White House releases "America's AI Action Plan"

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SUMMARY

On July 23, 2025, the White House released "Winning the Race: America's AI Action Plan," a document outlining nonbinding policy goals for federal regulation and support of artificial intelligence (AI). The action plan mirrors many of President Trump's existing policy aims, including a focus on US manufacturing, deregulation, trade, and content restrictions. This *On the Subject* summarizes the main objectives set forth in the action plan and provides key takeaways for AI developers, deployers, and consumers.

IN DEPTH

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Emphasis on speed**: Federal agencies are directed to accelerate AI innovation by removing regulations that may impede the speed of AI development and by expediting permits for data centers and other AI infrastructure. The administration directs the Office of Science and Technology Policy to launch a request for information from AI developers, deployers, and consumers in order to identify and address regulations that may hinder AI development or deployment. This effort would include identifying and revising or repealing regulations and subregulatory guidance.
- **Domestic AI infrastructure**: The action plan recommends a variety of approaches to expand AI infrastructure in the United States, including through the use of CHIPS Program Office, US Department of Energy (DOE), US Department of Defense (DOD), and National Science Foundation (NSF) funds to support chip production, grid upgrades, secure data centers, and AI-skilled workers in the United States.
- **AI exports, diplomacy, and security**: The action plan supports exporting AI technology (hardware, models, software, and standards) to allies and partners in order to promote US values and national security.

INDUSTRY PRIORITIES

While the action plan is broadly structured to focus on key "pillars" that represent overarching policy goals, each pillar contains distinct action items in a wide range of industries. The following is a brief summary of key objectives

in the action plan, organized by industry.

AI developers

Many aspects of the action plan support AI development and deployment. Two of the more interesting aspects of the action plan that directly implicate AI developers are that it:

- Encourages developers to release AI models that are open-source and open-weight.
- Puts into place certain policies to encourage model development that promotes "free speech" and "American values" and counters influence from foreign adversaries such as China.

The AI action plan specifically requires the US Department of Commerce (DOC) to revise the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) AI Risk Management Framework (RMF) to eliminate references to misinformation; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and climate change. AI developers and other stakeholders that have implemented AI governance frameworks based on the NIST AI RMF, particularly those with contractual obligations to do so, should monitor for updates to the NIST AI RMF and adjust their AI governance accordingly.

By encouraging more open-source and open-weight AI models, the administration appears to be seeking ways to improve access to large-scale computing power for startups and academics. AI developers are also encouraged to partner with the National AI Research Resource so start-ups and academics can rent large-scale AI development infrastructure without entering into long-term contracts. The administration expressed support for National Telecommunications and Information Administration-led programs to help small and mid-sized businesses adopt open-source AI models. Importantly, the action plan makes it clear that the decision "to release an open or closed model is fundamentally up to the developer."

Semiconductor industry

The action plan expresses support for continued CHIPS-funded manufacturing of semiconductors in the United States. The administration also states that certain environmental laws that may present barriers to new manufacturing opportunities should be removed or revised to advance manufacturing objectives.

Next-generation manufacturing and robotics

The administration explains that in order to support "next-generation manufacturing," it will mobilize the DOD, DOC, DOE, NSF, and others to invest, via existing grant funding opportunities, in foundational and translational technologies for next-generation robotics, drones, autonomous systems, and related supply chains. The action plan states that the DOC should convene stakeholders to identify and resolve supply chain bottlenecks in US robotics and

drone production.

Energy, data centers, and grid infrastructure

The administration outlines support for updating the US electric grid to enable more powerful AI data centers, through both stabilization of the existing grid and use of new energy generation technology such as enhanced geothermal, nuclear fission, and nuclear fusion.

High-security and government data centers

The action plan indicates the administration's intent to develop federal standards for classified, attack-resistant AI data centers (led by the DOD, the Intelligence Community, the National Security Council, and NIST) and to fast-track agency adoption of those secure compute environments.

Healthcare, energy, agriculture, and other regulated industries

Within specific sectors of the economy that might otherwise be slow to adopt AI, such as the healthcare, energy, and agriculture industries, the administration proposes to launch domain-specific regulatory sandboxes/centers of excellence to allow firms to safely test AI tools and publish shared results with fewer regulatory considerations. The action plan also discusses multi-stakeholder efforts to set AI performance standards and measure productivity gains in sectors such as healthcare, energy, and agriculture.

