SSDA News

Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades

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2025 Government Affairs Outlook

By Roy Littlefield

Donald Trump is poised to return to the White House, granting Republicans control over both the legislative and executive branches of government. With majorities in Congress and Trump's leadership, the GOP is ready to push forward with bold plans that could reshape the nation's policies for years to come. SSDA-AT will work with the administration and Congress to pass pro-business initiatives in the areas of tax reform, infrastructure funding, and a lessening of regulatory burdens.

SSDA-AT is optimistic about the chances of passing Right to Repair legislation under a Republican-controlled Congress. This issue has garnered strong bipartisan support, and many Republican lawmakers recognize the importance of protecting small businesses and promoting competition. SSDA-AT is particularly encouraged by the presence of Republican champions for this cause and is committed to working closely with Congress to push this legislation forward. Passing Right to Repair legislation in the 119th Congress will be a top priority for SSDA-AT.

Under the new administration, SSDA-AT is focused on several key priorities to support our members and the broader industry:

1.Tax Reform: We are looking forward to addressing tax reform by extending many of the 2017 tax cuts, maintaining estate tax exemption levels, extending provisions like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Section 199A, and advocating for comprehensive changes that support small businesses.

2. Regulatory Relief: SSDA-AT welcomes the administration's commitment to rolling back burdensome regulations. Excessive fines and pressure from agencies like OSHA have placed unnecessary strain on our members. We will advocate for a more balanced approach that promotes safety while reducing compliance costs.

3. Infrastructure Funding: We are optimistic about the possibility of a new transportation funding bill passing in the next two years. This legislation is critical for maintaining and improving the nation's roads, which directly impacts the industry.

4. EV Mandates: Rolling back aggressive EV mandates will benefit the majority of our members, who primarily serve traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. This approach will give independent dealers more time to adapt to evolving market demands.

5.Workforce Development: Addressing technician and driver shortages is another priority. SSDA-AT supports policies that invest in workforce development, providing new opportunities for workers while meeting the labor needs of our industry.

By working with a business-friendly administration and Congress, SSDA-AT is confident that we can make significant progress on these issues to benefit our members and the broader industry.

Building a Successful Website

By: McKensie Curnow of Net Driven

Building your own website has become increasingly simple and inexpensive in recent years. Though easy and accessible, DIY websites do not guarantee a website that works well or leaves a lasting impression for your business and your audience.

Your website is a reflection of you and your business, so you're obviously going to want to build a strong, professional, and positive presence to attract customers. Taking the risk of building a website on your own is taking the risk of losing potential leads and damaging your business's reputation – we never get a second chance to make a first impression!

When you invest in a professional web design team, such as our team here at Net Driven, you're not only investing in the visual appearance and accessibility of your website, you also invest in expert advice, techniques, and best practices to create the best possible user experience. Spending less money and trying to do it on your own may seem like the easy way out, but let's dive into why it's important to give your business the professional auto service website design it deserves.

COMMON MISTAKES MADE BY INEXPERIENCED DESIGNERS

Poor Structure & Navigation

A website should be attractive, accessible, and easy to navigate; all in all, user-friendliness is vital. A site's content should be understandable and full of useful information without being cluttered. In today's day and age, people like quick and simple. If they can't find what they need without gaining a headache, they're going to leave your site and find a frustration-free one instead. At Net Driven, we know how to organize automotive websites in a way that makes sense for both the business owner and their potential customers.

Lack of SEO

If no one can find your website, what's the point in making the effort of creating one? Many rookie designers forget the importance of SEO, or Search Engine Optimization.

As a certified Google Partner, our team highly

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NET DRIVEN

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knowledgeable of automotive SEO and works hard to make sure your site gets found.

Missing CTA

Your website is one of the most powerful marketing tools for your business.

Not only does your website have the power to bring in new customers, it also helps current customers remain loyal if they find what they're looking for with minimal frustrations.

One of the main components of a great website is a clear CTA, or call-to-action.

A CTA is what converts website visitors into customers by driving them to purchase your good or service. If your website is missing a clear CTA, you'll lose sales and customers.

At Net Driven, our team ensures that every website offers conversion-focused responsive web design.

