



SPECIAL REPORT: Republicans Have No Plan to Act on Climate Change

Before House Republicans left Washington for the July 4th recess, they passed a partisan bill (H.R.2014) to kill the President's strong actions on climate change and air pollution without offering a single proposal to meet those challenges to public health and our economy. Today, Senate Republicans are following in the footsteps of their House counterparts by advancing similar extreme provisions to kill the President's bold action on climate change in the Environment and Public Works Committee.

Despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of the American people want action on climate change, Republicans have not proposed an alternative to the President's Clean Power Plan to clean our air and save thousands of lives. Instead of introducing legislation to protect Americans from climate change, Republicans are attempting to block the President's plan in order to rig the rules in favor of special interest polluters and campaign contributors.

In the coming months, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker Boehner will try time and again to stop the President's Clean Power Plan, including through the appropriations process. They will try to gut clean energy research at the Department of Energy and attempt to stymie international negotiations to curb big polluters like China. All of these actions beg an important question: What's the Republican plan to act on climate change?

WHY NO GOP CLIMATE PLAN?

Republicans are working on behalf of polluting special interests. In the last election cycle alone, fossil fuel interests directly spent \$721 million – and hundreds of millions more through outside groups – on ads, lobbying, and other efforts to influence the climate debate. [Center for American Progress, [12/22/14](#)]

- Fossil fuel industries spent \$1.8 billion between 2010 and 2014 on lobbying to protect tax breaks and defeat environmental protections. [The Guardian, [5/12/15](#)]
- In 2014, U.S. taxpayers subsidized fossil fuel exploration and production to the tune of \$21 billion a year. Over the next decade, fossil fuel subsidies will cost the American taxpayer over \$100 billion. [The Guardian, [5/12/15](#)]

THE NEW GOP MAJORITY IS CONSISTENTLY AGAINST ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell wrote a letter to all 50 Governors urging them not to comply with EPA's Clean Power Plan. But even officials in his home state of Kentucky flatly rejected his unusual request to disregard the law. In a letter to the National Governors Association, as well as in an op-ed in a Kentucky newspaper, Senator McConnell urged states to simply not comply with sensible environmental protections whose legal justification has already been upheld by the Supreme Court. Environmental officials in McConnell's home state of Kentucky soundly rejected such an irresponsible approach and have moved to comply with the rule. [Reuters, [3/6/15](#); Lexington Herald-Leader, [3/3/15](#), Washington Post, [7/23/15](#)]

Republicans want to slash funding for clean energy research. Despite Republican calls for America to innovate our way out of the climate change crises, the Senate FY16 Energy and Water (E&W) appropriations bill slashes investment in DOE's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) office by nearly \$790 million, or 29 percent, compared with the President's budget. For example, the bill cuts the Wind Energy Program by 68 percent from the President's request and cuts funding for advanced component manufacturing, grid integration and a host of other activities necessary to advance both on and offshore wind turbines. The House FY16 E&W slashes clean energy research even further. The House bill cuts the EERE budget by over \$1 billion, or 40 percent compared with the President's budget. Senate Republican proposal cuts 9,000 scientists supported by National Science Foundation (NSF) research funding. [OMB, Senate Appropriations Committee, [6/11/15](#)]

Republicans oppose action to curb carbon pollution from power plants: Both the House and Senate FY16 Interior appropriations bills include riders that permanently dismantles efforts to address climate change by blocking EPA's effort to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants. The Senate provision will effectively allow states to opt out of the Administration's proposed Clean Power Plan without consequence, block meaningful progress in reducing carbon emissions and threaten human health, the environment and the nation's economic productivity. [[Senate Appropriations Committee](#), [House Appropriations Committee](#)]

Republicans oppose successful tax credits for renewable energy – like wind and solar – that have created hundreds of thousands of jobs and clean electric power.

