

## Trump Transition Tracker

Updates as of 1 PM EST on Tuesday, January 14, 2025.

### Transition Updates

**Confirmation hearings are underway.** The first hearing for President-elect Donald Trump's contentious pick for Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, was underway this morning. In the hearing, Hegseth endured intense questioning from Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee, while Republicans sent more positive signals. The veteran and Fox News host faced scrutiny from Democrats on his comments about women serving in the military and his failure to meet with any other Democrat on the committee other than Ranking Member Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI). Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) sparred with Hegseth and suggested he was unqualified for the position, especially in light of [accusations](#) of his financial mismanagement of past organizations. Most significantly, Hegseth responded to questions by potential swing vote Joni Ernst (R-IA) by stating – in contrast to recent [comments](#) to the contrary – that he would support women in combat roles “so long as meritocratic standards are not eroded.” Several more hearings are scheduled for tomorrow, including Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) for Secretary of State, Pam Bondi for Attorney General and Kristi Noem for Homeland Security. Notably, hearings have yet to be set for three of Trump's more controversial picks: Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. for Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence and Kash Patel to lead the FBI.

**GOP Senate leader says Obama set confirmation gold standard.** Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) is feeling the pressure to get Trump's cabinet and agency heads in place ASAP. In [remarks on the Senate floor](#) on January 9, Thune noted that in 2009, President Barack Obama had 12 cabinet secretaries in place within 15 days of taking office. He added that “[i]t took the Trump and Biden Administrations three times longer to get the same number confirmed. We need to get back to the Obama standard, and we are going to need Democrats to cooperate in order to do that.” Thune will undoubtedly push the GOP conference to move quickly, but don't expect Democrats to do him, the conference, or Trump any favors. It has been widely reported that Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has told his colleagues to use the hearings as a platform to grill Trump's nominees and point out what that MAGA agenda means for the country.

**Energy Policy Overhaul: Trump's plans to undo Biden's environmental agenda.** Trump is preparing to enact a series of executive orders aimed at boosting U.S. fossil fuel production and rolling back policies established by President Biden. Trump's initiatives will focus on reversing Biden's environmental and energy regulations, particularly those affecting the oil, natural gas, and electric vehicle (EV) industries. Expect Trump to attempt to reverse Biden's offshore drilling bans and restrictions on federal lands, undo stringent tailpipe emissions regulations, resume approving natural gas export projects, withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord again, create a national energy council managed by top officials like North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum (Interior Secretary nominee) and oil executive Chris Wright (Energy Secretary nominee). Trump's efforts to repeal regulations restricting fossil fuel extraction will likely face legal challenges. The fossil fuel industries, particularly oil, natural gas and gas-powered automobiles, stand to benefit most from Trump's proposed executive actions.

**DOGE plans to put paws on the ground at federal agencies.** Though the specific [plans](#) and structure of Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy's nongovernmental Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) remain closely held secrets, recent reporting suggests that the Trump allies are planning to insert two DOGE-affiliated foot soldiers into each major government agency to work as temporary – and potentially unpaid – employees. DOGE now seems unlikely to be set up as a formal outside organization but will instead serve as an unofficial but influential network of cost-cutters embedded in government agencies for several-month periods before being rotated out and returning to their private sector jobs. Republicans – and even some [Democrats](#) – seem open to at least considering a role for DOGE at this stage. For example, Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) is rolling out six new bills to help forward the DOGE mission after Trump takes office. These bills would reduce telework for federal employees, require agency guidance to clarify that they are not laws and mandate early notice ahead of new policy proposals from federal agencies.

**Israel-Hamas deal in sight?** There have been [reports](#) of an eleventh-hour breakthrough in negotiations to close a hostage release deal with an accompanying ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. However, renewed Israeli airstrikes on Gaza indicate that a deal remains far from assured. A deal in the coming days or weeks would hand Trump an early win, similar to how Ronald Reagan announced the conclusion of the Iran hostage crisis on his inauguration day in 1981. Notably, Biden's National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, was accompanied by Trump's Middle East Envoy Steve Witkoff at the negotiations in Qatar.

