

Comments on Trump withdrawing US from Paris Agreement

22 January 2025

[Ben Standing](#), Partner specialising in environment at UK and Ireland law firm Browne Jacobson, said:

"In a year when meeting legally-binding international climate targets appear increasingly unlikely, President Trump's list of climate-related executive orders – including to withdraw the US from the Paris climate agreement, remove oil and gas drilling restrictions both offshore and on federal land, ban new wind energy projects, and revoke electric vehicle targets – blurs the future path for policymakers and legislators across the world.

"On the international front, he is far from alone in wanting to push back on green targets. Reform campaigned at the last election on their removal, and the Conservatives have recently indicated it considers these targets aren't properly thought through.

"It is a stark reminder that even targets and obligations enshrined into law can be relatively easily reversed. This highlights the importance of democracy in bringing about change – if the public does not buy into the measures to reduce climate change, then these are unlikely to be effective, especially when it comes to making difficult economic and lifestyle decisions.

"It raises a number of questions about short-term gain against longer-term expense. Is it now a race to the bottom? With the Paris Agreement effectively redundant, other countries may lose trust of their fellow signatories to comply with environmental reduction targets.

"The concern is this could lead to a focus on short-term gain by continuing, or even increasing, the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, irrespective of future impact.

"The flipside of the argument is the diminishing focus on the green economy from the US presents a glittering opportunity for the rest of the world to take its place as a market leader. By investing now in the transition to cheaper and sustainable sources of energy, countries like the UK can gather the technical expertise and experience of developing and implementing net zero technologies, positioning them well for the future.

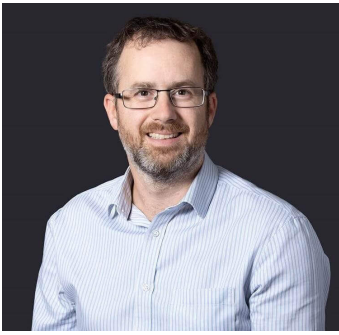
"However, with President Trump and other politicians receiving sizeable support for their stance against environmental protection policies, policymakers can't take it for granted that significant investment in the green economy will be endorsed by the public.

"Therefore, it must balance the long-term ambitions with short-term deliverables that make a tangible difference in improving quality of life, whether it is in tackling fuel poverty, savings household costs or making journeys easier and quicker.

"Governments can harness these milestone achievements to help build momentum behind the [environmental](#) work required."

Key contact

Ben Standing
Partner



ben.standing@brownejacobson.com

+44 0330 045 2400

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