

THE
GREEN
NEW DEAL
EXPLAINED

“It is the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal (A) to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers; (B) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States;”

- E. Markey, A. Ocasio-Cortez



What exactly is the Green New Deal?

The Green New Deal is a comprehensive plan put forth by senator Edward Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Though the resolution itself was submitted to the first session of the 116th congress as a bill, it is quite readable for the layman and proposes itself to be more of a broad resolution that outlines the necessary steps that the United States government needs to take to ensure a fast transformation to net-zero carbon emissions while protecting workers. The resolution focuses on three main points: Decarbonization, job creation, and a just transition for workers. Along with these three points, there is some necessary information to learn about the Green New Deal: that it is efficient, popular, and favors workers.

POLL Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation Poll

Do Americans support the Green New Deal? Most don't know enough to have an opinion.

Q: There is a proposal called the Green New Deal which has been put forward to address climate change. From what you've heard or read, do you support or oppose the Green New Deal, or haven't you heard enough to have an opinion?



Source: July 9-Aug. 5, 2019 Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation poll of 2,293 U.S. adults with an error margin of +/- 3 percentage points

EMILY GUSKIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

How popular is the Green New Deal?

Note that the Green New Deal is not some unpopular piece of legislation that members of congress are trying to sneak through. The Green New Deal is extremely popular amongst Americans, and with good reason. Looking at a poll done by Data for Progress, climate change legislation has broad popularity amongst US voters with over 59% supporting climate policies and only 28% opposed. In addition there is not too much of a difference amongst demographics with a similar level in support across Americans of all ages.

In addition, the Green New Deal has a countless level of endorsements from plenty of congressmen and women, famous public figures, and a multitude of other labor organizations supporting the legislation. In fact, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the second-largest union in the United States, just recently endorsed the Green New Deal. Furthermore, climate change legislation is popular amongst both Democrats and Republicans, but in general most people say they simply haven't heard enough about it to have an informed opinion. With all of this being said, it is important to learn about the Green New Deal and other climate change legislation to protect our future generations and the planet we live on.

Four-fifths of the country's registered voters **support** a Green New Deal – including two-thirds of Republican voters

So exactly how bad is climate change? How immediate is the issue and what can we do to fix it?

Climate change is exactly what it sounds like – anything that describes a change in the Earth's climate, whether this is a change in the amount of rainfall of a place or a change in the entire temperature of the Earth. NASA succinctly describes what is currently happening in relation to climate change on our planet: "Earth's temperature has gone up about one degree Fahrenheit in the last 100 years. This may not seem like much. But small changes in Earth's temperature can have big effects." These effects can already be seen today and are only going to get worse as man-made emissions from things like cars, power plants, and other carbon emissions continue.

Ocean levels will rise, natural disasters will worsen, and the seasons will get more extreme. There are many potential solutions to slow down or even stop climate change, but there is one important solution that sticks out: halting the use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. There are already many fossil fuel alternatives out there, but they are in many cases underutilized for a multitude of reasons. The Green New Deal proposes decarbonization and lays out the best known time-frame for this transition away from fossil fuels.



Warming of the Earth is not the only negative effect of climate change. Worsening natural disasters like tsunamis, hurricanes, and forest fires will all be part of the near future as emissions continue to rise.

- 70 percent of Americans recognize global warming is happening;
- 57 percent understand humans are causing the temperature rise;
- 85 percent support funding research into renewable energy;
- 77 percent support regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant;
- 63 percent support requiring utilities to generate one-fifth of their electricity from renewables.

