

POLITICS DECEMBER 6, 2018 / 7:03 AM / UPDATED AN HOUR AGO

# EPA to roll back carbon rule on new coal plants

Timothy Gardner

3 MIN READ



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration is expected on Thursday to roll back an Obama-era rule that requires new coal plants to capture their carbon emissions, a move that could crack open the door in coming years for new plants fired by the fossil fuel.

SPONSORED

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sign is seen on the podium at EPA headquarters in Washington, U.S., July 11, 2018. REUTERS/Ting Shen

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will make an “energy policy announcement” at 1:30 p.m. EST (1830 GMT) on Thursday. Andrew Wheeler, EPA’s acting administrator, will speak alongside Harry Alford, president of the National Black

Chamber of Commerce, a long-time opponent of former President Barack Obama's limits on carbon emissions.

SPONSORED

SPONSORED

The EPA is expected to propose allowing new coal plants to emit up to 1,900 pounds (862 kg) of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour of electricity, according to a New York Times report citing unnamed sources.

The Trump proposal, which is sure to be challenged by lawsuits from environmental groups, would replace an Obama-era standard allowing only 1,400 pounds of carbon per megawatt-hour. That Obama rule would have forced new plants to install carbon capture equipment that is not yet commercially available.



SPONSORED BY EQUINOR

## Hello, world. We're Equinor.

As a large, global energy company, we believe we have a responsibility to make positive change in the world. Let's change for the better, together.

[Learn more >](#)

---

No company has plans to build a new U.S. coal plant due to competition from plentiful and less-expensive natural gas. That could change as President Donald Trump rolls back rules meant to curb emissions linked to global warming.

"I'm not giving up on building a new generation of coal-fired power plants in this country," said Myron Ebell, who led Trump's EPA transition team last year. Ebell said Trump's policies could allow new coal plants to be built in the next five, 10 or 15 years.

SPONSORED

The administration says coal plants can be made to burn coal far more efficiently. But high costs have made them uneconomic. The regulatory roll back comes ahead of the

annual U.N. climate talks in Poland next week, where White House officials plan a panel on coal technology.

It was unclear whether the proposal can withstand lawsuits. Jay Duffy, a legal associate at Clean Air Task Force, said the weaker carbon emissions level would not satisfy federal clean air law requirements for the best available emissions technology.

---

Mourners flock to honor George H.W. Bush

While the carbon capture equipment the Obama rule would have required is technologically feasible, it is expensive.

But Duffy said Obama's rule would drive down costs.

"If Trump is really interested in supporting coal miners, what he should be looking at is supporting and advancing carbon capture," said Duffy. "That's the only way coal survives," in a future where rules on carbon constraints are likely, he said.

Reporting by Timothy Gardner; Editing by David Gregorio

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

**MORE FROM REUTERS**

TOP ARTICLES 1/5



SPONSORED

May's Brexit deal under fire as legal advice stiffens opposition

READ MORE >>

---

SPONSORED



### Could Smarter Charitable Giving Lower Your Taxes?

Fidelity Investments



### How bonds work and what they could do for you

From Merrill Lynch



### A Shockingly Lucrative Cash Back Card If You Have Excellent Credit

The Ascent



Promoted by **Dianomi**

POLITICS DECEMBER 5, 2018 / 5:01 AM / UPDATED 16 HOURS AGO

## Wisconsin Republicans move to undercut incoming Democratic governor

Joseph Ax, Brendan O'Brien

4 MIN READ



(Reuters) - Facing the loss of complete control of state government next month, Wisconsin Republicans passed legislation on Wednesday to weaken the powers of the newly elected Democratic governor and attorney general.

The final votes in the state Senate and Assembly came around dawn, following hours of debate during which Democrats accused Republicans of a naked last-minute power grab that ignores the results of the Nov. 6 election.

Republicans defended the legislation as a good-faith effort to ensure the legislative and executive branches remain equals.

Republican Governor Scott Walker, who was heckled with chants of “Shame!” from dozens of protesters during a Tuesday tree-lighting ceremony, has indicated he will sign the legislation. His office did not respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

Governor-elect Tony Evers, the Democrat who will succeed him in January, issued a blistering statement criticizing the vote.

“Power-hungry politicians rushed through sweeping changes to our laws to expand their own power and override the will of the people of Wisconsin who asked for change,” he said.

The Wisconsin legislation would allow legislators, rather than the attorney general, to decide whether to withdraw the state from lawsuits. That measure is aimed at preventing Evers and the incoming attorney general, Josh Kaul, from following through on campaign promises to end Wisconsin’s challenge to the federal Affordable Care Act, popularly known as Obamacare.

The legislation also restricts Evers’ ability to install rules that implement state laws.

Democrats have said they expect the new bills to be challenged in court.

## **HAMSTRINGING MICHIGAN DEMOCRATS**

Republican legislative majorities in other states where Democrats gained power in November have also sought to use lame-duck sessions to push through priorities and hamstring incoming Democrats.

Michigan's Republican-led legislature was poised on Wednesday to advance measures that would allow lawmakers to sidestep the attorney general in litigation and strip away campaign finance oversight from the secretary of state. Both posts, along with the governor's mansion, will be turned over to Democrats in January after eight years of total Republican control.

Republicans in the state also watered down minimum wage and sick leave laws on Tuesday, the culmination of a months-long strategy that involved passing the initial bills in September to keep the measures from appearing on November's ballot as a voter referendum. Democrats have called the move illegal and vowed to sue.

North Carolina's Republican-dominated legislature could approve a new voter identification law as soon as Wednesday during its own lame-duck session. The Republicans are pushing to finish the ID law before January, when they will lose the supermajority that can currently overcome Democratic Governor Roy Cooper's veto.

The various efforts are reminiscent of maneuvers by North Carolina Republicans to remove powers from the governor's office after Cooper won election in 2016.

Meanwhile, investigators are probing the validity of hundreds of mail-in ballots handled by political operatives in a closely contested congressional race that has led the state to hold off certifying a Republican's apparent victory.

GOP emails hacked months before 2018 election

Reporting by Joseph Ax in New York and Brendan O'Brien in Milwaukee, Additional reporting by Rich McKay and Jonathan Allen; Editing by Scott Malone and David Gregorio

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

#### MORE FROM REUTERS

TOP ARTICLES 1/5



May's Brexit deal under fire as legal advice stiffens opposition

READ MORE >>



All quotes delayed a minimum of 15 minutes. See [here](#) for a complete list of exchanges and delays.  
© 2018 Reuters. All Rights Reserved.