SSDA News

Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CTA Put on Hold

By Roy Littlefield

The implementation of the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA), which mandates that millions of businesses reveal their actual owners, is still stalled despite a U.S. Supreme Court decision supporting the Treasury Department.

Recently, the Supreme Court overturned a lower court ruling that had been preventing the enforcement of the CTA. However, a separate nationwide injunction issued earlier this month by a federal judge is still in effect, continuing to block the law from being carried out.

Designed to equip financial crime investigators with better tools to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, the CTA has faced criticism from opponents who argue that its reporting requirements place an undue burden on small businesses.

Justice Samuel Alito, in a court order issued, granted the government's request to lift the nationwide injunction against the CTA.

The injunction had been issued on December 3 by Judge Amos Mazzant of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in response to a lawsuit filed by parties including the Texas Top Cop Shop, a small business specializing in police equipment.

However, a separate nationwide injunction from January 7, issued by Judge Jeremy Kernodle—also of the Eastern District of Texas—remains in effect. That order continues to halt the nationwide implementation and enforcement of the CTA.

As of now, the case's docket does not indicate that the government has filed an appeal to challenge this ruling.

The Online Edge – What Your Business Needs to Thrive

By: Stephanie Santore, Net Driven

Does your business have an online presence? If so, are you doing all you can to ensure its virtual success? If not, what are you waiting for? Let's take a sneak peek at some statistical findings from the Pew Research Center. According to their most recent studies on the use of internet and technology it was found that:

Roughly three-quarters of Americans, or 77%, now own a smartphone, which nearly doubles the former findings since the Center began its research in 2011.

As of November 2016, nearly three-quarters, or 73% of Americans indicate that they have broadband service at home.

Nearly seven-in-ten Americans now use social media. When the Center started tracking social media adoption in 2005, just 5% of Americans said they used these platforms. Today, 69% of U.S. adults are social media users.

Half the public now owns a tablet computer. When the Center first began tracking tablet ownership in 2010, just 3% of Americans owned a tablet of some kind.

As you can see, now more than ever before, an online presence for your business is significant. And not just any online presence, but a quality one that provides a sense of credibility and legitimacy, turning its visitors into leads and sales, and contributing to the success of your business.

First impressions matter. If your business has a website, rest assured that internet users are navigating to it to formulate their opinion, to see what other people have to say about you, and to "screen" shop your services and products, which is much like window shopping, but with the ease of never having to actually visit your business's location.

Your business can now be accessible to the masses thanks to technology. Therefore, it's vital to have a way for potential clients to find you with the swipe of their fingertip and also to ensure you have a website that makes a good impression.

So, how do you go about trying to meet your customers' needs online?

Let's Talk Internet Marketing Best Practices

There are several factors that play into the creation of a well-made website that will help your business's online presence generate traffic and rank effectively:

Design & Layout

Visual presentation plays an important role in the functionality of a website. A high-performing website will provide a positive user experience. It helps to have a responsive web design. What makes a website responsive? Responsive design helps to generate leads and sales without any limitations based on user devices. So, customers can find your automotive service site on their tablet, smartphone, smart watch, etc., viewing your website efficiently from any screen size.

Content

Content is the reason why visitors come to a site. They are seeking information about your business and its services. The key is to provide relevant content that is easy for visitors to digest. Too much or too little and your visitors might go elsewhere to find what they're looking for. Check out what Moz has to say about content regarding search engine ranking. By providing unique content that moves beyond self- promotion and is easily digestible to the user, your

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NET DRIVEN

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website offers valuable information.

Calls to Action

Calls to action within a site's content and design come in the form of clickable links or custom buttons. It entices a visitor to take action beyond the page they are on, an action like submitting a form, requesting a quote, purchasing a product, or even just clicking a link that leads to another page with relevant information. Through a CTA, a user moves to take a specific action that will benefit your business. And action is what it's all about.

Credibility

A business with an online footprint is a business that can be found, recognized, and confided in.

From building a solid and consistent brand across all channels, to maintaining an active social media presence, gaining positive reviews, managing your online reputation with products like Net Driven's Reputation Management.

Mobile Viewability

More and more people are looking at your site from a mobile phone or web enabled device. It seems like anything with a screen and a microchip in it is capable of getting on the internet these days.

Make sure your site is viewable on a mobile internet enabled device.