- **Renewing the wind production tax credit could create over 100,000 jobs over four years.** The American Wind Energy Association estimates that the Production Tax Credit (PTC) will allow the wind industry to grow to over 100,000 jobs in four years and continue toward supporting 500,000 jobs by 2030. *Without the PTC, the industry stands to lose 35,000 American jobs.* At the end of 2013, the U.S. wind industry supported over 560 manufacturing facilities and supported over 50,500 full-time jobs in development, siting, construction, transportation, manufacturing, operations, and services. These 560 U.S. manufacturing facilities - including many whose workers are represented by United Steelworkers - build components for wind turbines. [American Wind Energy Association, [5/1/12](#); [American Wind Energy Association](#)]
- **Extending the solar investment tax credit would support the booming growth in solar jobs.** In large part due to the solar investment tax credit and the falling cost of solar for consumers, U.S. solar jobs are growing ten times faster than the national average employment growth. The solar industry has grown from 15,000

employees in 2005 to more than 143,000 today. These employees work at more than 6,100 companies, the vast majority being small businesses. Many workers are using their traditional construction training in this new industry. In 2013, the U.S. solar industry added almost 24,000 additional jobs and job creation in the industry grew at a rate of nearly 20 percent. [Renewable Energy World, [1/27/14](#); Solar Energy Industry Association, [4/30/14](#); Bloomberg, [1/27/14](#)]

Republicans oppose international climate change negotiations with China and India to reduce carbon pollution. During the debate on the Keystone XL pipeline, 50 Senate Republicans voted for Senator Blunt’s amendment #78, which would condemn the U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change and any U.S. effort to secure commitments from other countries to address climate change. The U.S. is already lowering carbon pollution at home, but this amendment tried to impede our ability to use this progress as leverage to secure commitments from developing countries, including China, to lower their climate-changing pollution. [Senate Roll Call vote 20, [1/22/15](#)]

Republicans oppose increased disclosure on campaign contributions, including third party groups like those backed by the Koch Brothers that vehemently oppose action on climate change. During this year’s debate on the budget resolution, Senate Republicans unanimously voted against an amendment offered by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and cosponsored by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) aimed at making it more difficult for corporations and billionaires to secretly influence federal elections through unlimited and undisclosed campaign expenditures – so-called “dark money.” Since *Citizens United*, there has been a dramatic rise in political spending by so-called “independent” groups with no disclosure requirements. In the 2014 elections—the most expensive midterm elections in our history, with over \$3.6 billion spent—the *Washington Post* reported that at least 31 percent of all independent spending was spent by groups that are not required to disclose their donors. And that doesn’t even count spending on so-called “issue ads,” which is not reported. [Senate Roll Call Vote 107, [3/26/15](#); Washington Post, [11/3/14](#)]

Despite the potential for record damage and increasingly powerful storm surge on our nation’s coasts, House Republicans are holding hearings calling the Department of Homeland Security’s efforts to plan for climate change “misplaced.” Instead of offering up a plan to deal with climate change, and recognizing the threat climate change poses to coastal infrastructure through sea level rise and increasingly powerful storms, Republicans are questioning why the Department of Homeland Security, Flood Insurance officials and FEMA are spending time looking into the implications of climate change. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) predicts that the costs of hurricane damage in 2075 will double due to climate change alone and could increase fivefold with additional coastal development. [House Committee on Homeland Security, [7/8/15](#), Congressional Budget Office, [6/2/15](#)]

THE REPUBLICAN VOTING RECORD OF CLIMATE DENIAL AND INACTION IS INESCAPABLE

- Earlier this year, Republicans voted repeatedly against stating that climate change is real. (Votes [12, 2015](#); [15, 2015](#))
- In 2011 and 2013, Republicans voted to prevent the EPA from reducing carbon pollution that contributes to climate change and endangers public health. (Vote [54, 2011](#); Vote [76, 2013](#))

