

July 19, 2022

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI): The Biden administration can do more on climate, and with legislative options now closed, the President must act. It's time for executive Beast Mode.

July 15, 2022

[@SenWhitehouse](#)

<https://twitter.com/senwhitehouse/status/1548017198991478784>

Senator Whitehouse (RI): With reconciliation foreclosed as a path for ambitious climate action, Congress must pivot to potentially bipartisan climate solutions such as a border carbon adjustment. Meanwhile, the executive branch has lots of tools at its disposal.

Let's review one by one what executive branch "Climate Beast Mode" might look like.

OMB must promulgate a robust social cost of carbon (north of \$100/ton) and require broad use across government decision-making – procurement, regulations, grants, leasing, permitting, royalty rates, investment decisions, foreign aid, trade agreements, & more.

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WV v. EPA didn't end EPA's ability to regulate carbon pollution from power plants. EPA options include requiring all coal- & gas-fired power plants to install carbon capture technology, as EPA did in 2015 for new coal-fired plants.

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But power plants aren't just sources of carbon pollution – they also pollute our air and water with soot, heavy metals, and other toxic pollutants. EPA must tighten controls on PM 2.5 (soot), coal ash, mercury, nitrogen oxides, and more.

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Cars & light trucks are the single largest source of carbon pollution. EPA and DOT restored Obama-era standards, but now they need to go much further and push the industry towards manufacturing 100% zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

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Heavy-duty trucks are also a huge source of carbon pollution. EPA doesn't yet address this, and that needs to change. California's advanced clean truck rule would increase zero-emission trucks, and EPA must follow suit.

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Green procurement can use the government's immense purchasing power (more than \$600 billion in contracts per year!) to decarbonize steel, cement, asphalt, buildings, vehicles, and so much more.

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EPA must promulgate a rigorous rule limiting methane emissions from oil and gas facilities. The rule must apply across the supply chain, including low-producing (but high-leaking) wells, and crack down on venting and flaring not just leaks.

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Satellite measurements can locate methane leaks to target strict enforcement against companies that are not in compliance.

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It's past time for DOJ to investigate the fossil fuel industry for its decades of lies. DOJ brought a civil RICO investigation against the tobacco industry for a similar history of dissembling and won big.

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Interior must by rule sharply limit methane emissions from oil/gas produced on federal lands/waters, use social cost of carbon to raise royalty rates, and reform bonding rules so companies can't abandon wells to leak methane & leave taxpayers on the hook.

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The Department of Energy has many energy efficiency rules it must strengthen. Together, these rules significantly reduce carbon pollution and they save families money. Win – win!

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The president should use his bully pulpit to remind Americans of the danger, call out fossil fuel obstruction in Congress, and get the rest of corporate America to finally lean in on climate action, creating space in Congress for bipartisan climate successes.

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(No trade association is any damned use on climate, big lobbies like Chamber are hostile, and the whole vast apparatus of corporate political influence ends up against us. Stop it.)

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The administration should sit down with G7 partners, design carbon border tariffs, and create a carbon club of nations dedicated to decarbonizing. Good for the environment and a big win for American competitiveness!

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* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheldon_Whitehouse

* <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/in-the-news/whitehouse-delivers-final-climate-speech>

* <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/issues/climate-change>

* <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/>

* https://ballotpedia.org/Sheldon_Whitehouse

* <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/in-the-news/this-member-of-congress-wants-everyone-to-know-about-the-dark-money-scheme-thats-captured-the-supreme-court>

* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/25/senator-sheldon-whitehouse-climate-crisis>