

The next potential environmental cataclysm on the horizon in Florida centers on [a proposed rock mine in the Everglades](#). Guess who wants it? Big Sugar. Shocking.

The Big Sugar cartels own hundreds of thousands of acres of former Everglades land south of Lake Okeechobee and want to dig a giant rock mine there, passing it off as water storage. It seems the South Florida Water Management District is initially in support. Big Sugar lobbyists wrote the SFWMD's "letter of project identification" which could enable the Big Sugar-backed mine to qualify for a key local permit.

All of this took place over the holidays late last year when the media and public were preoccupied elsewhere. Shady.

LINK: https://jasongarcia.substack.com/p/records-show-big-sugar-lobbyists?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=687064&post_id=155353744&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=false&r=g2ims&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email

This also helps explain why [Ron DeSantis wants the state to take over Everglades restoration](#) from the current 50-50 shared responsibility with the federal government. Getting the federal government out of oversight would grease the wheels for projects like the rock mine.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2025/01/16/desantis-wants-florida-to-control-everglades-restoration-not-the-feds/>

Upon returning to the White House, Donald Trump [immediately attacked the environment](#) and clean energy, removing incentives for purchasing electric vehicles, pausing wind power generation, opening more federal lands to oil exploration, [ending pauses on liquid natural gas exports](#), and [removing the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement](#), the international treaty supposedly holding nations accountable to climate action.

In Trump's mind, somehow, electric cars take jobs away from American autoworkers despite American autoworkers making electric cars.

Wind power generation is peak in Great Plains red states: Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa. Hopefully, politicians and locals there will push back. For whatever reason, Trump has always particularly hated wind power.

Who are America's peers when it comes to being outside the Paris Climate Agreement: Iran, Libya and Yemen. Those are the only other countries in the world not on board. Good company. Private philanthropic foundations have stepped forward to [fund the U.S. obligations to the agreement](#) in lieu of the federal government.

LINK: https://grist.org/politics/trump-climate-actions-day-one-energy-emergency/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

More: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/22/trump-big-oil-energy-priorities-explained?utm_term=679230704e79f3e1f24035d73e561f52&utm_campaign=DownToEarth&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email

More: https://grist.org/politics/us-leaving-paris-agreement-trump-deregulatory-agenda/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

More: <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/bloomberg-philanthropy-cover-us-climate-dues-after-paris-withdrawal-2025-01-23/>

A sneaky and deplorable piece of hypocrisy coming out of the final days of the Biden White House that I missed initially. It concerns data centers, massive, Amazon warehouse sized buildings housing acres of super computers necessary for the complex processing required by artificial intelligence.

[The amount of energy](#) – and water – required to run the computers producing “generative AI,” like Chat GPT, is astronomical. An Elon Musk xAI data center/supercomputer [proposed for suburban Memphis projects](#) to use 1,000,000 gallons of water PER DAY! and electricity comparable to that of 100,000 homes!

Google’s emissions are up 48% in 5 years. Microsoft’s are up 30% since 2020. Those soaring figures are being driven by mass investments in data centers to power AI tools.

Forecasts expect [data centers to consume a full 12% of the nation’s energy by 2028](#).

On his way out the door, [via executive order](#), Biden asked the Departments of Defense and Energy to lease federal land sites to private sector entities to construct cutting edge AI data centers in the name of national security and protecting America’s advantage in the tech/AI sector. Approval of leases and sites are supposed to have clean energy generation attached to them.

As mentioned, the data centers are water and energy hogs. Their construction also brings the typical environmental ruin associated with large development. And why is the federal government leasing federal land to private, multi-billion-dollar tech companies anyhow? Why not lease this land to conservation organizations for carbon storage, rewilding, or biodiversity support, or to small businesses for their needs? More government welfare for industry.

When the federal government leases land to private industry – take Big Oil or ranchers as classic examples – the environment always suffers.

