

Cut Down or Shut Down: Biden Sends Powerful Message to Power Plants

By Maya Richard-Craven | WORD IN BLACK

(WORD IN BLACK) - In a move aimed at confronting the existential threat of climate change, the Biden administration has unveiled a draft proposal to tackle greenhouse gas emissions emanating from fossil fuel-fired power plants.

This ambitious plan sets its sights on compelling these facilities to slash their emissions by a staggering 90% or risk permanent closure. With over 3,400 of these power plants dotting the American landscape, this groundbreaking proposition signifies a pivotal leap toward combating global warming and forging a path toward a sustainable and equitable future.

These power plants, which are reliant on coal, oil, and natural gas, have long been complicit in exacerbating the climate crisis.

According to the United States Energy Information Administration, fossil fuels make up more than 60% of electricity generation in the United States. These power plants account for 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States — and they're often built in or near Black communities.

"Black Americans face the brunt of pollution from power plants. It's having impacts that are keeping our community from living a healthy quality of life on a daily basis," Jeremy Orr, the environmental and climate justice chair for the NAACP Michigan, tells Word In Black.

78% percent of Black people in the United States reside within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant. A 2019 study revealed that Black and low-income people are most likely to die as a result of fine particle pollution from power plants.

"This administration has been prioritizing and trying to center Black environmental health," Orr says.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, "In 2030 alone, the proposed standards would prevent approximately 1,300 premature deaths; more than 800 hospital and emergency room visits; more than 300,000 cases of asthma attacks; 38,000 school absence days; 66,000 lost workdays."

That could have a significant effect on the Black community. Our children are three times more likely to go to the emergency room as a result of an

asthma attack. We are more likely to die from lung disease, even though we smoke less than our white counterparts. Black folks have higher rates of lung cancer, and living near power plants doesn't help.

Over the past three years, Biden has passed some major climate memorandums and executive orders. He did so much for climate justice in the first 100 days of his presidency that folks at the Harvard Environmental and Energy Law Program created a report to document it all — which revealed that Biden passed over 70 climate measures in his first week as president.

This latest announcement comes on the heels of the April 21 executive order, which included the creation of the Office of Environmental Justice within the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

"Under this order, environmental justice will become the responsibility of every single federal agency — I mean, every single federal agency," Biden said at the White House Rose Garden ceremony.

"Imagine turning your back on all those moms and dads living in towns poisoned by pollution and telling them, 'Sorry, you're on your own.' We can't let that happen. I mean, we really can't let that happen."

Undoubtedly, the Biden administration's proposal faces a challenging road ahead. The fossil fuel industry, known for its economic and political clout, has historically resisted attempts at regulation.

Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, denounced the proposal.

"This Administration is determined to advance its radical climate agenda and has made it clear they are hell bent on doing everything in their power to regulate coal and gas-fueled power plants out of existence, no matter the cost to energy security and reliability," Manchin said. Manchin and his family have personally profited from coal-fired power plants and the fossil fuel industry as a whole.

Meanwhile, the EPA will be accepting comments on this proposal for a period of 60 days following its publication in the Federal Register. Additionally, the EPA will host a virtual public hearing, and further details will be provided on its website.



A new EPA study found that in all but four states, non-whites face higher exposure than whites to PM 2.5, much of which comes from the burning of fossil fuels. Credit: Mark Wilson/Getty Images



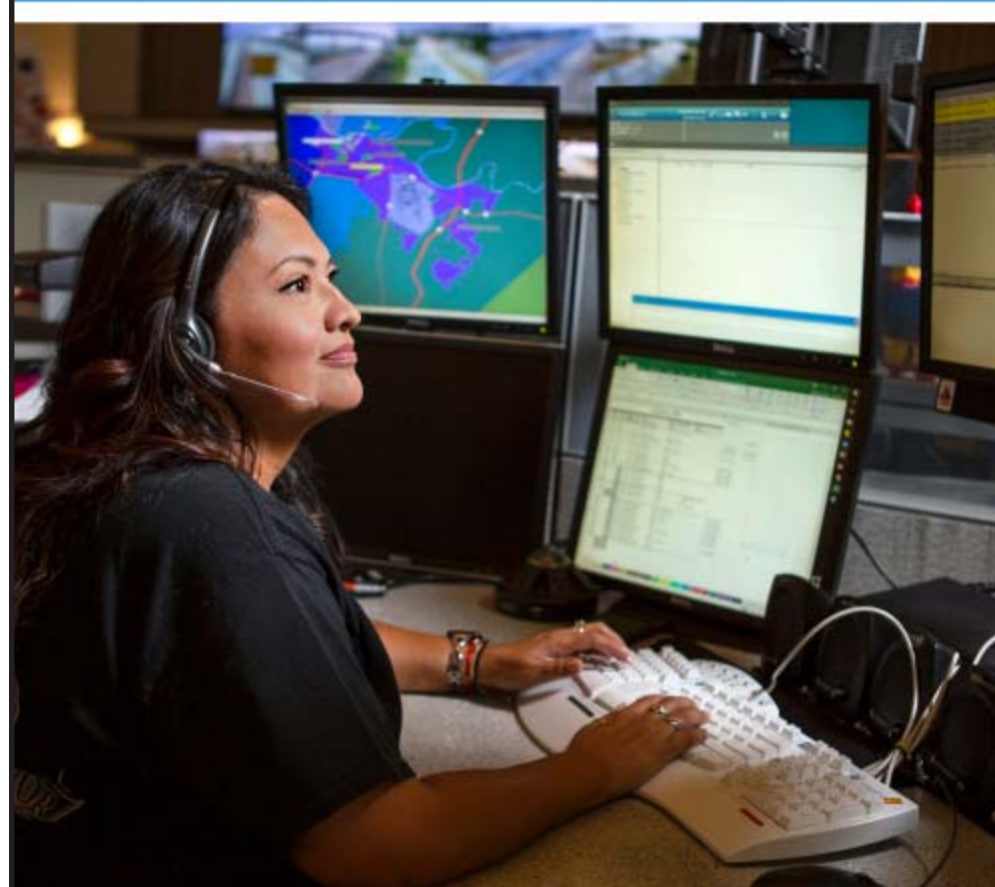
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ABBOTT SENDS MIGRANTS TO VP HARRIS'S HOME ON MOTHER'S DAY

By Lauren Nutall
Black Enterprise

(BE) - Texas migrants were transported to the Naval Observatory near Vice President Kamala Harris's Washington, D.C. home on May 14. This is just another installment in the ongoing migrant crisis and comes almost immediately after the end of Title 42, which allowed U.S. officials to expel migrants from the border during the COVID-19 pandemic. Texas has recently seen a sudden influx of migrants arriving at the Texas-Mexico border, seeking asylum in the wake of Title 42's expiration, which occurred late Thursday evening. In response, Gov. Greg Abbott's administration has been delivering bus-loads of these migrants to the Vice President's residence, the previous occurrence only three days before this latest Mother's Day stunt.

On May 11, Abbott sent two buses filled with migrants directly to the vice president's home. According to his office, one bus dropped off roughly 50 migrants, while the second carried more than 30. When asked about this incident by the *Texas Tribune*, Andrew Mahaleris, a spokesperson for Abbott, said, "Until President Biden steps up and does his job, Texas will continue busing migrants to sanctuary cities to provide relief to our overwhelmed border towns."

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