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EXCERPTED FROM OUR FEATURED Q&A

Where Does the U.S. Exit From the Paris Climate Deal Leave Latin America?

WATCH ▶ LIVE

President Trump

makes a statement regarding the

Paris Accord

U.S. President Donald Trump announced June 1 that he was pulling the United States out of the Paris Agreement, saying the accord subjects Americans to "harsh economic restrictions" and "fails to live up to our environmental ideals." // Photo: White House.

Q President Donald Trump announced June 1 that he was withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement on climate change. Trump said his decision is based on his campaign promise to make U.S. workers his first priority. Was this the right move for the United States? How will the decision affect signatories from the Western Hemisphere—which include all but Nicaragua—as they work to cut carbon emissions? How will Trump's decision affect renewable energy initiatives in the region?

A Ethan G. Shenkman, partner at Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer in Washington and former deputy general counsel at the EPA, and Erika Norman, associate at Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer in Los Angeles: "First, withdrawal from Paris won't be effective until November 2020 at the earliest because of the terms of the agreement, and it is reversible by a subsequent administration. Second, Trump's decision is unlikely to change the fact that Latin America is a leader in renewable energy: Latin America produced 53 percent of its electricity from renewable sources (including hydropower) in 2014, while the global average was 22 percent. Chile, Mexico and Argentina have all set goals of producing approximately 20 percent of their electricity from non-hydro renewable sources by 2025. Other Latin American countries have already exceeded that goal. Nicaragua, which refused to sign the Paris Agreement because it didn't go far enough, already gets more than half of its energy from renewable resources and plans to grow that number to 90 percent by 2020. Third, with countries such as Mexico reaffirming their 'unconditional support for the Paris accord,' Trump's decision is unlikely to weaken efforts across the region to fight climate change. Although the United States is unlikely to meet its nationally determined contribution goals in the face of a continuing roll-back of Obama-era environmental policies, the fall off may not be as significant as would be expected given the efforts of states, localities and businesses to combat climate change. The impact of terminating contributions to the Green Climate Fund—which is currently funding 43 climate-related projects in developing countries including in Latin America—remains to be seen."