- In 2007 and 2015, Republicans voted against considering the effects of climate change when planning infrastructure, despite insurers and the Congressional Budget Office warning of its impacts. (Vote [166, 2007](#); and Vote [38, 2015](#))
- In 2010, despite the overwhelming scientific consensus, Republicans voted against asserting that too much carbon pollution in the air is dangerous for human health and the environment. (Vote [184, 2010](#))
- In 2012 and 2015, Republicans voted against mercury air toxics standards for power plants. Toxic mercury and other air toxins from power plants like arsenic, lead and chromium are connected with a litany of health problems, including cancer. (Vote [72, 2013](#), and Vote [9, 2015](#))
- In 2011, Republicans voted against the EPA Cross-State Pollution Rule which was designed to clean up the air, reduce dangerous soot, and reduce smog-forming air pollution that impacts air quality and the health of more than 240 million people. (Vote [201, 2011](#))

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTS ACTION ON CLIMATE

77% of Americans support government action to combat climate change. A Stanford poll found 83% of Americans, including 61% of Republicans, say if nothing is done to reduce emissions, global warming will be a serious problem in the future. 77% of Americans say the federal government should be doing a substantial amount to combat climate change.

[New York Times/Stanford [Poll](#), 1/30/15]

67% of Americans support EPA action to curb carbon pollution from power plants. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll out found 67% of respondents support EPA's new rules, while 29% oppose them. 57% support requiring companies to cut emissions, even if it means higher power bills, up from 48% in October 2009.

[Wall Street Journal/NBC [Poll](#), 6/7/14]

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ARE ALREADY BEING FELT BY COMMUNITIES ACROSS AMERICA

American families and businesses are already paying the costs of climate change as it makes some extreme weather events more frequent or intense. Heat waves are getting longer, rainstorms are getting more extreme and this is leading to floods and droughts in some regions. Sea-level is rising and the ocean is becoming more acidic as carbon pollution increases. ([National Climate Assessment: Overview](#))

- As financially devastating as extreme weather is to individual families, all Americans -- through their tax dollars -- are paying for the impact of climate change. According to Budget Committee Democratic staff calculations, the federal government spent more than three times the amount on disaster relief in the last ten years than it did in the 1990s. Wildfire suppression costs are also rising. They have averaged over \$3 billion in recent years compared to about \$1 billion in the mid-1990s. In recognition of these and other costs to the federal government from climate change, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) added the federal government's fiscal exposure to climate change to their high risk list in 2013. While the GAO has found the government has

made some progress on dealing with the issue, climate-related fiscal risks were included in the 2015 high risk list. ([Senate Budget Committee Democrats](#), [GAO](#))

The West – Drought and water scarcity: The drought conditions being felt by hundreds of thousands on the Pacific coast and in the Southwest are expected to worsen in the coming years due to climate change. Water resources in the American West are already in decline. Streamflow totals in the Sacramento-San Joaquin, the Colorado, the Rio Grande, and in the Great Basin were 5% to 37% lower between 2001 and 2010 than the 20th century average flows. Studies from NASA show that, if the current pace of climate change continues unabated, periods of extended drought – called megadroughts—become increasingly likely for states like Arizona and parts of California. ([National Climate Assessment: Southwest](#), [Science Magazine](#), [Washington Post](#))

The Southeast – Rising sea levels and extreme weather: Sea level rise poses a significant threat to the Gulf States and the Southeast, with rising sea levels already costing millions. Critical infrastructure such as, roads, railways, ports, airports, oil and gas facilities, and water supplies are at low elevations and vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise. Cities such as, New Orleans, Tampa, Charleston, Virginia Beach, and Miami are among those most at risk from rising seas and extreme weather. Miami is spending hundreds of millions of dollars installing pumps throughout Miami Beach to protect the city from flooding during high tides. ([National Climate Assessment: Southeast](#), [Miami Herald](#))

The Great Lakes – Invasive species and toxic algal blooms: The Great Lakes have seen increased water temperatures and reduced winter ice cover. These changes threaten fish species such as the Yellow Perch, advantage invasive species, and could be supporting dangerous algae blooms. Higher temperatures, increased precipitation, and longer growing seasons favor production of toxic algae which harm tourism, fishing, and drinking water supplies. ([National Climate Assessment: Midwest](#), [Observer-Reporter](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