Using Free or Low-Cost Templates

Rookie designers are likely to use a free or low-cost template for their website.

While this may seem like an easy solution, it will make your website look generic and unconnected to your brand.

Your business is unique, your website should be, too. Our designers take the time to ensure each one of our automotive websites are exclusive to the client and capture the individuality of their business. As with any service or good, you get what you pay for.

Your money buys value, which in turn, will actually build your business's bank account in the long run.

Your company's website is no exception. If you want to leave a lasting, positive impression of your brand, leave website design to the professionals.

Still not convinced?

Check out our portfolio *of the finest responsive web design in the automotive industry.*

For further details, visit our solutions *and* packages *pages.*

Happy New Year from SSDA-AT!

US O&G Industry is Serious about Methane Reduction

The US oil and natural gas industry has cut onshore methane emissions by 42% since 2015 using advanced technologies for leak detection, real-time monitoring and flaring reduction, writes American Petroleum Institute Senior Vice President of Policy, Economics and Regulatory Affairs Dustin Meyer. Moreover, industry-led collaborations such as The Environmental Partnerships and strict regulatory compliance reflect the sector's commitment to balancing environmental progress with energy security, Meyer writes.

Musk Wants to Stop Enforcing Regulations. Why that's 'almost meaningless.', E&E

Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy outlined a plan to help companies avoid environmental regulations: The government could just refuse to enforce its own rules.
But some lawyers who specialize in federal regulation expressed doubt that companies would benefit from such a plan — or even want it.

"I don't think it would really reduce the burden on industry for the most part, because companies have a legal obligation to comply with regulatory requirements," said Jeff Holmstead, a former EPA air chief under President George W. Bush who represents industry clients at Bracewell LLP.

Musk and Ramaswamy, whom President-elect Donald Trump named to co-lead the so-called Department of Government Efficiency, asserted in a recent Wall Street Journal op-ed that Trump could "immediately pause the enforcement" of rules that his team deems are unneeded or harmful.

"This would liberate individuals and businesses from illicit regulations never passed by Congress and stimulate the U.S. economy," they wrote.

It's true that departments and agencies have latitude when deciding whether to make a company follow rules related to things such as reducing climate pollution or installing new carbon-catching technologies. They can also decide not to pursue certain cases because of a lack of resources, and they can determine when to treat a case as civil or criminal, or whether to impose administrative penalties.

That might make it hard for outside groups to sue federal offices for failing to act.
"It's difficult to sue an agency for not enforcing a rule if they have enforcement discretion," said Michael Gerrard, faculty director of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University.

But those protections don't apply to the companies themselves, according to lawyers.

Under most environmental statutes — including the Clean Air Act, the primary vehicle for climate regulation — citizens with standing can sue companies for violations when states and federal regulators opt not to. If they win, companies may have to pay monetary settlements and attorneys fees. And they may be required to suspend operations at a facility or secure permits.

For example, if a utility built a new coal-fired power plant but didn't secure permits under a 2015 standard requiring partial carbon capture — which remains in force — a federal enforcement pause would not protect it from citizen lawsuits and angry investors.

"So, yeah, this idea that somehow announcing you're not going to enforce existing regulations is not only not a panacea, but it's almost meaningless," said Holmstead.
"The only way to reduce the regulatory burden is to actually change the regulations," he added.

Exclusive-Trump Plans No Exemption for Oil Imports Under New Tariff Plan, sources say, Reuters

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump does not intend to spare crude oil from his planned 25% import tariffs on Canada and Mexico, sources told Reuters, as the oil industry warned the policy could hurt consumers, industry and national security.

Canada and Mexico are the top sources of U.S. crude oil imports, together accounting for around a quarter of the oil U.S. refiners process into fuels like gasoline and heating oil, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The U.S. and Canadian oil industries had been optimistic that Trump's broad plans for protectionist trade measures would spare oil imports because many U.S. refineries rely on the two countries and have equipment designed to process their oil types.

Two sources familiar with Trump's plans said that oil would not be exempted from the plan. They asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue.

America's top oil trade groups, meanwhile, said imposing the tariffs would be a mistake - exposing a rare moment of discord between the industry and Trump.