Search Engine Optimization

At Net Driven, we drive the traffic that drives your business! It begins with a website that keeps local search in mind.

A strong SEO foundation puts proven strategies to work and improves your ability to get found.

From understanding searcher behavior to using tested best practices, the SEO team at Net Driven works hard to ensure that your site has all of the key ingredients for SEO success. Look to us for:

Keyword research performed for your business and target geographic

Optimized meta tags for click through success

Relevant industry content

Local directory management

SEO-friendly site architecture

and more!

Don't have a website yet? What are you waiting for?!

Talk to a representative from Net Driven today and ask about how we can help you create a website that not only generates traffic, but turns your traffic into leads and sales!

Net Driven should be your choice for all your automotive internet marketing needs.

Contact us today!

US Gas-Fired Capacity Poised for Massive Expansion

The growing energy needs of AI data centers and manufacturing facilities are driving plans for up to 80 new natural gas-fired power plants in the US by 2030, which could increase power capacity by 46 gigawatts, according to Enverus. Major oil companies such as ExxonMobil and Chevron are also joining the fray with projects designed to power AI data centers directly, bypassing the traditional grid.

Report: Texas Oil, Gas Industry had a Banner 2024

Texas' oil and natural gas industry set new benchmarks in 2024, achieving record highs in production, refining, exports and emissions reductions, according to the Texas Oil & Gas Association. Highlights include daily crude output peaking at 5.86 million barrels, industry contributions to state revenues hitting $27.3 billion and the flaring rate falling below 0.94% in August.

IRS Issues Guidance for the District of Columbia and States that have Paid Family and Medical Leave Programs

The Internal Revenue Service issued guidance on the income and employment tax treatment of contributions and benefits paid in certain situations under a state paid family and medical leave program, as well as the related reporting requirements. Rev. Rul. 2025-4 PDF provides guidance to the District of Columbia and states that have mandatory paid family and medical leave programs and for employees working in and employers operating in those states. Today's guidance responds to requests to clarify the federal tax treatment of state paid leave programs that help pay employees who can't work because of non-occupational injuries to themselves or family members, as well as sickness and disabilities.

Multiple scenarios

The revenue ruling explains multiple tax treatment scenarios for contributions to and benefits paid in certain situations under these programs, and the related reporting requirements.

For example, in general, employers can deduct the amount they contribute to mandatory paid family and medical leave programs as a payment of excise tax. Similarly, an employee may deduct the amount they contribute as a payment of income tax, if the employee itemizes deductions, to the extent that the employee's deduction for state income taxes does not exceed the state income tax deduction limitation.

An employee who receives state paid family leave payments must include those amounts in the employee's gross income. An employee who receives state paid medical leave payments must include the amount attributable to the employer portion of contributions in the employee's gross income. This latter amount also is subject both to the employer's and employee's shares of Social Security and Medicare taxes. The amount attributable to the employee's portion of the contributions is excluded from the employee's gross income, and this amount is not subject to Social Security or Medicare taxes.

The revenue ruling provides additional guidance on other situations.

Transition relief

In addition, the revenue ruling provides transition relief to the District of Columbia, states, and employers from certain withholding, payment, and information reporting requirements for State paid medical leave benefits paid made during calendar year 2025.

This guidance will impact the District of Columbia and states administering paid family and medical leave programs, employers and workers contributing to such programs, and those who receive payments from these programs.

The IRS is soliciting comments on additional situations and aspects of state paid family and medical leave programs that are not covered in this revenue ruling electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at https://www.regulations.gov type IRS-2025-0012 in the search field on the https://www.regulations.gov homepage to find this revenue ruling and submit comments); or (b) By mail to: Internal Revenue Service, CC:PA:LPD:PR (Revenue Ruling 2025-4 PDF), Room 5203, P.O. Box 7604, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, D.C., 20044.

IRS

Judge Dismisses NYC's Climate Case Against the Fossil Fuel Industry, E & E News

In a win for the fossil fuel industry, a state judge has rejected New York City's lawsuit seeking to hold oil and gas companies financially accountable for climate change.

New York City filed its case in 2021 under then-Mayor Bill de Blasio, alleging — like dozens of similar climate lawsuits nationwide — that the oil industry intentionally misled the public about the role of fossil fuels in worsening climate change. But in a ruling issued Tuesday, state Supreme Court Justice Anar Patel found that the city had failed to show that Exxon Mobil, Shell and BP deceived New Yorkers about the climate effects of their products.

