

U.S. to Withdraw from Paris Climate Accord

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On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced his decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord, formally known as the “Paris Agreement.”

As we previously [reported](#), the Paris climate accord was developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and negotiated at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC in Paris. It was adopted by consensus on December 12, 2015, with nearly 200 countries signing on. The goal of the Paris Agreement is to “strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change” by, among other things:

1. Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;
2. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production; and
3. Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016.

The Trump administration had two options for withdrawing from the Paris Agreement. First, the United States could formally withdraw from the Agreement, a process that will take three years, or second, the United States could exit the underlying UNFCCC framework, which would be a faster but more drastic measure. President Trump announced that the United States will follow the former path, ensuring a lengthy process that will not conclude until at least November 2020—the month of the next United States presidential election. While the President suggested in his remarks that he would attempt to negotiate a “better deal” for the United States, the practical reality is that there is little to no likelihood of re-negotiating the Paris Accord, which took almost two decades to achieve and has been adopted by close to 200 other countries. A number of state governments and other stakeholders have vowed to continue to cooperate with the international goal of reducing carbon emissions to help limit the global temperature increase.

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