**Cabinet Spotlight: Secretary of Housing & Urban Development nominee Scott Turner.** A former NFL star who served in Trump's first term, Turner is currently the chair of the [Center for Education Opportunity](#) at [America First Policy Institute](#), a pro-Trump think tank that was formed in 2021 and has played a key role in developing policy proposals for Trump's second term. In the first Trump administration, Turner led the [White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#) which was tasked with turning around distressed communities and included steering billions in private investment to so-called Opportunity Zones – economically depressed areas eligible to be used for the federal tax incentives. The effort won bipartisan praise, though critics suggested the wealthy investors getting tax breaks saw more benefit than local residents. Turner was twice elected to the Texas House of Representatives, serving from 2013 to 2017, and [opponents are pointing](#) to several votes he cast as potential red flags to lead the federal agency that oversees housing for the poorest Americans, which shelters more than 4.3 million low-income families through public housing, rental subsidy and voucher programs. Despite the criticism, Turner should not have an issue being confirmed.

## Trade, Tariffs & Investments

**Canada willing to take on “tariff man” with same tools.** In 2018, Canada retaliated against U.S. tariffs dollar-for-dollar, targeting U.S. steel and aluminum imports. The spat was eventually resolved with the renegotiation of NAFTA into the USMCA. This time around, outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has [signaled](#) that Canada would take a similar approach and suggested that Ottawa's going tit-for-tat with the U.S. had been effective last time. Trudeau also noted that tariffs on Canadian exports – which include oil and electricity – would likely add to already-rising prices for American consumers. While the Canadians are keeping their powder dry for now, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly will visit Washington on January 15 to issue a warning to the Trump team about Canada's willingness to retaliate swiftly and thoroughly against any proposed tariffs. With Trump weighing rapid tariff actions soon after taking office, watch to see whether Ottawa's threats will be enough to stave off a confrontation, at least for now.

## Regulation & Deregulation

**Outgoing administration leaves pandemic roadmap.** The Biden Administration announced it will leave behind a 300-page pandemic response plan for successive administrations. However, Trump has long been critical of the Biden administration's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and has vowed to shut down the White House's Office of Pandemic Preparedness and Response Policy (OPPRP). The move comes as Trump plans to appoint prominent vaccine skeptics, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., to lead the federal health bureaucracy. Expect the Trump administration to largely disregard the plan.

## Technology

**Biden's swan song: AI export controls.** Just one week before Trump's inauguration, the Biden administration [released](#) a sweeping new framework for export controls on AI technologies. The framework sets restrictions based on geography, with restrictions set across three tiers of countries: U.S. allies, U.S. adversaries, and the rest of the world. The new curbs represent the culmination of Biden's export control efforts over his tenure, which have gradually ratcheted up restrictions on China's access to advanced U.S. semiconductors and other critical and emerging technologies. Though Democrats and Republicans in Congress have supported stricter controls on high-tech exports to China in the past, some Republicans criticized the new rules as putting an undue

burden on the U.S. semiconductor industry. For example, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) called Biden’s rule a “misguided approach” that threatens innovation. Once inaugurated, Trump will need to balance his desire to reduce U.S. trade deficits with the impetus from his national security to restrict the flow of U.S. tech to China.

## APCO Deep Dives

Visit our [Agenda '24 page](#) for APCO’s post-election analyses on:

- Results
- Global Reaction
- Health Care
- DEI
- ESG & Sustainability
- AI
- The Changing Media Landscape
- Non-profit & Philanthropy

## Confirmation Hearings

### Tuesday, January 14

- Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth — 9:30 am

### Wednesday, January 15

- Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem — 9:00 am
- Attorney General Pam Bondi — 9:30 am
- Secretary of State Marco Rubio — 10:00 am
- Secretary of Energy Chris Wright — 10:00 am
- Director of the Central Intelligence Agency — 10:00 am
- Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy — 10:00 am
- Director of the Office of Management and Budget Director — Russell Vought — 1:00 pm

### Thursday, January 16

- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Eric Turner — 10:00 am
- Interior Secretary Doug Burgum — 10:00 am
- Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Lee Zeldin — 10:00 am
- Attorney General Pam Bondi — 10:15 am
- Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent — 10:30 am

### Week of January 20

- Secretary of State — Marc Rubio
- Secretary of Veteran Affairs — Doug Collins

Click [here](#) for a Senate calendar of confirmed hearings.

For more information email Dan Scandling at [dscandling@apcoworldwide.com](mailto:dscandling@apcoworldwide.com).

For more information on Trump Inauguration packages, please email Dan Meyers at [dmeyers@apcoworldwide.com](mailto:dmeyers@apcoworldwide.com).



[www.apcoworldwide.com/agenda24](http://www.apcoworldwide.com/agenda24)

building un/common ground.™