AOW 13 Period: Name:

1. Summarize main and important points in margins, and underline key sentences.
2. Include your own original reactions and questions in margins.
3. Write a one-page reflection and attach it to the article.

**Codes**: MI=More Main Ideas need summarizing; OC=More Original Content needed

# **Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Releases Green New Deal Outline**

February 7, 20195:01 AM ET, Heard on [All Things Considered](https://www.npr.org/programs/all-things-considered/2019/02/07/692268916), [DANIELLE KURTZLEBEN](https://www.npr.org/people/409798174/danielle-kurtzleben)

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., think they have a start to a solution. Thursday they [are introducing](https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=5729033-Green-New-Deal-FINAL) a framework defining what they call a "Green New Deal" — what they foresee as a massive policy package that would remake the U.S. economy and, they hope, eliminate all U.S. carbon emissions. That's a really big — potentially impossibly big — undertaking."Even the solutions that we have considered big and bold are nowhere near the scale of the actual problem that climate change presents to us," Ocasio-Cortez told NPR's Steve Inskeep in an interview that aired Thursday on Morning Edition.

She added: "It could be part of a larger solution, but no one has actually scoped out what that larger solution would entail. And so that's really what we're trying to accomplish with the Green New Deal."

**What is the Green New Deal?**

In very broad strokes, the Green New Deal legislation laid out by Ocasio-Cortez and Markey sets goals for some drastic measures to cut carbon emissions across the economy, from electricity generation to transportation to agriculture. In the process, it aims to create jobs and boost the economy. In that vein, the proposal stresses that it aims to meet its ambitious goals while paying special attention to groups like the poor, disabled and minority communities that might be disproportionately affected by massive economic transitions like those the Green New Deal calls for.

Importantly, it's a nonbinding resolution, meaning that even if it were to pass (more on the challenges to that below), it wouldn't itself create any new programs. Instead, it would potentially affirm the sense of the House that these things should be done in the coming years. Lawmakers pass nonbinding resolutions for things as simple as [congratulating Super Bowl winners](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-resolution/58), as well as to send political messages — for example, [telling the president they disapprove of his trade policies](https://slate.com/business/2018/07/trump-and-trade-congress-passes-non-binding-purely-symbolic-motion-to-not-really-stop-him.html), as the Senate did in summer 2018.

**What are the specifics of that framework?**

The [bill calls for a](https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/sites/ocasio-cortez.house.gov/files/Resolution%20on%20a%20Green%20New%20Deal.pdf) "10-year national mobilizations" toward accomplishing a series of goals that the resolution lays out. Among the most prominent, the deal calls for "meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources." The ultimate goal is to stop using fossil fuels entirely, Ocasio-Cortez's office told NPR, as well as to transition away from nuclear energy.

In addition, the framework, as described in the legislation as well as a [blog post](https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/media/blog-posts/green-new-deal-faq) — containing an updated version of ["FAQs"](https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=5729035-Green-New-Deal-FAQ) provided to NPR by Ocasio-Cortez's office — calls for a variety of other lofty goals:

* "upgrading all existing buildings" in the country for energy efficiency;
* working with farmers "to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions ... as much as is technologically feasible" (while supporting family farms and promoting "universal access to healthy food");
* "Overhauling transportation systems" to reduce emissions — including expanding electric car manufacturing, building "charging stations everywhere," and expanding high-speed rail to "a scale where air travel stops becoming necessary";
* A guaranteed job "with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations and retirement security" for every American;
* "High-quality health care" for all Americans.

Which is to say: the Green New Deal framework combines big climate-change-related ideas with a wish list of progressive economic proposals that, taken together, would touch nearly every American and overhaul the economy.

**Are those ideas doable?**

Many in the climate science community, as well as Green New Deal proponents, agree that saving the world from disastrous effects of climate change requires aggressive action. And some of the Green New Deal's goals are indeed aggressive. For example, Ocasio-Cortez told NPR that "in 10 years, we're trying to go carbon-neutral." According to Jesse Jenkins, a postdoctoral environmental fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School, that may be an unreachable goal. "Where we need to be targeting really is a net-zero carbon economy by about 2050, which itself is an enormous challenge and will require reductions in carbon emissions much faster than have been achieved historically," he said. "2030 might be a little bit early to be targeting." Similarly, removing combustible engines from the roads or expanding high-speed rail to largely eliminate air travel would require nothing short of revolutionizing transportation.

Likewise, some of the more progressive economic policies — universal health care and [a job guarantee](https://www.npr.org/2018/05/08/609091985/likely-2020-democratic-candidates-want-to-guarantee-a-job-to-every-american), for example — while popular among some Democrats, would also be very difficult to implement and transition into. On top of all that, implementing all of these policies could cost trillions upon trillions of dollars. Altogether, the Green New Deal is a loose framework…..

**So will it pass?**

That looks unlikely. Yes, there's some energy for it on the left — some House Democrats [have already said they will support the bill](https://www.axios.com/green-new-deal-house-resolution-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-9bca3bd8-3932-43e8-87c9-caf2011ed533.html). However, there are indications House leadership isn't prioritizing the idea as much as those more liberal Democrats would like — Speaker Nancy Pelosi [frustrated Green New Deal proponents](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/423492-house-dems-formalize-climate-committee-plans-without-green-new-deal) by not giving them the kind of committee they wanted to put the policies together. … In addition, it's easy to see how the bill could be dangerous for moderate House Democrats, many of whom come from swing districts and may be loath to touch such a progressive proposal. Among Republicans — even those worried about climate change — the package, with its liberal economic ideas, will also likely be a nonstarter. "Someone's going to have to prove to me how that can be accomplished because it looks to me like for the foreseeable future we're gonna be using a substantial amount of fossil fuels," said Rep. Francis Rooney, R-Fla., co-chair of the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, speaking to NPR before the Green New Deal's text was released. For his part, Rooney is in favor of a carbon tax, [a policy he helped propose](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/418596-bipartisan-group-of-lawmakers-propose-landmark-carbon-tax) with a bipartisan group of lawmakers in November….

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**Possible Prompts:**

* **The Green New Deal is ambitious and unlikely to pass. Are the goals ones we should aim for, or are they the wrong goals?**
* **Some think we should focus on markets to bring prosperity to all, while others argue we need a new deal to bring back the American Dream to workers. Who is right?**
* **Is universal health care a good or bad goal? Guaranteed jobs?**