Patel wrote that the city had also claimed that "there is near universal consensus that global warming is primarily caused, or at least accelerated, by the burning of fossil fuels."

"The city cannot have it both ways," Patel wrote.

The New York City Law Department said it was disappointed with the ruling and is reviewing its options.

"Our complaint alleged that these defendants spent millions to mislead consumers to think that they, and their products, contribute to a clean energy future. They do not," said spokesperson Nicholas Paolucci. "Companies that violate the city's consumer protection laws should be held fully accountable. New Yorkers deserve no less."

A spokesperson for Exxon, the lead defendant in the case, noted it was the second time a judge has dismissed a similar lawsuit filed by the city.

"At some point our hope is that political figures around the country come to understand that ideological hatred for us doesn't mean we did anything wrong," the spokesperson said.

Oil industry allies welcomed the dismissal of the case.

The verdict is a "clear indication that courts in New York and around the country are continuing to see through these allegations and that neither the law, nor commonsense, subjects energy producers and sellers to liability for climate change," said Phil Goldberg, special counsel to the Manufacturers' Accountability Project, an initiative of the National Association of Manufacturers, which opposes climate liability lawsuits.

The ruling comes six months after a state judge in Maryland became the first to dismiss a local government's entire climate change lawsuit. And last January, a state judge in Delaware tossed out parts of the state's lawsuit against BP, Chevron and other companies.

If other state courts follow their lead, the rulings could slow the momentum of climate liability litigation, which — if successful — could lead to a multibillion-dollar payout to local governments dealing with climate mitigation. Such lawsuits were dealt a major win Monday with the Supreme Court rejecting the industry's petition to intervene in the

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cases.

In the New York case, Patel, who was appointed by Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul, also found that the city had not proven that the companies duped consumers with campaigns about their support for clean energy and alternative energy sources.

She wrote that the alleged greenwashing statements were "inactionable," adding that the city had in some cases used "distortions of statements that have been taken out of context."

Patel found that some of the statements — including an Exxon boast that a fuel would help consumers "drive cleaner, smarter and longer" — did not fall under the state's consumer protection law because they represented "statements of aspiration, opinion, or puffery."

She cited prior cases to argue that such statements are protected against false advertising claims.

"No reasonable consumer," she wrote, "would be misled by these subjective, nonspecific, and vague statements to believe that the use of the Invigorate, Shell V-Power® NiTRO+, or Synergy™ fuel products does not contribute to climate change."

New York City's lawsuit was filed in April 2021, three weeks after a federal appeals court upheld dismissal of the city's 2018 lawsuit against Exxon, BP, Shell, Chevron and ConocoPhillips. That ruling has become a legal cudgel for the industry.

A federal judge last May rejected the oil industry's request to transfer the city's 2021 lawsuit out of state court, where it was first filed, and into federal court.

Patel noted in her decision that the new lawsuit was "effectively re-purposing" many of the allegations in the dismissed 2018 lawsuit to make a claim under the state's consumer protection law.

Separately, in the Maryland case, the city of Baltimore filed an appeal Monday with the state's Appellate Court, arguing that the lower court "fundamentally misconstrued the city's case" when it dismissed the lawsuit.

Judge Videtta Brown of the Baltimore City Circuit Court ruled in July that the city's 2018 challenge against BP and other oil producers went "beyond the limits of Maryland state law."

But Baltimore argued in its appeal that its lawsuit doesn't seek to regulate air pollution and instead targets the industry's "extravagant misinformation campaign that contributed to the city's injuries in breach of Maryland tort duties."

The lawsuit, Baltimore argues, "does not allege defendants violated a legal duty by manufacturing or burning fossil fuels, or by polluting."

Supreme Court Declines to Hear from Oil and Gas Companies Trying to Block Climate Change Lawsuits, AP

The Supreme Court said it won't hear an appeal from oil and gas companies trying to block lawsuits seeking to hold the industry liable for billions of dollars in damage linked to climate change.

The order allows the city of Honolulu's lawsuit against oil and gas companies to proceed. The city's chief resilience officer, Ben Sullivan, said it's a significant decision that will protect "taxpayers and communities from the immense costs and consequences of the climate crisis caused by the defendants' misconduct."