"Across-the-board trade policies that could inflate the cost of imports, reduce accessible supplies of oil feedstocks and products, or provoke retaliatory tariffs have potential to impact consumers and undercut our advantage as the world's leading maker of liquid fuels," said a spokesperson for the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers group, which represents oil refiners.

The AFPM said its industries would "continue urging officials to veer clear of any policies that could disrupt America's energy advantage."

The American Petroleum Institute, meanwhile, said in response to a question about the threatened tariffs that keeping up the trade of energy across borders is important.

"Canada and Mexico are our top energy trading partners, and maintaining the free flow of energy products across our borders is critical for North American energy security and U.S. consumers," said API spokesperson Scott Lauermann.

Oil industry analysts and traders also warned the move would likely

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Exclusive-Trump Plans No Exemption for Oil Imports Under New Tariff Plan, sources say, Reuters

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raise oil prices for U.S. refiners, squeezing margins and driving up the cost of fuel.

The U.S. imported about 5.2 million barrels of crude and petroleum products per day (bpd) from Canada and Mexico in 2024, with more than 4 million of that from Canada, data from U.S. government's statistical arm showed.

The biggest impact would come from the levies on Canadian crude oil, which is an important source of supply to refineries in the U.S. Midwest.

"The Midwest will have to deal with higher gasoline prices as it will be difficult to replace the Canadian crude that they are using currently," ship tracking firm Vortexa analyst Rohit Rathod said.

"Applying tariffs on over 4 million barrels per day of crude from your leading supplier seems self-destructive," said Matt Smith, an analyst at ship tracking service Kpler.

U.S. refiners have a capacity to process more than 18 million bpd of crude oil in total, but often run at lower rates due to maintenance and other issues.

While the U.S. is the world's top oil producer, with output at a record 13.5 million bpd of crude, much of it is light in density and not compatible with domestic refineries that are largely configured to refine heavy crude like Canadian and Mexican oil.

Converting units to run lighter crudes economically would require investing in new equipment.

Asked about the inclusion of oil imports, the Trump transition team noted that tariffs against China created jobs, spurred investment and resulted in no inflation.

"President Trump will work quickly to fix and restore an economy that puts American workers first by re-shoring American jobs, lowering inflation, raising real wages, lowering taxes, cutting regulations, and unshackling American energy," said Trump transition spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt.

Trump Prepares Wide-Ranging Energy Plan to Boost Gas Exports, Oil Drilling, sources say, Reuters

Donald Trump's transition team is putting together a wide-ranging energy package to roll out within days of his taking office that would approve export permits for new liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects and increase oil drilling off the U.S. coast and on federal lands, according to two sources familiar with the plans.

The energy checklist largely reflects promises Trump made on the campaign trail, but the plan to roll out the list as early as day one ensures that oil and gas production will rank alongside immigration as a pillar of Trump's early agenda.

Trump, a Republican, also plans to repeal some of his Democratic predecessor's key climate legislation and regulations, such as tax credits for electric vehicles and new clean power plant standards that aim to phase out coal and natural gas, the sources said.

An early priority would be lifting President Joe Biden's election-year pause on new export permits for LNG and moving swiftly to approve pending permits, the sources said. Trump would also look to expedite drilling permits on federal lands and quickly reopen five-year drilling plans off the U.S. coast to include more lease sales, the sources said.

In a symbolic gesture, Trump would seek to approve the Keystone Pipeline, an issue that was an environmental flashpoint and which was halted after Biden canceled a key permit on his first day in office. But any company looking to build the multibillion-dollar effort to carry Canadian crude oil to the U.S. would need to start from scratch because things like easements have been returned to landowners.

"The American people can bank on President Trump using his executive power on day one to deliver on the promises he made to them on the campaign trail," Karoline Leavitt, Trump's transition spokesperson, said in a statement.

Many of the elements in the plan would require time to move through Congress or the nation's regulatory system. Trump has promised to declare an energy emergency on his first day in office that could test whether he can bypass those barriers to impose some changes on an accelerated schedule.

Trump would also call on Congress to provide new funding so he can replenish the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, established as an emergency crude oil supply and which was depleted under Biden to help manage price spikes caused by the Ukraine crisis and high inflation during the pandemic. Replenishing the reserve would boost short-term oil demand and encourage U.S. production.