The Mountain Region – Increased wildfires risk and drought: Climate change is pressuring forests by increasing wildfire risk, infestation, drought, and disease. Warmer and drier conditions have helped increase the number and extent of wildfires in western U.S. forests since the 1970s. This trend is expected to continue under climate change. The United States already spends billions controlling wildfires on federal lands, and those costs are projected to rise as wildfire seasons become longer and more intense. ([National Climate Assessment: Northwest](#), nature Communications, [7/14/15](#))

The Northeast – Extreme downpours and drastic changes in ecosystems: Rain patterns and ecosystems in New England and the Northeast are undergoing dramatic changes due to a warming climate. In the last six decades, the Northeast has seen more than a 70% increase in the amount of rain and snow falling in extreme events. This increase coupled with sea-level rise raise the risk of river and coastal flooding in the region. Warmer winters and less snow cover have allowed pests like the winter tick to flourish. These ticks latch onto moose in great numbers, killing them in droves after carrying thousands of ticks all winter long. The increased prevalence of pest species benefitting from climate change will lead to an overall loss of biodiversity, function, and resilience of Northeastern ecosystems. Other climate disruptions are impacting the fishing, agriculture and tourism economies of the Northeast. The iconic maples and their fall foliage are moving north as are cold water loving cod and lobster. ([National Climate Assessment: Northeast](#), [National Geographic](#))

HEALTH, NATIONAL SECURITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION

American Lung Association: “Power plant pollution makes people sick and cuts short lives. We are pleased to see significant health benefits from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) proposed limits on carbon pollution from power plants, which would reduce the burden of air pollution in America, prevent up to 4,000 premature deaths and 100,000 asthma attacks in the first year they are in place, and prevent up to 6,600 premature deaths and 150,000 asthma attacks in 2030.” [American Lung Association, [6/2/14](#)]

American Thoracic Society, President Tom Ferkol, MD: “As a pediatric pulmonologist who cares for children with severe health problems, we are beginning to recognize the health effects of global warming in our practices. The ATS strongly supports the efforts of President Obama and the EPA to reduce the harmful emissions of greenhouse gasses from power plants. Today’s rules are a step in the right direction toward mitigating climate change. What often gets lost in the discussion is that reducing carbon emissions also decreases other noxious pollutants like mercury, ozone and particulate matter. Mercury, ozone and particular matter are known pollutants that cause neurological damage, respiratory and cardiovascular disease. By reducing carbon pollution today, our children will enjoy the benefits of cleaner air while we address a major cause of global warming.” [[EPA](#)]

American Academy of Pediatrics: “As climate change accelerates, children will continue to suffer disproportionately. In fact, according to the World Health Organization, more than 80% of the current health burden due to the changing climate occurs in children younger than five years old. Children are not just little adults; they breathe faster, spend more time outside and have proportionately greater skin surface exposed to the environment, making them especially vulnerable to all environmental exposures. The regulation released today by the EPA is a welcomed and needed step to help make the air we breathe safer and cleaner for children. As the regulation takes effect, the American Academy of Pediatrics will work with the EPA to ensure the strongest possible standards to protect and promote child health.” [[EPA](#)]

National Hispanic Medical Association: “Latino families suffer greatly when industrial carbon pollution is emitted to our air. One out of two Latinos lives in areas where air quality does not meet EPA’s public health standards. Exposure to polluted air causes long-lasting damage to our communities’ health, and those with asthma or respiratory illnesses are at greater risk. We applaud the historic announcement of standards that will limit harmful carbon emissions from power plants and we stand ready to protect our families from the destructive climate change and from the impending threat of global warming.” [[EPA](#)]

Dr. Sumita B. Khatri, Co-Director Asthma Center Cleveland Clinic & Board Member of the American Lung Association: “Air quality does not just impact people from a theoretical standpoint—it affects our patients, our families, and us. Many are fortunate enough not to worry about how they will catch their next breath, that it is second nature and not a second thought. Children, senior citizens, and individuals with chronic lung or heart conditions are particularly at risk by being exposed to poor air quality. This announcement helps us to set priorities; any measures we can take to improve our air quality will be meaningful to all of us. We must be empowered by knowing that each of us can have a very real impact by paying attention to how our personal actions impact energy efficiency, and how our community chooses to care about the environment. These activities affect the health of those around us not just now but well into the future.” [[EPA](#)]

Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review: The impacts of climate change may increase the frequency, scale, and complexity of future missions, including defense support to civil authorities, while at the same time undermining the capacity of our domestic installations to support training activities. Climate change poses another significant challenge for the United States and the world at large. As carbon pollution increases, sea levels are rising, average global temperatures are increasing, and severe weather patterns are accelerating. The Department will remain ready to operate in a changing environment amid the challenges of climate change and environmental damage. We have increased our preparedness for the consequences of environmental damage and continue to seek to mitigate these risks while taking advantage of opportunities. [Department of Defense, [3/10/14](#)]

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus: “I mean, I think the reason we’re making so much progress in the Navy is that we’re basing this (climate change) on its merits as an issue of national security, it makes us better at defending this country. It takes away the argument that, well, what does climate change have to do or what does energy have to do with the Navy? It has everything to do with us.” [U.S. Navy, [2/2/15](#)]

Cargill: “Cargill sees climate change as a risk influencing our ability to create a more food-secure world. All the things that are challenging about producing food for a growing, more affluent population become more interdependent when faced with the range of possible impacts of a changing climate. In a period of accelerated climate change, the question is whether the food systems upon which we rely can adapt. Current research shows potential risks to agricultural production based on projected changes in climate. And climate change is just one of the challenges we face in terms of our ability to create a more food-secure world. Cargill believes a prudent approach to managing risks from climate change would include both global efforts to reduce the amount of Greenhouse Gas Emissions that are added to the atmosphere and policies and investment that support adaptation.” [Cargill company statement]

Europe’s largest oil and gas companies, including Shell and BP: “Climate change is a critical challenge for our world. We acknowledge that the current trend of greenhouse gas emissions is in excess of what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is needed to limit the temperature rise to no more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Our companies are already taking a number of actions to help limit emissions. For us to do more, we need governments across the world to provide us with clear, stable, long-term ambitious policy frameworks to reduce uncertainty and stimulate investments in low carbon technologies and the right resources.” [Shell, BP, Total, Total, ENI, Statoil, BG Group; [5/29/15](#)]

General Mills: Science based evidence suggests we must limit the global mean temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels in order to avoid permanently altering the atmosphere and negatively impacting the environmental, social and economic systems that sustain us – both today and in the future. When coupled with a global population projected to reach 9 billion by 2050, the disequilibrium of natural resource supply and human demand for both food and fuel presents a real threat to global stability. Potential risks include food availability and price volatility, both of which affect the global food industry. The imperative is clear: Business, together with governments, NGOs and individuals, needs to act to reduce the human impact on climate change. [General Mills company statement, [7/14](#)]

NextEra Energy Chairman and CEO Lew Hay: “Our nation is at a critical moment in history, confronted by a triple threat of challenges – an economy in recession, an overdependence on foreign energy, and a warming planet. Simply put, we must create a clean-

energy economy for the 21st century – one that will help pull our economy out of recession, strengthen America’s energy security in a volatile world, and address the threat of global climate change.” [[NextEra Energy](#)]

Exelon CEO John Rowe: “The carbon-based free lunch is over. Inaction on climate is not an option.” [[Exelon](#)]

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E): “We recognize that climate change threatens to significantly alter the physical environment for this and future generations. We also recognize that the electric and natural gas industry is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and, as such, has a responsibility to find solutions and take action.” [[PG&E](#)]

Swiss Re (Insurance): “Climate change is widely acknowledged to be caused by greenhouse gas emissions from human activity, and could lead to increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. According to the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, if left unchecked, the cost of climate change could increase to around 20% of global GDP by the end of this century. Dealing with climate change requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions alongside an integrated approach to disaster risk management.” [Risk Management Magazine, [2/2/15](#)]