The industry has faced a series of cases alleging it deceived the public about how fossil fuels contribute to climate change. Governments in states including California, Colorado and New Jersey are seeking billions of dollars in damages from things like wildfires, rising sea levels and severe storms. The lawsuits come during a wave of legal actions in the U.S. and worldwide seeking to leverage action on climate change through the courts.

The oil and gas companies appealed to the Supreme Court after Hawaii's highest court allowed the lawsuit to proceed. The companies include Sunoco, Shell, Chevron, Exxon Mobil and BP, many of which are headquartered in Texas.

The companies argued emissions are a national issue that should instead be fought over in federal court, where they've successfully had suits tossed out.

"The stakes in this case could not be higher," attorneys wrote in court documents. The lawsuits "present a serious threat to one of the nation's most vital industries."

The American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, said declining to hear the Honolulu case now means the compa-

Supreme Court Declines to Hear from Oil and Gas Companies Trying to Block Climate Change Lawsuits, AP

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nies could face more lawsuits from activists trying to "make themselves the nation's energy regulators."

"I hope that the Court will hear the issue someday, for the sake of constitutional accountability and the public interest," said Adam White, a senior fellow at the institute.

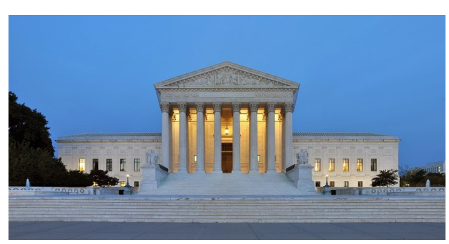
The Democratic Biden administration had weighed in at the justices' request and urged them to reject the case, saying it's fair to keep it in state court at this point — though the administration acknowledged that the companies could eventually prevail.

The incoming Republican Trump administration is expected to take a sharply different view of environmental law and energy production.

Honolulu argued it's made a strong case under state laws against deceptive marketing and it should be allowed to play out there. "Deceptive commercial practices fall squarely within the core interests and historic powers of the states," attorneings wrote.

Environmental regulations, meanwhile, have not always fared well overall before the conservative-majority court. In 2022, the justices limited the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. In June, the court halted the agency's air-pollution-fighting "good neighbor" rule.

Justice Samuel Alito recused himself from consideration of the appeal. He did not specify a reason, but he owns stock in companies affected by the lawsuits, according to his most recent financial disclosure.



Saskatchewan High School Students Now Have More Oil and Gas Industry Opportunities, Journal of Commerce

The Saskatchewan government is reporting three additional energy companies have partnered with the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (Sask DLC) and Teine Energy to support the creation of new online oil and gas high school courses with work placements.

Cenovus Energy, Vermilion Energy and Whitecap Resources have joined Teine Energy's commitment to provide industry expertise to Sask DLC's development of new Energy and Mines – Oil & Gas 20 and 30-level online courses.

The four energy companies are providing a combined total of up to $160,000 over two years to support the creation of the new courses and to fund a co-ordinator position to facilitate student work placements and industry engagement opportunities, a release reads.

Starting in semester two of this school year, students will be taking Energy and Mines – Oil & Gas 20 as part of the pilot of this new online course with work placements. Energy and Mines – Oil & Gas 30 will be available to students starting in the 2025-26 school year.

In the 20 and 30-level elective courses, students will take 50 hours of online theory to learn about the industry, safety and career paths available to them as well as 50 hours of hands-on learning through an industry work placement.

The new online courses are based on the Ministry of Education's existing energy and mines curriculum and are available to full-time Sask DLC students or high school students attending local schools throughout the province.

Registration is limited to ensure all students are matched with the work placement required for course completion.

Teine Energy and Whitecap Resources have also agreed to host student work placement hours at their locations throughout Saskatchewan to supplement student learning.

The four companies also have the opportunity to provide a representative to the steering committee that is providing industry feedback to the Sask DLC course developers currently creating these new online courses.

API Reports Unexpected Crude Oil Inventory Build, Oil Price

The American Petroleum Institute (API) estimated that crude oil inventories in the United increased by 1 million barrels for the week ending January 17. Analysts surveyed by Reuters had expected the API to report a draw of around 1.6 million barrels.