Trump is also expected to put pressure on the International Energy Agency, the Paris-based energy watchdog that advises industrialized countries on energy policy. Republicans have criticized the IEA's focus on policies to reduce emissions. Trump's advisers have urged him to withhold funding unless the IEA takes a more pro-oil position.

Trump Prepares Wide-Ranging Energy Plan to Boost Gas Exports, Oil Drilling, sources say, Reuters

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"I have pushed Trump in person and his team generally on pressuring the IEA to return to its core mission of energy security and to pivot away from greenwashing," said Dan Eberhart, CEO of oilfield service firm Canary.

TRUMP 'PLANS TO GO STRONG' ON LNG

Biden put a freeze on new LNG export permits in January to study the environmental impacts, in an election-year move aimed at making gains with the party's green voting blocs. Without the export permits, developers cannot go ahead with multi-year construction plans for new projects. Projects delayed include Venture Global's CP2, Commonwealth LNG, and Energy Transfer's Lake Charles complex, all of which are in Louisiana.

The United States is the world's top producer of natural gas, and became the No. 1 exporter of LNG in 2023 as Europe looked to America to wean itself off Russia's vast energy supplies following the invasion of Ukraine.

The Biden administration promised to release the environmental study before Trump assumes the White House on Jan. 20, but it would have no influence on the incoming administration, the sources said.

"The LNG issue is a lay-up and he plans to go strong on the issue," said one of the sources.

There are five U.S. LNG export projects that have been approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, but are still awaiting permit approvals at the Department of Energy, federal records show.

Biden's pause also halted necessary environmental reviews, portions of which may still be needed for the five pending DOE permits to withstand legal scrutiny.

LOOKING TO DRILL OFFSHORE AND ON FEDERAL LANDS

Trump would look to accelerate drilling off the U.S. coast and on federal lands.

The average time to complete a drilling permit on federal and Indian land averaged 258 days in the first three years of Biden's administration, up from 172 days during the four years of Trump's presidency, according to federal data.

Trump is expected to expedite pending permits, hold sales more frequently and offer land that is more likely to deliver oil, the sources said.

Despite the lag time in permit approvals, Biden's Interior Department approved more onshore oil drilling permits on average than Trump's first administration, federal records show.

Oil output on federal lands and waters hit a record in 2023, while gas production reached its highest level since 2016, according to federal data.

Drilling activity on federal lands and waters accounts for about a quarter of U.S. oil production and 12% of gas output.

USDOL's Wage and Hour Division announces Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

On December 3, 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor announced a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), Employment of Workers with Disabilities Under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act that would phase out certificates allowing employers to pay workers with disabilities at wage rates below the federal minimum wage.

Since the Fair Labor Standards Act was enacted in 1938, significant legal and policy developments have expanded employment opportunities and rights for individuals with disabilities.

Expectations and beliefs regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities have evolved and increased opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

With this NPRM, the Department proposes to:

Cease the Department's issuance of new section 14(c) certificates to employers submitting an initial application on or after the effective date of a final rule.

Permit existing section 14(c) certificate holders, assuming all legal requirements are met, to continue to operate under section 14(c) certificate authority for up to 3 years after the effective date of a final rule.

If finalized, the Department believes this proposal would increase wages, improving the economic self-sufficiency of these workers. Along with the broader shifts in opportunities for workers with disabilities, this proposal could lead to an increase in the overall labor force participation rate for persons with disabilities.

This proposal would not require impacted workers to leave their current places of employment, nor would it require current section 14(c) certificate holders to amend the type of services that they currently provide.

The Department expects that many workers currently paid under a section 14(c) certificate will be able to transition to full-wage employment, leading to benefits for workers.

For more information on the notice of proposed rulemaking and if you would like to provide a comment, please visit www.regulations.gov. To contact the Wage and Hour Division call toll-free at 1-866-4US-WAGE (487-9243).

Republicans Eye Tax Breaks, Border Funds and Clean Energy Cuts when Trump Returns, NBC

Republicans are making plans to craft and pass a huge party-line bill early next year in the new Donald Trump administration, eyeing it as a vehicle for a variety of priorities from tax cuts to more funding for immigration enforcement.

