

# Offshore drilling made easier with Trump's rollback of environmental standards

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Interstate pipeline and offshore drilling projects are more likely to receive federal approval if President Donald Trump's changes to longstanding environmental standards go into effect, two administration officials told McClatchy on Thursday.

Trump's proposed changes to the regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act, a law intended to protect the environment, would no longer require that federal agencies consider the effects of climate change before approving major energy and infrastructure projects across the country.

That would apply to federally funded pipeline projects on land as well as drilling efforts in U.S.-administered waters.

One official confirmed that the updated procedure "would affect offshore drilling" as well as all other government-funded projects.

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"Under the proposed rule, for any category of activity or project that requires a federal permit or other approval, the NEPA process will be more predictable and timely," said a second official with the Council on Environmental Quality.

"When an environmental impact statement is required, there will be a presumptive 2-year time limit, and increased coordination between agencies," the official added.

The new regulation specifically gets rid of a tiered system that accounts for direct, indirect and cumulative environmental effects of a project, settling on a single standard – “reasonably foreseeable impact” – that neither excludes nor requires the consideration of greenhouse gases.

Trump’s changes to NEPA are expected to be posted to the federal register on Friday, opening a 60-day review period before the regulation is finalized.

At that point, it is certain to run into lawsuits that could take years to settle in court.