For the week prior, the API reported a draw of 2.6-million-barrel in U.S. crude oil inventories in the midst of build season, while product inventories saw a hefty build for multiple weeks in a row.

In 2024, crude oil inventories dropped by more than 12 million barrels, according to the API's inventory data, with the downward trend continuing beyond the new year.

Earlier this week, the Department of Energy (DoE) reported that crude oil inventories in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) rose by 0.3 million barrels as of January 17. SPR inventories are now at 394.6 million barrels, a figure that is still 239 million less than the inventory when President Biden took office.

At 4:52 pm ET, Brent crude was trading down $0.38 (-0.48%) on the day at $78.91. The U.S. benchmark WTI was also trading down on the day by $0.45 (-0.59%) at $75.73—more than $2 per barrel under last week's level.

Gasoline inventories rose this week by 3.2 million barrels after last week's large 5.39-million-barrel increase. As of last week, gasoline inventories are slightly below the five-year average for this time of year, according to the latest EIA data.

Distillate inventories rose by 1.9 million barrels, which follows last week's large 4.88-million-barrel increase. Distillate inventories were about 4% below the five-year average as of the week ending January 10, the latest EIA data shows.

Cushing inventories—the benchmark crude stored and traded at the key delivery point for U.S. futures contracts in Cushing, Oklahoma—rose by 500,000 barrels, according to API data, after rising by 573,000 barrels in the previous week.

LNG WRAP: US Gas Producers Likely to Gain Asian Market Share, Bloomberg

US gas producers could gain Asian market share at the expense of Australian exporters in the long run, as countries running a trade surplus with the US, like Japan and South Korea, are compelled to buy more American LNG to avoid Trump's tariffs, according to Bloomberg Intelligence.

Chinese buyers have already agreed to buy a combined 14 million tons of US LNG from 2026, 50% higher than the previous record in 2021, BI analysts including Chia Chen and Henik Fung said in a note on Tuesday. China might add more shipments to negotiate favorable tariffs with Trump's administration, they said.

Trump's reversal of the US LNG export ban will likely also revive new gas projects and pave the way for stronger export growth. Currently, surplus supply in Asia, China's faltering recovery and Japan's nuclear restart could cap Asian LNG prices at $10/mmbtu, the analysts said.

More News:

-PetroVietnam bought a cargo for delivery in March to the Thi Vai import terminal

-Exporter APLNG sold an LNG cargo on an FOB basis for March 23-24 loading

Drivers:

-LNG send-out in Europe was at ~3.1 TWh/day on Jan. 26, according to latest available data; -0.4% w/w: GIE data

-European gas storage levels were ~56% full on Jan. 26, compared with the five-year seasonal average of 63%

-The 30-day moving average of Chinese LNG imports was 215k tons/day on Jan. 25, down 0.5% from a week earlier, according to ship-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg

-The 30-day moving average of LNG deliveries to Japan has remained below the 5-year average since mid-October, according to ship tracking data

-Estimated flows to all US export terminals were ~14.2 bcf/day on Jan. 27, +3.1% w/w: BNEF

Blackstone to Buy $1 Billion Virginia Power Plant Near Data Centers, Yahoo

The unit of Blackstone (BX) dedicated to investments in the energy industry has agreed to acquire Potomac Energy Center, the asset manager told Reuters on Thursday, in a deal symbolizing the allure to investors of power plants sited near data centers.

Blackstone Energy Transition Partners has agreed to buy the 774-megawatt natural gas-fired power plant in Loudoun County in northern Virginia, according to a statement.

The statement gave no financial details, but sources familiar with the matter said Blackstone is paying around $1 billion for the facility. Fellow investment firm Ares Management has owned the plant since 2021.

Potomac Energy Center is situated in the area of northern Virginia outside of Washington D.C. which is estimated to have around a quarter of the current U.S. data center capacity.

This proximity was one of the reasons why Potomac Energy Center was so attractive, according to Blackstone Energy Transition Partners' Senior Managing Director Bilal Khan.

"This opportunity is unique," Khan told Reuters. "Not only for its location and its unparalleled access to data centers in Virginia, but also for the efficiency of the plant and the young age of the facility."

The plant was built in 2017.

The boom in artificial intelligence and data centers is driving power demand to record levels, with growth expected to persist for the rest of the decade. This is making generation assets increasingly attractive to buyers, especially so for gas-fired power plants which can provide the consistent power output that data centers require.

