks were a bit [like a potluck dinner](#), where guests bring what they can.”

5. The agreement relies on self-reporting

The teeth of the agreement comes in mandatory reporting. But what if you can't trust it?

It was only a few years ago, after all, that China was caught ~~fudging~~ [underreporting](#) its coal burning by a whopping 14 percent.

While there is talk of one day creating an independent body to monitor and verify pollution levels, no such body is in place, and the [New York Times reports](#) that it just might be staying that way, since “several countries, including China and India, are expected to push for a more lenient system that is reliant on self-reporting.”

6. The U.S. will almost certainly not meet its target—and that could have an adverse impact

Everyone knows the U.S. will not meet the ambitious carbon reduction targets laid out by the Obama administration. As the Washington Post [reports](#), “it's clear that the Trump administration will fail to meet the climate goals that the Obama administration established under the agreement – namely, a pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent below their 2005 levels by the year 2025.”

This could be problematic, assuming some nations actually do take the targets seriously.

“A great power that willfully misses its target could provide political cover for other laggards and weaken the soft power of process,” [said](#) Luke Kemp, a climate and environmental policy expert at Australian National University

And it’s not just the U.S. The *New York Times* reported that “Russia put forth a plan that is essentially business as usual, requiring no new domestic policies.”

7. The jury on carbon dioxide is still out

Like most of the people reading this article, I don’t have a degree in climate science. But there are people unafraid to point out an obvious fact: Our climate models over the last decade [were way off](#).

The question is: Why?

Believe it or not, there is a community of scientists who contend that the dangers of CO₂ emissions have been grossly exaggerated. In fact, some research suggests that carbon dioxide in the atmosphere actually helps the environment more than it hurts it.

Among these scholars is Indur Goklany, a U.S. delegate to the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and an IPCC reviewer, who in 2015 published a paper titled “[Carbon Dioxide: The Good News](#)”.

In his paper, Goklany concludes that many climate impact assessments suffer from three primary flaws.

“Firstly, they rely on climate models that have failed the reality test. Secondly, they do not fully account for the benefits of carbon dioxide. Thirdly, they implicitly assume that the world of 2100 will not be much different from that of the present – except that we will be emitting more greenhouse gases and the climate will be much warmer.”

None of this says the move away from an international climate agreement must be permanent. Proactive measures may be required as we glean new evidence.

But the Paris deal was poorly devised and passed without proper constitutional consent. It's better left behind. In the meantime, perhaps we'll learn more about the alleged dangers of climate change.