

Elon Musk tells Donald Trump 'we shouldn't vilify the oil and gas industry'



Elon Musk, who famously owns an electric vehicle company and has said he wants to move humanity to “a sustainable energy civilization,” told former President Donald Trump during an interview on X that “we shouldn’t vilify the oil and gas industry.”

Musk interviewed Trump on his social media platform, where the livestream was delayed over 40 minutes due to technical difficulties. After long, rambling discussions about immigration, inflation, and foreign policy, Musk and Trump finally came to the subject of energy and climate change – where Musk surprisingly came to defense of the fossil fuel industry.

“I don’t think we should vilify the oil and gas industry and the people that have worked very hard in those industries to provide the necessary energy to support the economy,” Musk said.

“People that have worked very hard in those industries”

The Tesla CEO, who described his views as “pretty moderate” on energy despite owning an EV and home energy company, claimed the economy “would collapse” if oil and gas firms were forced to shutdown. Musk also said that the planet can transition to a sustainable energy economy in “50 or 100 years” – despite the scientific community warning that humanity is quickly reaching a tipping point on the climate. (Trump later changed it to “500 to 1000 years,” which Musk didn’t correct.)

“So it’s not like the house is on fire immediately,” Musk said. “But I think it is something we need to move towards... It’s probably better to move there faster than slower. But like without vilifying the oil and gas industry and without causing hardship in the short term.”

But he quickly contradicted himself. Musk acknowledged that the air will become harder to breath with the continued use of fossil fuels, causing people “headaches and nausea.” But that was no reason to quickly transition away from the use of planet-heating fuels. According to Musk, we can casually stroll into a more sustainable future.

“We still have quite a bit of time,” he said. “We don’t need to rush.”

Trump, who often sounded like he was slurring his words, quipped that rising sea levels means people would have more “oceanfront property.” That comment was quickly blasted out by Vice President Kamala Harris’ campaign.

Trump then briefly touched on one of his favorite topics, electric vehicles, claiming that fossil fuel-powered energy generation is what powers Tesla’s vehicles. “[We] can’t get away from it at this moment,” he said.

But the EV discussion didn’t go much further than that, despite Trump’s vows to end subsidies for plug-in cars that

could seriously impact Tesla's sales. Trump urged Musk to put solar panels on the roof of his cars. (Tesla filed a patent for a solar panel-covered tonneau cover for the Cybertruck, but didn't follow through.)

"People talk about global warming, or they talk about climate change, but they never talk about nuclear warming," Trump said. "An immediate problem."

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