Earlier last month, Constellation Energy agreed the $16.4 billion purchase of Calpine. The largest U.S. power deal in nearly two decades is aimed at adding Calpine's predominantly gas-fired fleet to Constellation's existing generation mix which is majority nuclear power.

Blackstone has been investing, across a number of strategies, into both data centers and the energy infrastructure powering them. In September, it agreed a $16 billion deal to buy Australian data center operator AirTrunk, while AI cloud platform CoreWeave said in May it raised a $7.5 billion debt facility from investment firms including Blackstone.

California Considers Letting Victims of Natural Disasters Sue Oil Companies for Damages, AP

Oil and gas companies would be liable for damages caused by climate change -related disasters in California under legislation introduced by two Democratic lawmakers.

The proposal claims that the oil industry intentionally deceived the public about the risks of fossil fuels on climate change that now have intensified storms and wildfires and caused billions of dollars in damage in California. Such disasters have also driven the state insurance market to a crisis where companies are raising rates, limiting coverage or pulling out completely from regions susceptible to wildfires and other natural disasters, supporters of the bill said.

Under state law, utility companies are liable for damages if their equipment starts a wildfire. The same idea should apply to oil and gas companies, said Robert Herrell, executive director of the Consumer Federation of California, "for their massive contribution to these fires driven by climate change."

The bill aims to alleviate the financial burdens on victims of such disasters and insurance companies by allowing them to sue the oil industry to recoup their losses. It would also allow the Fair Access to Insurance Requirements Plan, created by the state as a last resort for homeowners who couldn't find insurance, to do the same so it doesn't become insolvent.

If approved, California would be the first state in the U.S. to allow for such lawsuits, according to the bill's author, state Sen. Scott Wiener.

"We are all paying for these disasters, but there is one stakeholder that is not paying: the fossil fuel industry, which makes the product that is fueling the climate change," Wiener said at a Monday news conference. The new measure is bound to face major backlash from oil and gas companies, who have faced a string of defeats in California in recent years as the country's most populous state started to shift policy priorities to address climate change.

The Western States Petroleum Association, representing oil and gas companies in five states, already signaled it will fight the bill. President and CEO Catherine Reheis-Boyd said state lawmakers are using the LA fires to "scapegoat" the industry.

"We need real solutions to help victims in the wake of this tragedy, not theatrics," Reheis-Boyd said in a statement. "Voters are tired of this approach."

Supporters said the measure will also help stabilize the state's insurance market by allowing insurers to recover some of the costs after a natural disaster from oil companies, which will prevent increased rates from being passed onto policyholders. The bill is supported by several environmental and consumer protection groups.

The legislation comes as California begins the long recovery process from multiple deadly fires that ripped through sections of Los Angeles and burned more than 12,000 structures earlier this month.

Trump Seizes Wartime Powers in Battle for More Fossil Fuels, BNN

President Donald Trump's declaration of an energy emergency opens the door to wield sweeping Cold War-era powers and little-known authorities to fast track pipelines, expand power grids and save struggling coal plants.

By invoking the country's national and economic security, the plan lays the foundation for energy projects to move forward with unprecedented speed — even if it involves encroaching on habitat for endangered species or tapping powers usually reserved for wartime.

The president has directed federal agencies to scour statutes and regulations to find obscure rules allowing him to facilitate production of more oil, natural gas and electricity, as well as approve construction of the pipelines and power lines needed to move it.

The declaration, which Trump signed after taking office Monday, sets the stage for him to push national security boundaries to achieve his energy priorities, potentially going even further than former President Joe Biden did in his own quest to fight climate change. It's part of an ongoing push by presidents to stretch the limits of executive authority.

"This is power politics in an era of power — not rules," said Kevin Book, managing director of the Washington consulting firm ClearView Energy Partners LLC.

Critics say the idea of an energy emergency flies in the face of soaring oil and gas production. The US has solidified its position as the world's top crude producer in recent years, with record output far surpassing any other nation.

One of the biggest changes Trump is setting in motion is speeding up project reviews using emergency consultations under the Endangered Species Act. Usually reserved for natural disasters such as forest fires and hurricanes, the process allows quicker approvals of projects that may harm — but not completely jeopardize — at-risk wildlife.