The legislation would use the budget "reconciliation" process, which would allow them to pass policies involving taxes and spending without the need for any Democratic votes. GOP leaders are looking to tee up the process with a budget setting the parameters for the bill in early January, even before Trump takes office, two sources with knowledge of the push said.

Their top objective is to extend the 2017 Trump tax law and prevent $3.3 trillion in tax breaks from expiring at the end of 2025.

But the party is aiming bigger.

In interviews, senior Republicans said they also want to use the bill to give the incoming administration more resources to carry out border enforcement and Trump's promise of "mass deportations," repeal clean energy funding in President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and use the package to slash other federal spending.

The reconciliation process bypasses the Senate's 60-vote threshold for most bills, requiring just a majority vote to pass a tax- and spending package once per fiscal year. Republicans will have 53 votes in the Senate, allowing them three defections. But the House will be a bigger challenge as the party is on track to have a paper-thin majority of 220-215, which will shrink even further early in the Trump era as some GOP members leave to join his administration.

"I've told all the freshmen and the returning members: Be ready for a very busy first 100 days," said House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La. "We've got to do a lot of things at the same time. We're going to be walking and chewing gum."

They'll also have to navigate deadlines to prevent a government shutdown and avert a calamitous debt default.

"It'll be super challenging," said Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C. "And the reason for that is you have razors at margins, and we're obviously not going to get any Democrat votes. The key is going to be addressing all these coalitions that are likely going to threaten an insufficient number of votes unless they get their priorities. ... It's infinitely more complex to get a reconciliation outcome in this cycle out of the House than the Senate."

Democrats are already gearing up to blast the package as a giveaway to the wealthy, reprising their attacks on the 2017 Trump tax law by highlighting the tax breaks for the highest income earners.

"Republicans are trying to take actions that will benefit the most fortunate and grow the debt for future generations," said Rep. Brad Schneider, D-Ill., the newly elected chair of the moderate New Democrat Coalition. "They've made it very clear they're not going to look to find any compromise. They're going to have to work within their own caucus, this very narrow majority."

DOL Rule Increasing Salary Threshold Set Aside

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas has vacated and set aside the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)'s final rule increasing the salary threshold for the "White Collar" overtime exemptions under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) on a nationwide basis.

The court held that each of the three components of the rule exceeded the DOL's statutory authority under the FLSA. The court had previously enjoined enforcement of the rule against the State of Texas in its capacity as an employer of state employees; its final decision now vacates the rule for all employers nationwide. This means, most notably, that the increase in the salary level to be exempt to $1,128.00 per week ($58,656 per year) will NOT go into effect January 1, 2025. The court also struck down the July 1, 2024, increase to $844.00 per week ($43,888 per year). Finally, the court held that the final rule's automatic "escalator" provision, which would have increased the threshold every three years going forward, was also unlawful. As such, the current salary threshold to be exempt under an applicable white-collar exemption is $684.00 per week ($35,568 per year).

What Comes Next?

The January 1, 2025, increase will not go into effect as scheduled, and as a matter of law, the July 1, 2024, increase is nullified. The salary threshold will revert to $684 per week ($35,568 per year). Employers that previously adjusted salaries or the exemption status of employees to meet the July 1 salary level of $844.00 per week ($43,888 per year) may have the opportunity to reduce the salary increase and/or exemption status of affected employees.

The DOL may seek to appeal the lower court's decision to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. That said, with the upcoming change in the presidential administration, we predict that under new leadership the DOL would likely abandon any appeal and allow the lower court's decision to stand. Going forward, it is less clear whether the Trump administration will revisit some or all the rule, repealing it entirely, or perhaps adopting a different formulation.

State Salary Thresholds

To ensure compliance, be aware of state salary threshold requirements that are higher than the Federal requirement.

The following states have their own salary thresholds that employers need to comply.

Alaska: twice the state's minimum wage rate for a 40-hour workweek ($938.40 per week as of January 1, 2024).

California: twice the state's minimum wage rate for a 40-hour workweek ($1,280.00 per week as of January 1, 2024).

