

## **CLIMATE ACTIONS BY OTHER COUNTRIES**

As a part of the Administration's Climate Action Plan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed costly guidelines to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from existing coal-fueled power plants. EPA expects that its guidelines will reduce electric sector CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, even though ...

- The guidelines are projected to cost \$366 billion to \$479 billion.<sup>1</sup>
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the U.S. coal fleet represent only three percent of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>2</sup>
- The guidelines will have no meaningful effect on global climate change. For example, the guidelines will reduce atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations by less than one-half of one percent and sea level rise by 1/100th of an inch, the thickness of three sheets of paper.<sup>3</sup>

To justify the EPA proposal, its supporters argue that the U.S. must show global leadership. In his June 2013 remarks describing the Climate Action Plan, the President argued that the U.S. should "... lead international efforts to combat climate change ... [because] the world still looks to the America to lead."<sup>4</sup> In an address to the U.N. General Assembly in September 2014, the President highlighted the EPA proposal and urged other nations to take similar steps to reduce their emissions.<sup>5</sup>

However, in stark contrast to the President's remarks, other countries are abandoning pledges to reduce emissions or increasing emissions regardless of their pledges. According to the *Washington Post* (September 23, 2014), many industrialized countries are expected to "blow through" existing commitments to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.<sup>6</sup> Highlighted below are examples of actions taken by 34 other major CO<sub>2</sub> emitters that collectively made up more than two-thirds of non-U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2012.<sup>7</sup>

**AUSTRALIA**, with the highest per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of all major western nations,<sup>8</sup> is the first nation in the world to repeal a law that put a price on carbon emissions.<sup>9</sup> Australia repealed its carbon tax effective

July 1, 2014.<sup>10</sup> The Australian government cites costs for businesses and households as a reason for the repeal.<sup>11</sup> Supporters of the repeal pointed to electricity rates that had nearly doubled, partly due to the carbon tax.<sup>12</sup> **CANADA** was ranked the worst among industrialized nations on climate change issues by the Center for Global Development based on per capita emissions, renewable energy development, and international climate change commitments.<sup>13</sup> In December 2011, Canada pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>14</sup> In defending the decision, the Canadian Environment Minister noted that the Protocol was not an appropriate way forward on climate issue and withdrawal allowed Canada “to continue to create jobs and growth.”<sup>15</sup> **JAPAN** drastically reduced its CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target in November 2013.<sup>16</sup> The new target, a 3.8 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2020, is significantly less aggressive than the prior target set by Japan, a 25 percent reduction below 1990 levels.<sup>17</sup> Japan has refused to sign on to a second round of the Kyoto Protocol, arguing that additional reductions are meaningless as long as developing nations are not participating in the program.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Japan recently announced plans to build new coal units to provide power to towns in the Fukushima area.<sup>19</sup> Together, Australia, Canada, and Japan have been cited as “standouts in going backwards” in international climate talks.<sup>20</sup> **CHINA** is the world’s largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter, with 29 percent of global GHG emissions.<sup>21</sup> China has set up several pilot carbon trading programs,<sup>22</sup> one of which has been called a “baby step” in reducing emissions.<sup>23</sup> In addition, China’s Air Pollution Control Plan is expected to have a “small” impact<sup>24</sup> on GHG emissions due to the exclusion of the primary coal producing and consuming region.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, even if China meets national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions intensity targets, overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are still expected to increase.<sup>26</sup> (China emits more CO<sub>2</sub> in one *month* – about 820 million tonnes -- than EPA’s proposal would reduce in one *year* -- approximately 550 million tonnes.<sup>27</sup>) Economic growth, not CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction, is likely to remain the top domestic priority for China.<sup>28</sup> In a recent submission to the U.N., China insisted that developed countries should do more to reduce emissions than developing nations, and called for financial support for developing nations to achieve emissions

