

Biden's tariffs on China: A union worker responds - part 1

written by Chris Fry

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Biden has slapped a 100% tariff on Chinese electric vehicles.

When Biden was running for office in 2020, he said that Trump's tariffs on Chinese products increased inflation on the public and promised to reduce or eliminate them.

He did not.

Instead, on May 4, the Biden Administration announced a massive tariff increase on imported goods from the People's Republic of China (PRC):

Battery parts (non-lithium-ion batteries)	Increase rate to 25% in 2024
Electric vehicles	Increase rate to 100% in 2024
Facemasks	Increase rate to 25% in 2024
Lithium-ion electrical vehicle batteries	Increase rate to 25% in 2024
Lithium-ion non-electrical vehicle batteries	Increase rate to 25% in 2026
Medical gloves	Increase rate to 25% in 2026
Natural graphite	Increase rate to 25% in 2026
Other critical minerals	Increase rate to 25% in 2024
Permanent magnets	Increase rate to 25% in 2026
Semiconductors	Increase rate to 50% in 2025
Ship to shore cranes	Increase rate to 25% in 2024
Solar cells (whether or not assembled into modules)	Increase rate to 50% in 2024
Steel and aluminum products	Increase rate to 25% in 2024
Syringes and needles	Increase rate to 50% in 2024

Tariffs on medical supplies must be considered particularly bizarre, as the population is still subject to outbreaks of the deadly Covid virus. And public health officials are increasingly alarmed by a new outbreak from the avian H5N1 flu virus which has infected dairy cows and their milk across the country. Many farmworkers who milk cows have become ill from this virus.

A June 3 Scientific American [article](#) reports:

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently recommends that workers on farms where H5N1 has been detected have access to personal protective equipment, or PPE, such as N95 respirators, face masks, goggles and face shields. But it's only a recommendation, Lakdawala says.

In order to prevent bird flu from causing more infections in humans, Lakdawala thinks dairy workers on all farms should have access to and use proper PPE—especially face shields to protect their eyes. Getting workers to wear N95 masks while working all day in hot barns is unlikely, she notes, but a face shield would provide at least some protection.

But in terms of the economic effects on workers and the oppressed communities, the most dramatic was the tariff increase was on electric vehicles (EVs), going from Trump's 25 percent to a whopping 100 percent, doubling the price of the cars, placing them out of reach for most of our class.

And Biden tripled tariffs on Chinese-manufactured lithium batteries, going from Trump's 8% to 25%.

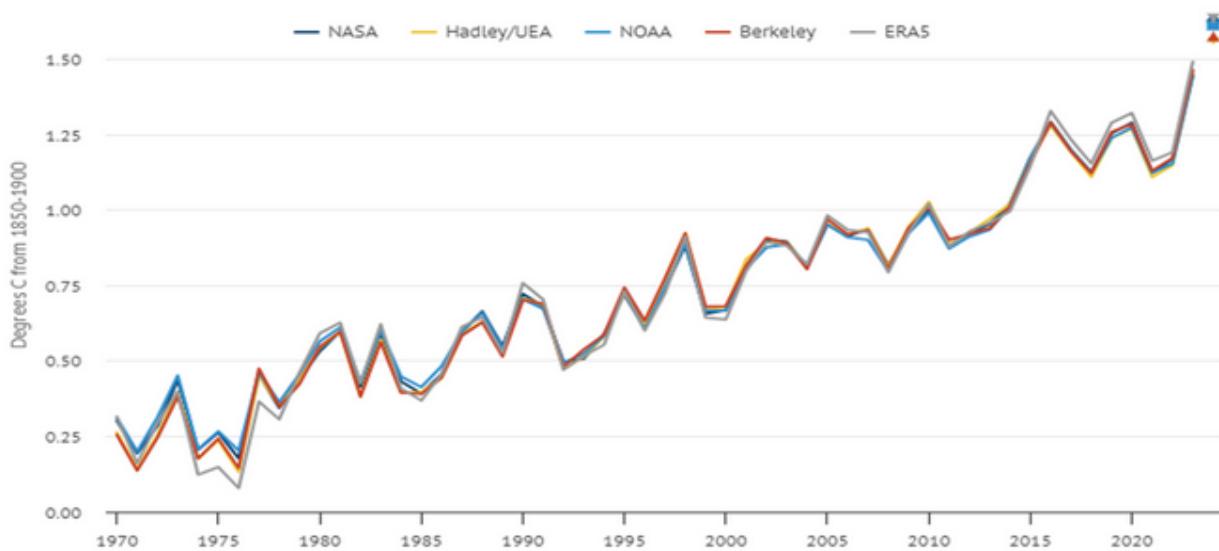
The big winner from Biden's tariffs: Global warming

A May 28th [article](#) from the Foreign Policy website describes these new tariffs from an environmental perspective:

The winner of the escalating, zero-sum green technology trade war between the United States and China may well be climate change. In the latest surge of election-year techno-nationalism, to protect and advance his green transition—and to out-Trump former U.S. President Donald Trump—President Joe Biden last week imposed a wave of new tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs), batteries, and solar cells as well as other Chinese goods, in addition to retaining all of Trump's tariffs on China.

Scientists are already predicting that 2024 will surpass 2023 as the warmest year globally:

Global surface temperature records, 1970-2023, and 2024 so far



A May 7 CNN [article](#) describes some of the catastrophic effects of this on people around the world:

The impacts have been stark. Swaths of Asia have been grappling with deadly heat: schools were closed for millions of children in Bangladesh, rice fields have shriveled in Vietnam, and people in India battled 110 degree Fahrenheit temperatures to vote in recent elections.

Global ocean heat in April was also record-breaking for the 13th consecutive month. Ocean surface temperatures reached 21.04 degrees, the highest on record for any April, and just a fraction below the overall record set in March, according to Copernicus data.

The impact on marine systems is devastating. A mass coral bleaching event

occurred this spring, which scientists said at the time could be the worst on record.

As for the U.S., the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has presented a grim hurricane [forecast](#) for 2024:

NOAA National Weather Service forecasters at the Climate Prediction Center predict above-normal hurricane activity in the Atlantic basin this year. NOAA's outlook for the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season, which spans from June 1 to November 30, predicts an 85% chance of an above-normal season, a 10% chance of a near-normal season and a 5% chance of a below-normal season.

NOAA is forecasting a range of 17 to 25 total named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher). Of those, 8 to 13 are forecast to become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 4 to 7 major hurricanes (category 3, 4 or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher). Forecasters have a 70% confidence in these ranges.

In 2021, to pass his corporate-friendly Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Biden promised a 50 percent to 52 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 2005 levels) by 2030, zero net emissions by 2050, and 50 percent of all new vehicles being zero-emission by 2030.

But in his campaign to “out-Trump” Trump and protect corporate profit margins and the oil and gas industry, these new tariffs mean that Biden’s climate promises go right out the window.

As part of Biden’s IRA, billions were allocated for public EV charging stations across the country. Yet by February 2024, there are only 61,000 public chargers in the U.S.

In China, by the end of 2023, there were 2.7 **million** such chargers, with a 40

percent increase expected this year.

Chris Fry is a Chrysler retiree and former member of UAW Local 51. He worked on the pre-final line as an assembler at Chrysler Lynch Road Assembly before the company shut down the plant.

[Part 2 - International solidarity, not corporate protectionism, key to union drives, jobs, and higher wages and benefits](#)

Source: [Fighting Words](#)