Trump has also ordered quarterly meetings of a committee of cabinet-level officials that's authorized to green light ventures even when the survival of a species is at stake. The panel — known as the "God Squad" — has met only a handful of times over the past four decades.

"They are definitely reaching deep to utilize pretty specific exceptions," said Noah Greenwald, endangered species program director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "This executive order is a death warrant for polar bears, lesser prairie chickens, whooping cranes and so many more species on the brink of extinction."

Industry leaders have long complained that conservationists have weaponized the Endangered Species Act to challenge plans to expand oil drilling, build power plants and develop mines.

During Trump's first term, efforts to protect the greater sage-grouse — whose habitat overlaps with prime oil hotspots — stalled plans to expand drilling in the western US.

Supporters of Trump's latest move argue it will shift the balance, hastening approvals while still ensuring species are protected.

"We have a permitting process that is taking too long and has been abused," said Andrew Black, president of the Liquid Energy Pipeline Association.

White House officials said Trump would take a balanced approach.

"Just as he did in his first term, President Trump will advance conservatism and environmental stewardship while promoting economic growth for Americans across the country by unleashing our energy — which is much cleaner than oil and gas in foreign countries — and lowering prices," said Harrison Fields, White House principal deputy press secretary.

Most emergency powers in federal law are designed to rapidly halt action — not kick start it. For years, environmental activists eyed them as a way to confront climate change, lobbying Biden

Trump Seizes Wartime Powers in Battle for More Fossil Fuels, BNN

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to halt crude exports, stop pipeline flows and take other executive actions to stifle greenhouse gas emissions.

Now, Trump is invoking a crisis to unlock more fossil fuels. The energy sources identified for special treatment are limited to those favored by the president — oil, gas, coal, hydropower, geothermal and nuclear — while wind, solar and battery storage are left out.

Separate emergency powers Trump has triggered allow the administration to overrule individual states' efforts to block pipelines and other energy infrastructure on environmental grounds. Williams Cos. in 2020 scrapped its planned Constitution Pipeline to transport gas from Appalachia to New York after the state blocked it citing water-quality concerns.

"We desperately need more pipeline infrastructure to the Northeast," said Dena Wiggins, president of the Natural Gas Supply Association. "There is quite a bit of gas" in the region, "but we can't get it through the state of New York."

Trump justified his declaration by calling the US energy system "precariously inadequate and intermittent" and saying it "leaves us vulnerable to hostile foreign actors and poses an imminent and growing threat."

He argues the growing demand for electricity from artificial intelligence makes the need for swift action all the more urgent.

"Under emergency declaration I can get the approvals done myself without having to go through years of waiting," Trump told world leaders and chief executives gathered in Davos Thursday.

Trump has tried to use similar tactics before. During his first term, officials considered using Cold War-era powers to direct government purchases of power and generation capacity from struggling coal plants in a bid to prevent them from shutting down.

This time, the president ordered an assessment of the Defense Department's ability to acquire and move "the energy, electricity or fuels needed to protect the homeland and to conduct operations abroad." He's also told agencies to fix any vulnerabilities, even if it means tapping emergency military construction authority normally reserved for wartime.

The effort could extend beyond military bases, potentially reaching to pipelines supplying diesel to ships in New York Harbor or trucks at ammunition depots across the country, according to a person familiar with the effort who asked not to be named because the deliberations were private. Privately owned pipelines and refineries that supply fuel to the military could be targeted for upgrades or new capacity. And since almost every US military base is connected to a civilian power grid, those could be in play too.

Backers of the plan say it will streamline bureaucratic reviews and allow speedy construction of essential infrastructure.

Trump is even borrowing from Biden's playbook. For each of the past three summers, Biden issued emergency waivers to allow widespread sale of higher-ethanol E15 gasoline.

Now Trump is recommending doing the same.

"The presidents are learning from one another," Book said, "and taking bolder and bolder steps to the outer edge of what's in bounds."

1532 Pointer Ridge Place, Suite G
Bowie, Maryland 20716

Phone: 301-390-0900
Fax: 301-390-3161
E-mail: rlittlefield2@wmda.net

SERVICE STATION DEALERS OF AMERICA AND ALLIED TRADES

For more information on SSDA-AT, please contact:

Roy Littlefield, Managing Director/ Editor

rlittlefield2@wmda.net ✦ 301-390-0900 ext. 137

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