Scientific Data on Climate Change

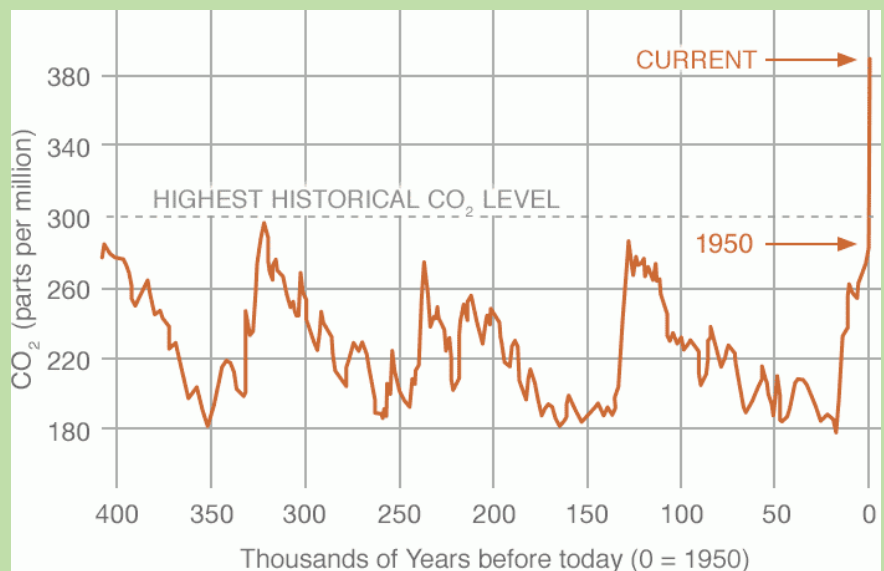
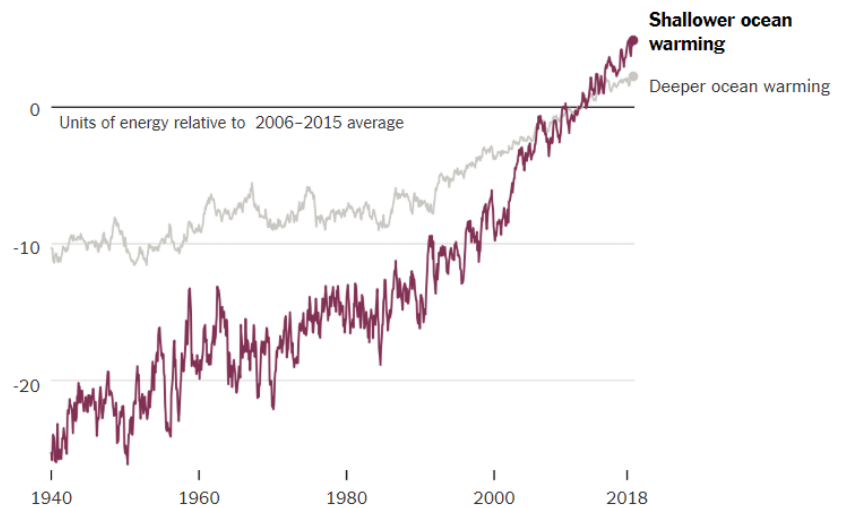
Climate change is no joke. It is real, and it is happening faster than anyone could imagine. Some effects of climate change include things like rising oceanic temperatures. This leads to melting of the ice caps and dangerous sea level rises as this climb continues.

In addition to the rising sea water level and temperature, entire ecosystems are being destroyed. With the release of carbon emissions and pollution, there are massive consequences. The bleaching and death of coral reefs, algae blooms, and polluting of the oceans are all preventable disasters that can still be stopped.

One of the most daunting aspects of climate change is carbon emissions. This is one of the main forces behind climate change and will only continue with our further reliance on fossil fuels. Our current emission levels are nothing natural when comparing to previous emissions over thousands of years.

The Oceans Are Heating Up

Data since the 1940s shows that the heat content of the oceans has been increasing. Waters closest to the surface have warmed significantly over the past two decades.



“As we design climate solutions, we have to think about a just transition for workers and those who are caught in the middle” - Anne Kelly, senior policy director of Ceres

The Three Goals of the **Green New Deal**

01

Decarbonize.

Decarbonization is the aforementioned halting of the use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. For us, this would be in the way of decarbonizing the United States economy which would mean quickly and smoothly transitioning the economy from fossil-fuel based to renewable energies. Of course, the American economy runs on fossil fuels, so the transition will not be easy. The GND calls for an optimistic goal of 100% renewable or clean energy in 10 years.

Though this plan is a best case scenario, most scientists agree that the transition is possible in a reasonable amount of time, even if it does require pushing the target back a little. Decarbonization in the US would take the form of a multitude of clean and renewable energies. A switch to wind power, solar power, and nuclear power would drastically reduce the US economy's reliance on fossil fuels along with a transition to greener cities with things like electric cars and public transport.

02

Guarentee Jobs.

The Green New Deal's job guarentee is just as important as its climate legislation components. It is important to make sure that we are saving the people and workers who are most affected by climate change in addition to saving the planet. The U.S. employs 1.1 million employees, or 55 percent of all energy workers, in traditional energies such as coal, oil and gas.

That is a lot of workers that need to be transitioned to a new job. The Green New Deal's job guarantee gets inspiration from job guarentees during the Great Depression. It has a unique purpose that says if you have lost your fossil fuel job, and you have not yet been incorporated into the green sector, then it is ensured that during that transition for you, you will be provided “a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all people of the United States.”

This job guarentee will ensure that a transition to a carbon-neutral climate is as smooth as possible and helps to benefit the ones most affected by climate change.

03

Transition Justly.

As previously stated, the Green New Deal's goal is to ensure that those who are most affected by climate change and climate change legislation are justly aided and compensated. This includes protections for people in low-income communities, communities of color, indigenous communities, and front-line communities most affected by climate change, pollution, and other environmental harm.

This would be implemented by the aforementioned jobs guarentee, a raising of the minimum wage, investments in these communities, and having strong labor and nondiscrimination standards. The Green New Deal would guarentee a well-paying job, excellent benefits for things like child and elder care, paid vacation, and a safety net for those that need it.

The Green New Deal aims to build grassroots power, with legislation being made with consultation of the front-lines communities, and current fossil-fuel workers. With these goals in mind, the Green New Deal seeks to be an embodiment of America's values of justice, democracy, and equality.

