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Launch of National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization

January 24, 2023

Regulation



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On January 10, the Biden-Harris Administration released the [U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization: A Joint Strategy to Transform Transportation](#), which is designed to cut all greenhouse emissions from the sector by 2050. The blueprint, developed by the Departments of Energy, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency, provides a “framework of strategies and actions to remove all emissions from the transportation sector by 2050.” According to the blueprint’s [fact sheet](#), the blueprint is meant to serve as a “guide for future policymaking and research, development, demonstration, and deployment in the public and private sectors.” The [executive summary](#) of the blueprint provides that the agencies will “develop and implement the Action Plans and will work with other federal agencies, governments at the regional, state, local, and Tribal levels, philanthropic organizations, the private sector, and with global partners to achieve [its] milestones,” which include research and investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions before 2030 and scaling up deployment of clean solutions between 2030 and 2040.

According to the announcement, the U.S. transportation sector accounts for one third of all domestic greenhouse gas emissions and is the second-largest annual household expense in the U.S., both of which disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities. For these reasons, the blueprint is intended to facilitate a “well-planned transition to a decarbonized transportation system” to address these inequities and “provide equitable, affordable, and accessible options for moving people and goods,” “create good-paying jobs across all segments of the transportation sector,” and “strengthen America’s energy independence.” With respect to transportation decarbonization strategies in particular, the immediate impacts and long-term planning goals include increasing convenience “by supporting community design and . . . land-use planning at the local and regional levels,” improving efficiency “by expanding affordable, accessible, efficient, and reliable options like public transportation and rail, and improving the efficiency of all vehicles,” and transitioning to clean options “by deploying zero-emission vehicles and fuels for cars, commercial trucks, transit, boats, airplanes and more.”

Taking The Temperature: The 88-page blueprint clearly sets out the current Administration's intentions with regards to improving the U.S. transportation sector by making it more accessible, affordable, and environmentally friendly. Specific areas that are expected to be subject to reform and regulation include public transportation, vehicle fuel economy, clean electricity, and hydrogen. However, the blueprint's framework remains fairly high-level, and the devil will be in the details. Policy goals will need to be translated into tangible projects in the real economy and will require significant investments in transportation infrastructure, which may require bipartisan support that historically has been extraordinarily difficult to obtain. We will await any subsequent announcements with interest, but it is clear that the current administration is serious about making systemic changes in order to meet its decarbonization commitments.