This action is particularly duplicitous for Biden seeing as how he used his outgoing address to the nation to highlight the [growing Tech-Industrial complex](#) – Big Tech, Apple, Google, Facebook, Amazon, Twitter/X, etc. – and how those companies mine user data, spread disinformation, and erode democracy, while raking in larger and larger profits, allowing them to fund and tilt elections. Take Musk’s \$250 million in funding given to the latest Trump campaign.

Biden’s right to call out the Tech-Industrial complex and its threats to American democracy and society, and then he turns around and hands over federal land to these same companies to ramp up more and more artificial intelligence. Never mind how misinformation and algorithm doctoring by Facebook and Twitter/X fundamentally cost his party presidential elections in 2016 and 2024. This executive order is environmentally disastrous and politically stupid.

You may have heard Trump promote \$20B of investing coming to the U.S. via a company from the United Arab Emirates and how this will boost the economy here. [Most of that money will go to build](#)

[data centers](#). While data centers do support some initial construction and manufacturing jobs, once they're operational, they're more like storage facilities with VERY few jobs or economic benefit to the communities they inhabit. But they sure drain power and water.

These data centers are also increasingly being linked to adverse human health impacts, like at [this Bitcoin mining town in Texas](#).

Make it a reflex: when you hear "data center," cringe, and assume some tech giant is about to bilk a community for tax breaks and raid its power and water supply.

LINK: <https://disconnect.blog/generative-ai-is-a-climate-disaster/>

LINK: <https://www.actionnews5.com/2024/06/06/million-gallons-day-elon-musks-supercomputer-plans-raise-questions-about-local-water-supply/>

LINK: <https://apnews.com/article/biden-white-house-ai-artificial-intelligence-7458d9d1bb537929c5dcfb5192695223>

LINK: <https://www.nextgov.com/artificial-intelligence/2025/01/biden-orders-federal-land-be-leased-ai-data-center-development/402177/>

LINK: <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/what-the-tech-industrial-complex-looks-like-under-trump.html>

LINK: <https://apnews.com/article/trump-damac-emirates-investment-data-centers-00aa7c2189ba631eede4d232797a296f>

LINK: <https://time.com/6982015/bitcoin-mining-texas-health/>

You likely appreciate the environment for its own sake. For its beauty, the biodiversity it supports, the plants and animals, the enjoyment you receive from time spent in nature. To you – to us – nature is a critical and inseparable component of the human experience.

Not everyone shares this opinion, obviously. Others, including many of the most powerful politicians and business executives (see above) perceive the environment only through a prism of profit. To them, a tree has no value until it's cut down and sold as timber.

These people have to be sold on the value of nature by highlighting the value of nature. To wit, [the business case for saving coral reefs](#).

LINK: https://grist.org/oceans/the-business-case-for-saving-coral-reefs/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

A more in-depth look at [the economic argument for nature](#) and "ecosystem services."

LINK: https://happyeconews.com/the-economic-value-of-nature/?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_source_platform=mailpoet&utm_campaign=weekly-top-5-news-7

Oysters, similarly, contribute massive financial benefits to the communities where they reside filtering water, reducing storm surge, bolstering biodiversity, improving sportfishing, and supporting

harvesting economies. Keep an eye out for this [Florida oyster documentary](#) on your local PBS station and PBS streaming.

LINK: <https://www.oyster.film/>

[Oyster harvesting in Florida remains devastated](#) by destruction of habitat, water pollution, low water flows from freshwater rivers, and overharvesting in the immediate aftermath of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

LINK: <https://www.theinvadingsea.com/2025/01/13/oyster-reefs-florida-unfiltered-documentary-apalachicola-bay-aquaculture-climate-change/>

More [Florida oyster restoration efforts](#).

LINK: <https://flamingomag.com/2025/01/20/cainnon-gregg-pelican-oyster-co/>

More on [the myriad benefits of oyster reefs](#).

LINK: https://happyeconews.com/oyster-reefs-a-natural-solution/?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_source_platform=mailpoet&utm_campaign=weekly-top-5-news-7