reductions.<sup>29</sup> **INDIA** has been called a “deal breaker” by those who observe international climate negotiations for refusing to sign onto an agreement that binds developed and developing countries.<sup>30</sup> India has argued that per capita emissions and historic emissions should be the basis for an international agreement, a position that poses a barrier to an international agreement because of India’s emissions growth.<sup>31</sup> For example, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the energy sector in 2035 are projected to be more than double today’s level.<sup>32</sup> According to the Indian Environment Minister, India will not commit to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions ahead of upcoming international climate negotiations.<sup>33</sup> Like China, India’s primary focus appears to be on continued economic growth.<sup>34</sup> Neither Chinese President Xi nor Indian PM Modi attended the U.N. Climate summit in September 2014.<sup>35</sup> **RUSSIA** has refused to sign on to a second round of the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>36</sup> Since 1998, Russian emissions have increased steadily, and the trend is expected to continue, resulting in “inadequate” emissions reductions.<sup>37</sup> Recently, a Russian energy company noted it may build the world’s largest coal-fueled power plant (8,000 megawatts) to provide electricity to China.<sup>38</sup> The **EUROPEAN UNION** emissions trading scheme cost more than \$280 billion with limited climate impact through 2011, according to UBS.<sup>39</sup> UBS describes the scheme as having “little benefit and embarrassing consequences.”<sup>40</sup> **THE UNITED KINGDOM** has reduced its budget for international climate negotiations by nearly 40 percent.<sup>41</sup> **GERMANY** has experienced three years of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions growth despite a \$140-billion green energy plan.<sup>42</sup> Germany is expected to miss its 2020 emissions target because of an increase in coal-based electricity generation due, in part, to an energy “revolution” policy that could cost €1 trillion by 2040.<sup>43</sup> **POLAND** vetoed a 2012 plan to set stringent emissions targets for the European Union.<sup>44</sup> Poland’s objections stemmed from the economic impacts of reducing its reliance on coal, which makes up 90 percent of its electricity generation.<sup>45</sup> Highlighting the importance of coal, the Prime Minister noted “the future of Polish energy is in brown and black coal, as well as shale gas.”<sup>46</sup> **AUSTRIA, SPAIN, DENMARK, ITALY, LUXEMBOURG,** and **THE NETHERLANDS** are “far from meeting their [Kyoto] targets,” according to a 2012 report by the

International Center for Climate Governance.<sup>47</sup> The report concludes that the EU was slightly below the overall Kyoto target, due in part to the financial crisis. **NORWAY** stopped developing its “moon landing” CCS project at a refinery, due to delays and budget issues.<sup>48</sup> At the time of cancellation, the project was more than \$300 million over budget. The decision has been called “the symbol of this government’s total failure on climate policy” by environmentalists.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> ACCCE, *Climate Effects Of EPA’S Proposed Carbon Regulations*, (June 2, 2014).

<http://americaspower.org/sites/default/files/Climate%20Effects%20Issue%20Paper%20June%202014.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Remarks by the President on Climate Change, (June 25, 2013) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/25/remarks-president-climate-change>

<sup>5</sup> Remarks by the President at U.N. Climate Change Summit (2014) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/23/remarks-president-un-climate-change-summit>.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Mufson, *All over the planet, countries are completely missing their emissions targets*, (September 23, 2014) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/09/23/all-over-the-planet-countries-are-completely-missing-their-emissions-targets/>

<sup>7</sup> Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, *Trends in Global CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 2013 Report*, (2013).

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<sup>15</sup> *Canada pulls out of Kyoto protocol*, (December 12, 2011) <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/13/canada-pulls-out-kyoto-protocol>

<sup>16</sup> Mari Itawa, *Japan Retreats in CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Cut Target*, (November 15, 2013) <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303789604579199063912364466>

<sup>17</sup> Mari Itawa, *Japan Retreats in CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Cut Target*, (November 15, 2013) <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303789604579199063912364466>

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