

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



For Immediate Release
April 15, 2015

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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)

The President's UN Climate Pledge: Scientifically Justified or a New Tax on Americans?

Chairman Smith: Last June, the Obama Administration proposed sweeping new electricity regulations. Now, despite heavy and growing opposition to the proposal, the administration seeks to commit America to costly new requirements that won't improve the environment.

The president has promised the United Nations that the United States will cut its greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 28 percent over the next decade and by 80 percent or more by 2050. He is attempting to write large checks we simply cannot cash.

The pledge was made in preparation for a U.N. summit in Paris this December aimed at producing an international agreement that would impose legally binding requirements on the United States for the next decades.

But all of this activity—at home and abroad—disregards the concerns of the majority in Congress and many states. The president's attempt to justify his actions with an alarmist, one-sided focus on worst-case scenarios establishes a poor foundation for sound policy-making.

When President Obama took office, he had an opportunity to work with a Democrat controlled House and Senate to create climate legislation. But that effort failed because opposition to costly climate regulation crosses party lines.

Congress has repeatedly rejected the president's extreme climate agenda. So the administration instead has taken the unprecedented step of attempting to create laws on his own—and twist environmental regulations in ways Congress never intended.

Now the administration has packaged up all these regulations and promised their implementation to the U.N. But the president's "Power Plan" is nothing more than a power grab. Environmental laws can't trump the Constitution. They can't give the federal government the right to regulate the daily lives of citizens within their homes.

Regardless of what the president may try to claim, Congress has not given him or the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to re-write laws. Opposition to the president's agenda is widespread and continues to grow. At least 32 different states are openly opposed to the plan and many now consider the possibility of refusing to enact his edicts at all.

The majority of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate are opposed. And numerous organizations that are concerned about the cost and reliability of America's electricity grid

have issued dire warnings about the likely impacts of the president's plan. And the EPA's models show there will be no real climate benefits.

Whether that plan can stand up to legal scrutiny will take years to sort out. The legality of President Obama's unilateral action certainly will not be known when climate negotiators set out to create binding international rules in Paris later this year.

The president's far-reaching proposals and international promises will do lasting damage to our nation, all for little to no environmental benefit. In fact, the pledge to the U.N. is estimated to prevent only a 0.03° C temperature rise. And in testimony before this Committee, former Assistant Secretary for Energy, The Honorable Charles McConnell, noted that the president's Clean Power Plan would reduce sea level rise by less than half the thickness of a dime.

Meanwhile, middle and lower income American families will be hit hardest as energy costs inevitably rise. The president's pledge to the U.N. hinges on a questionable and unclear plan. The commitment submitted two weeks ago lacks details about how we will achieve such goals without burdening our economy. And it fails to quantify the specific climate benefits tied to the promise.

Today is April 15th, Tax Day. It is a day that many Americans dread. As more Americans feel squeezed by rising costs, flat wages, and rising taxes, we should ask ourselves: can we really afford another extreme and expensive mandate?

We will never reach the president's arbitrary targets, which would increase electricity costs, ration energy and slow economic growth. Such severe measures will have no discernable impact on global temperatures. They will make the government bigger and Americans poorer.

I hope today's hearing will demonstrate that the president's U.N. climate pledge is destructive to the American economy and would produce no substantive environmental benefits.

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