How will we pay for it?

The most frequently asked question when the Green New Deal is brought up is always: “But how will we pay for it?” It is an excellent question to ask whenever thinking about implementing or supporting a new piece of legislation, but in this scenario it is tough to put an exact cost measurement on the Green New Deal.

Why is that? Well, that is because the Green New Deal is not an official declaration of policies to implement. After all, the Green New Deal is a set of non-binding ambitions, not specific policies, so the price will depend on the policies put in place. In fact, the Green New Deal purposefully avoids mentioning a specific cost point, as it tries to be as flexible as possible to ensure support and policies can be built around it, and as a “set of ambitions”, it aims to not set strict limits but rather to reduce greenhouse emissions as much as technologically and economically feasible.

Since this is the case, scary figures that are mentioned like \$93 trillion aren’t just misleading but outright wrong. When pricing out the Green New Deal, there are a lot of factors to consider, but there are two main ones:

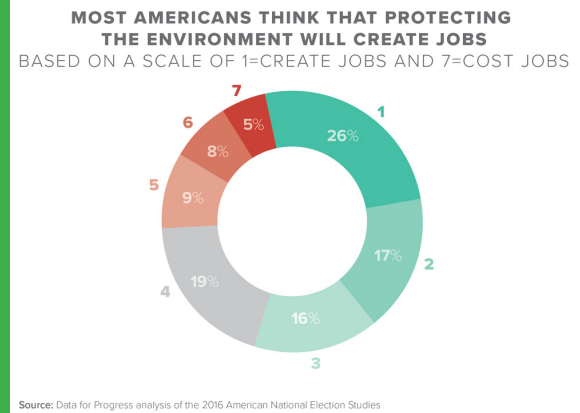
1. Shifting around and adding to the budget.

This would entail taking spending in other parts of the economic budget and allocating them towards the Green New Deal. This could be enacted in many ways, but some popular ideas have been cutting military spending, enacting a higher tax rate on the super wealthy, and taxing sectors of the economy with high carbon output to incentivize them to lower emissions.

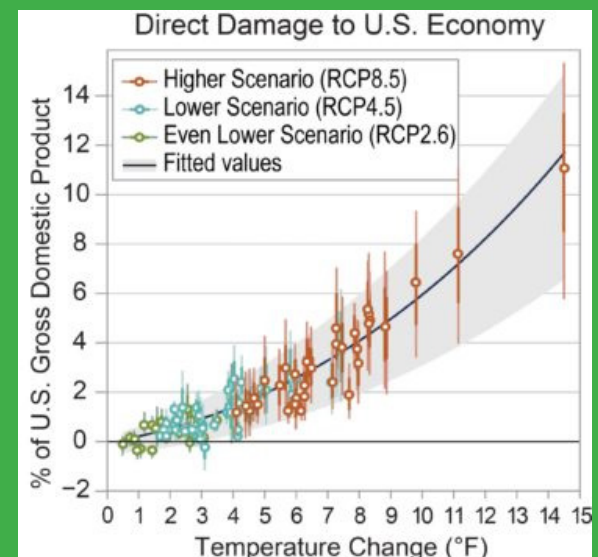
2. Pricing out the costs of climate change

Climate change impacts are going to cost a lot more than climate change mitigation. Natural disaster relief alone costs Americans billions of taxpayer dollars a year already, and with worsening natural disasters like forest fires, floods, and droughts, this number will only grow. By investing in climate change mitigation, we can lower this number and reinvest the saved money.

With these goals in mind, we can try to estimate the cost of the Green New Deal, but it will be hard. Then, there is the economist perspective: model the economy’s available resources; figure out what you can deploy and still avoid inflation; figure out how much private consumption spending you have to displace to make room for the necessary war spending; and finally, ensure a just transition.



“When Congress funnels trillions to the military or cuts taxes for the wealthy, no one asks how they will pay for it.”



What can we do?

When it comes to tackling climate change, it is important to remember: ***we are running out of time.*** If we don't act on climate change *today* and work together to bring about an end to carbon emissions and enact a Green New Deal, then the United States will be in dire straits. Putting an end to climate change is a bipartisan effort that cannot be done by just one party, democratic or republican. Though there have been many suggestions to tackle this issue, the Green New Deal is a comprehensive platform that details standards and policy ideas to bring about not just net-zero carbon emissions, but also a transition to green energy that is just, and that provides workers with well paying, livable jobs.

Climate change is the biggest threat facing not only the United States, but humans as a race and the entire planet with us. To help secure a future for our future generations, we need to do everything we can to combat climate change. If possible, reach out to your representative, tell them your concerns, and ask them to support the Green New Deal. If you feel like going even further in the fight, then ask local representatives and community members how you can join a climate movement.



MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

or

202-224-3121

GET INVOLVED

sunrisemovement.org

350.org

peoplesclimate.org

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