

# What energy emergency?

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Among the early executive orders that President Donald Trump signed soon after his second inauguration is a declaration of an “energy emergency.” This despite the fact that the U.S. is producing more oil and gas than ever, and exporting more than any other country.

The declaration provided a rationale for a slew of related executive orders that signal a distinct policy shift away from renewable energy expansion and toward fossil fuel development. These include opening up more oil and gas drilling in Alaska, reversing President Biden’s pause on new Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export terminals that threaten communities along the Gulf Coast, freezing congressionally allocated investments in renewable energy, and restricting wind energy and pausing approvals of renewable energy on public land and waters. The president also pulled the U.S. out of the Paris climate agreement, and revoked policy that was designed to ease the disproportionate burden of pollution on low-income and Black, Indigenous and other communities of color.

The energy emergency declaration specifically calls out obstacles to this agenda in the Northeast and West Coast, “where dangerous State and local policies jeopardize our Nation’s core national defense and security needs, and devastate the prosperity of not only local residents but the entire United States population.” It will be worth monitoring to see if this leads to attempts to overturn state and local laws and regulations that ban certain forms of energy development, such as fracking, and that restrict siting of pipelines and other infrastructure.

The emergency declaration also appears to indicate support for speeding up permitting of energy projects, electricity transmission lines, and mining for minerals used for renewable energy and the military. Members of Congress are working on bills that would loosen environmental regulations around mining and energy development and limit public input, including from communities located near proposed projects.

The Sisters of Mercy’s *Awakening to a New Consciousness on Extractivism* theological reflection process offers many examples of the harms of extracting natural resources, analysis of the impacts of this extraction, and calls to action.