



Aligning Fiscal and Climate Policy

The United States is the second largest greenhouse gas emitter. In 2020, the US emitted 688 million metric tons of methane, and 15% of those emissions were from **municipal solid waste landfills**. These landfills affect the rapid speed of climate change, and if we continue to pollute at this trajectory, we will be dooming our people, our country, and our planet.

One primary consequence is that this pollution is becoming unsustainable. As the American people still choose not to recycle, we are beginning to run out of space to store our waste. We are likely to see landfills reach capacity as **early as 2036**, which has the effect of disastrous changes on a global scale. Once landfills reach capacity, **they begin to leak** into local water supplies and slowly poison those who depend on clean water to survive. The methane produced from **landfills can cause** slurred speech, memory loss, nausea, and in extreme cases loss of consciousness. If landfills continue to go unchecked, we will notice harmful effects that we were too late to save our children from.

Another consequence of continuing down this path is the lack of recycling that exists in the status quo. With no consequence of plastic waste being funneled into landfills, American citizens will neglect a cleaner and more sustainable solution. If we continue to allow citizens to **utilize landfills for recyclable items**, we will proceed to see the pollutants of plastic plague our oceans. This will **decrease** ocean life and harm those who rely on the animals in the ocean for their nutrients.

Action must be taken to create a more sustainable climate. Luckily, there are possible reforms that lawmakers could consider implementing.

- First, implementing a **landfill tax** could be utilized to pursue more environmentally friendly energy sources and help battle the national debt crisis we face. At rates similar to the **United Kingdom**, the ability to generate revenue while incentivizing a reduction in waste would be a bipartisan solution to the crises we face as a nation.
- Secondly, using 75% of the tax revenue to fund **infrastructure** relating to our climate, including new incineration plants, recycling centers, and more.
- Next, portioning out 12.5% of the tax revenue to alleviate pressure on the nation's national debt would allow better responses to crises and allow more opportunities to fund programs that are necessary for the continuation of the United States.
- Finally, using the remaining 12.5% of revenue to create a national **Climate Innovation Fund** that would help transition our economy, technology, and government to more sustainable opportunities.

Ultimately, creating a more sustainable climate will require a combination of both environmental and personal reforms. Focusing on **bipartisan support** with economic benefits and climate policy is necessary for the continuation of our nation. It will not be easy, but we must act now to address climate change before it is too late. Our people, our country, and our planet depend on it.



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