

# [***Conservatives Should Own the Climate Issue | Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKR-GSX1-DY68-117S-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Liberals have come to own environmental issues. That is a problem in a two-party system, but it is also an opportunity for Republicans.

**Body**

I'll get right to the point: conservatives, if you want to "own the libs," then own the issue that they have dominated for too long. Take the lead on good climate policy and show how free market solutions are superior to progressives' proposals.

In ***politics***, there are parties that come to "own" certain issues. For decades, conservatives owned foreign policy. The Right (and to be fair, a number of liberals agreed) set good policies in place that defeated the Soviet Union without the need to fight a hot war.

For their part, liberals have come to own environmental issues. That is a problem in a two-party system, but it is also an opportunity for [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). I'll say it again: if you want to "own the libs," then own the issue that they have dominated for too long. Take the lead on good climate policy and show how your solutions are superior to theirs.

To be sure, we can and should continue to understand climate science better, and there's much we still need to learn. But one thing we already know without a doubt is that energy and innovation are good for people and the planet.

The best solutions, and the ones conservatives can and should lead on, are based on [*maximizing economic freedom across the economy*](https://www.c3solutions.org/policy-paper/free-economies-are-clean-economies-2023/introduction/).

A system rooted in economic freedom generates [*more wealth for individuals and societies*](https://www.c3solutions.org/policy-paper/free-economies-are-clean-economies-2023/chapter-1/), allowing them to invest more in protecting the environment. In recent years the U.S. has been backing away from its support for economic freedom, but we can change all that as part of making our country greater "again."

If economic freedom is [*the best solution*](https://www.c3solutions.org/policy-paper/free-economies-are-clean-economies-2023/chapter-2/) to environmental problems, why not own the issue?

The best climate policy empowers people to choose, companies to innovate, and markets to move based on supply and demand rather than government fiat. The best climate policy [*respects consumer choice*](https://www.c3solutions.org/policy-paper/free-economies-are-clean-economies-2023/conclusion/), competition, private property rights, and the rule of law. The best climate policy lowers barriers to adopting natural, practical solutions that are good for the climate, and especially for our food, water, and national security. The best climate policy recognizes the practical reality that every form of energy has tradeoffs and that there's no single perfect solution. The best climate policy ensures that as we transition to a cleaner energy future, we must ensure that energy is not only cleaner, but also abundant, reliable, and affordable, while also strengthening our national security.

The worst climate policy tries (but always fails) to pick winners and losers and ends up with people and the planet being the biggest losers in the end.

The Right can own the issue of climate change, and thus "own the libs," by lowering taxes, lowering regulatory barriers, investing in research, fixing government failures, and accelerating American energy innovation across the board. The immediate expensing for research and development and equipment upgrades included in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act brought [*several environmental benefits*](https://c3newsmag.com/three-ways-immediate-expensing-helps-the-environment/) and spurred investment and innovation in the United States. Modernizing permitting, which President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) prioritized while in office, would increase energy supplies and bring projects online faster, which helps everything from advanced nuclear energy to critical mineral mines. A return to these policies would be great for America, great for the planet, and great for people around the world.

America is already dominating in energy and innovation across many fronts. We are leading the world in energy innovation in everything from natural gas fracking and liquefied natural gas exports ([*which Biden sadly "paused"*](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/long-term-us-ban-new-lng-export-projects-would-have-significant-impact-shell-2024-02-14/)) to solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, and new nuclear and [*AI for nuclear*](https://www.axios.com/2024/02/27/artificial-intelligence-nuclear-smr). We are the world's leading innovators in construction and concrete, [*carbon capture and use*](https://carboncredits.com/announced-ccus-carbon-capture-capacity-grows-50-in-bnef-2023-market-outlook/) for products and regenerative farming, and even using [*methane for fertilizer*](https://www.waste360.com/organic-waste/windfall-bio-raises-9-million-seed-funding-to-launch-first-ever-methane-to-organic-fertilizer-solution). The list goes on and on and on. The U.S. energy portfolio is the world's greatest and most varied. It is one area where American greatness has never wavered.

We can all make, and keep, America great by supporting economic freedom and enjoying the environmental improvements it delivers. The best climate policies are good for people *and* the planet.

Because we have the best policies, conservatives have more than earned the right to own the issue. We just need to embrace it.

*Drew Bond is the President and CEO of the Conservative Coalition for Climate Solutions (C3 Solutions).*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2365322/emission-smoke-stack.jpg)

**Graphic**

Emission from smoke stack

Gary Hershorn/Getty Images

NEWARK, NJ - JANUARY 21: An emission comes out of a smoke stack at the Essex County Resource Recovery Waste-to-Energy Facility as the sun rises on January 21, 2024, in Newark, New Jersey.

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