

Trump waives Biden air emissions rules for plastic resin plants



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President Donald Trump's administration is exempting dozens of plastic resin and chemical plants from Biden-era air emissions rules, arguing that waivers are needed to maintain domestic supply chains and boost national security.

The chemical industry hailed the July 17 White House [decision](#) as much-needed relief from unworkable regulations from President Joe Biden's administration, while environmental groups condemned it, saying people would breathe more toxic air as a result.

The Trump decision grants two-year waivers to major new [air emissions rules released in 2024](#). One of the rules covered 80 chemicals and required fence line monitoring for six compounds, including plastics building blocks benzene, 1,3-butadiene and vinyl chloride.

The [waivers exempt](#) many large plastics resin and feedstock facilities along the Gulf Coast, including those operated by Formosa Plastics Corp., Westlake Vinyls LLC, Denka, Indorama, TotalEnergies and Dow Chemical.

They also exempt a Sabic Innovative Plastics plant in Indiana and Trinseo facilities in Georgia and Michigan.

The Biden rule was only the second time the Environmental Protection Agency had required an industrial sector to undertake detailed fence line emissions monitoring, which is designed to give [more health protection](#) to communities living in the vicinity of industrial plants.

The previous time was a 2015 rule for petroleum refining.

The Trump administration said the monitoring requirements in the Biden plan were impractical, the technology to implement it was frequently unavailable and it said the waivers were needed to bolster U.S. supply chains.

"Maintaining a robust domestic chemical industry is vital to safeguarding the supply chains that underpin our economy and to reducing the Nation's dependence on foreign control over materials critical to national resilience," the White House said in its announcement. "As adversaries expand influence over key inputs, continued domestic production is essential not only to economic resilience but also to military readiness, public health, and national preparedness."

The Environmental Defense Fund, however, said the Trump administration decision amounts to a "free pass to put more cancer-causing and toxic substances into our air."

"President Trump's callous and dangerous actions would let some of the country's worst industrial polluters evade compliance with the safeguards that protect Americans from toxic air pollution," said Vickie Patton, EDF general counsel, in a [statement](#).

Along with the order covering 53 petrochemical plants, Trump also signed orders July 17 granting waivers to three coal plants, eight taconite iron ore processing facilities and 39 medical product sterilization plants.

The waivers came after the Trump EPA in late March issued a [formal invitation](#) to companies to make email requests for Presidential exemptions to nine different Biden EPA emissions rules finalized in 2024.

EDF [sued](#) under the Freedom of Information Act for records related to the EPA invitation.

The New York Times [reported](#) in April that two industry groups, the American Chemistry Council and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, sent a letter to EPA requesting exemptions.

ACC [applauded](#) the Trump administration move, saying that the Biden rules could have forced plant shutdowns. It accused Biden's EPA of ignoring reductions in the industry's emissions.

"This action is a key step forward to necessary relief from several concerning parts of the Biden administration's rule, which required significant capital expenditures and risked potential shutdowns with unworkable compliance deadlines," ACC said. "The President's action appropriately recognizes the critical role of a strong chemical manufacturing sector to our nation's overall infrastructure and advanced manufacturing needs across supply chains."