Defense and national security

In a fast-moving geopolitical environment, the administration states that it will establish an "AI and autonomous systems virtual proving ground," create a streamlined process to pinpoint and automate priority workflows, and negotiate agreements with cloud and other compute providers that guarantee DOD priority access to large-scale computing in a national emergency. The administration also proposes to transform senior military colleges into centers of AI research, development, and instruction, embedding AI skills and curriculum across degree programs.

Scientific research and datasets

The administration proposes to direct the NSF, DOE, NIST, and other partners to invest in automated, cloud-enabled laboratories across engineering, materials science, chemistry, biology, and neuroscience, and to use long-term agreements to support focused-research organizations that combine AI with high-throughput experimentation.

The action plan charges the National Science and Technology Council's Machine Learning & AI Subcommittee with

setting minimum data-quality standards, requiring federally funded researchers to disclose nonproprietary datasets, creating secure compute environments at the National Science Foundation and DOE and an online portal for the National Secure Data Service, and exploring a whole-genome sequencing program for life on federal lands.

AI assurance, evaluation, and interpretability

The administration proposes to convene a cross-sector consortium (led by NIST and the DOC) to establish new measurement science and interoperable metrics for AI systems. They would also publish Center for AI Standards and Innovation-supported guidelines and resources so every federal agency can run mission-specific model evaluations and confirm legal compliance. The action plan discusses funding testbeds where multi-stakeholder teams can pilot AI in controlled settings across sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and healthcare.

Cybersecurity and critical infrastructure

The action plan calls for a US Department of Homeland Security-led AI Information Sharing & Analysis Center to circulate AI security threat intelligence across critical infrastructure sectors. The Department of Homeland Security will keep current private-sector guidance on remediating AI-specific vulnerabilities, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency must update its incident and vulnerability response playbooks to weave in AI scenarios and coordination with chief AI officers.

Workforce and skills

The action plan prioritizes AI skill-building across career and technical education, apprenticeships, and employer training, with US Department of the Treasury guidance enabling tax-free reimbursement for AI courses. The plan calls for a national initiative to map high-priority trades (such as electricians and HVAC techs) for AI-infrastructure build-out and fund employer-driven training and apprenticeships.

Biosecurity and life sciences safety

The administration proposes to mandate that federally funded labs use synthesis providers with robust sequence screening and customer verification and develop data-sharing networks to spot malicious orders.

Government operations and procurement

Within the federal government, the action plan calls for:

- Codifying the Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer Council as the government's main coordination hub for

AI adoption and linking it with existing executive branch councils such as the President's Management Council and Chief Data Officer Council.
- Creating a rapid-detail program so data scientists, software engineers, and other AI specialists can rotate to agencies that need them most.
- Crafting a uniform, government-wide catalog that lets any agency select, customize, and compare compliant AI models and see how peers are using them.
- Launching a General Services Administration-run initiative to move proven AI capabilities and use cases across agencies.

International trade and export controls

With regard to global trade, the action plan proposes that the DOC solicit proposals from industry consortia and, together with the US Department of State, EXIM Bank, Development Finance Corporation, and other agencies, broker export packages that bundle US-origin hardware, models, software, and standards for willing allies. An interagency group would explore using new and existing on-chip location-verification features and stand up a joint DOC – Intelligence Community effort to monitor diversion and expand end-use checks for AI-grade chips. Finally, the action plan tasks DOC with drafting new export controls on currently uncontrolled subsystems of semiconductor manufacturing equipment to close loopholes in the existing regime.

WHAT'S NEXT

While the AI action plan is nonbinding, AI developers and deployers should pay close attention to the wide-ranging and specific policy objectives that the administration sets forth. Binding executive orders related to AI are expected in the coming days and are likely to closely track the policy goals in the AI action plan.

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Our cross-practice team continues to closely monitor developments in AI. Reach out to one of the authors of this client alert or your regular McDermott lawyer to discuss the potential legal implications for your business.

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