Colorado: changes July 1 of each year ($1,057.69 per week as of July 1, 2024).

Maine: $844.00 per week as of July 1, 2024; $1,128.00 per week as of January 1, 2025.

New York: $1,300.00 per week as of March 13, 2024.

Washington: twice the state's minimum wage rate for a 40-hour workweek ($1,302.40 per week as of January 1, 2024).

Mexico Suggests it Would Impose its Own Tariffs to Retaliate Against any Trump Tariffs, AP

President Claudia Sheinbaum suggested that Mexico could retaliate with tariffs of its own, after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose 25% import duties on Mexican goods if the country doesn't stop the flow of drugs and migrants across the border.

Sheinbaum said she was willing to engage in talks on the issues, but said drugs were a U.S. problem.

"One tariff would be followed by another in response, and so on until we put at risk common businesses," Sheinbaum said, referring to U.S. automakers that have plants on both sides of the border.

She said Tuesday that Mexico had done a lot to stem the flow of migrants, noting "caravans of migrants no longer reach the border." However, Mexico's efforts to fight drugs like the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl — which is manufactured by Mexican cartels using chemicals imported from China — have weakened in the last year.

Sheinbaum said Mexico suffered from an influx of weapons smuggled in from the United States, and said the flow of drugs "is a problem of public health and consumption in your country's society."

Sheinbaum also criticized U.S. spending on weapons, saying the money should instead be spent regionally to address the problem of migration. "If a percentage of what the United States spends on war were dedicated to peace and development, that would address the underlying causes of migration," she said.

Sheinbaum's bristly response suggests that Trump faces a much different Mexican president than he did in his first term.

Back in late 2018, former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador was a charismatic, old-school politician who developed a chummy relationship with Trump. The two were eventually able to strike a bargain in which Mexico helped keep migrants away from the border — and received other countries' deported migrants — and Trump backed down on the threats.

It's not clear how serious Trump's threat is. The U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement forbids just imposing tariffs on other member countries. And it's not clear whether the economy could even tolerate sudden levies on imports: Auto plants on both sides of the border rely on each other for parts and components, and some production lines could screech to a halt.

"It is unacceptable and would cause inflation and job losses in Mexico and the United States," Sheinbaum said, while offering to talk about the issues. "If tariffs go up, who will it hurt? General Motors," she said.

Maine Sues Oil and Gas Giants for Climate Change Damage, Maine Public

Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey is accusing huge oil and gas companies of knowingly selling fossil fuels that hurt the environment.

And he wants them to pay for the damage from a warming climate caused by burning their products.

In a complaint filed in Cumberland County superior court, Frey said corporations including British Petroleum and Exxon misled consumers in order to keep selling harmful fuels.

"They knew for years that the increased use of their product would result in catastrophic impacts on states, just like Maine," Frey said in an interview.

But instead of issuing warnings, companies lied about the effects and sowed doubt on climate science, the state alleges.

And companies continued to aggressively market polluting fuels while people in Maine were harmed by sea level rise, damaging storms, drought and other harmful effects of a warming climate, Frey said.

"These companies, we allege, knew that this was going to happen, but hid their science, hid their knowledge in represented their products were fine to use," Frey said.

Maine alleges oil and gas companies and the American Petroleum Institute trade group violated state trespass, nuisance and liability laws.
Maine is the latest state to file climate lawsuits using state laws and follows attempts by California, Vermont and Massachusetts. The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected oil companies' attempts to get the cases moved to federal court.

Chevron, Shell and Sunoco were also named in Maine's suit.
In a statement, Shell spokesperson Natalie Gunnell said the company agreed action on climate change is needed now.

But the company does "not believe the courtroom is the right venue to address climate change, but that smart policy from government and action from all sectors is the appropriate way to reach solutions and drive progress," Gunnell said.

Chevron's counsel Theodore J. Boutrous said Maine's claims were identical to those dismissed by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Addressing climate change requires coordinated federal and international policy, "not meritless state court litigation attacking essential energy production," Boutrous said in a statement.

The API, similarly said climate policy was for Congress to debate and decide, not a patchwork of state courts.

And the campaign to wage lawsuits against the industry "is nothing more than a distraction from important national conversations and an enormous waste of taxpayer resources," General Counsel Ryan Meyers said in a statement.

Donald Trump's Call for 'Energy Dominance' is Likely to Run into Real-World Limits, AP

President-elect Donald Trump is set to create a National Energy Council that he says will establish American "energy dominance" around the world as he seeks to boost U.S. oil and gas drilling and move away from President Joe Biden's focus on climate change.

The energy council — to be led by North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, Trump's choice to head the Interior Department — will be key in Trump's pledge to "drill, drill, drill" and sell more oil and other energy sources to allies in Europe and around the globe.

The new council will be granted sweeping authority over federal agencies involved in energy permitting, production, generation, distribution, regulation and transportation, with a mandate to cut bureaucratic red tape, enhance private sector investments and focus on innovation instead of "totally unnecessary regulation," Trump said.

But Trump's energy wishes are likely to run into real-world limits. For one, U.S. oil production under Biden is already at record levels. The federal government cannot force companies to drill for more oil, and production increases could lower prices and reduce profits.

A call for energy dominance — a term Trump also used in his first term as president — "is an opportunity, not a requirement,'' for the oil industry to move forward on drilling projects under terms that are likely to be more favorable to industry than those offered by Biden, said energy analyst Kevin Book.

Whether Trump achieves energy dominance — however he defines it — "comes down to decisions by private companies, based on how they see supply-demand balances in the global marketplace,'' said Book, managing partner at ClearView Energy Partners, a Washington research firm. Don't expect an immediate influx of new oil rigs dotting the national landscape, he said.

Trump's bid to boost oil supplies — and lower U.S. prices — is complicated by his threat this week to impose 25% import tariffs on Canada and Mexico, two of the largest sources of U.S. oil imports. The U.S. oil industry warned the tariffs could raise prices and even harm national security.

"Canada and Mexico are our top energy trading partners, and maintaining the free flow of energy products across our borders is critical for North American energy security and U.S. consumers," said Scott Lauermann, speaking for the American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry's top lobbying group.

American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, which represents U.S. refineries, also opposes potential tariffs, saying in a statement that "American refiners depend on crude oil from Canada and Mexico to produce the affordable, reliable fuels consumers count on every day."

Donald Trump's Call for 'Energy Dominance' is Likely to Run into Real-World Limits, AP

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Energy lobbyist Scott Segal said the idea of centering energy decisions at the White House follows an example set by Biden, who named a trio of White House advisers to lead on climate policy. Segal, a partner at the law and policy law firm Bracewell, called Burgum "a steady hand on the tiller" with experience in fossil fuels and renewables.

And unlike Biden's climate advisers — Gina McCarthy, John Podesta and Ali Zaidi — Burgum will probably take his White House post as a Senate-confirmed Cabinet member, Segal said.

Dustin Meyer, senior vice president of policy, economics and regulatory affairs at the American Petroleum Institute, called the new energy council "a good thing" for the U.S. economy and trade. "Conceptually it makes a lot of sense to have as much coordination as possible," he said.

Still, "market dynamics will always be the key" for any potential increase in energy production, Meyer said.

Jonathan Elkind, a senior research scholar at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy, called energy dominance a "deliberately vague concept," but said, "It's hard to see how (Trump) can push more oil into an already saturated market."

Trump has promised to bring gasoline prices below $2 a gallon, but experts call that highly unlikely, since crude oil prices would need to drop dramatically to achieve that goal. Gas prices averaged $3.06 nationally as of Friday, down from $3.25 a year ago, according to AAA.

Elkind and other experts said they hope the new energy council will move beyond oil to focus on renewable energy such as wind, solar and geothermal power, as well as nuclear. None of those energy resources produces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

"Failure to focus on climate change as an existential threat to our planet is a huge concern and translates to a very significant loss of American property and American lives," said Elkind, a former assistant energy secretary in the Obama administration. He cited federal statistics showing two dozen weather disasters this year that caused more than $1 billion in damage each. A total of 418 people were killed.

Trump has played down risks from climate change and pledged to rescind unspent money in the Inflation Reduction Act, Biden's landmark climate and health care bill. He also said he will stop offshore wind development when he returns to the White House in January.

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