

2016 Presidential Candidates on the Clean Power Plan

Background

On August 3, 2015, President Barack Obama's Environmental Protection Agency unveiled ["the most far-reaching energy regulation in the nation's history"](#) – a regulation otherwise known as the Clean Power Plan. The [fundamentally flawed plan](#) seeks to regulate carbon emissions from power plants as a means to [solidify the president's political legacy](#) as a fighter of climate change despite the burdensome regulation having virtually no impact on its stated purpose.

This illegal regulation is a [dressed-up version of the unpopular "cap and trade" legislation from five years ago](#) with a new name meant to deceive the public. This regulation would have the same devastating economic consequences as the first iteration of "cap and trade," which is why the first time around the idea ultimately died in the face of strong bipartisan opposition.

This illegal overreach by EPA and President Obama is the defining energy issue of the 2016 presidential campaign. To date, 12 candidates running for president have publicly stated their opposition, 4 candidates have stated their support and 5 candidates have taken no position.

Candidates who oppose the Clean Power Plan

Jeb Bush

"President Obama's Carbon Rule is irresponsible and overreaching. The rule runs over state governments, will throw countless people out of work, and increases everyone's energy prices.

The fact is, U.S. emissions of greenhouse gasses are down to the same levels emitted in the mid-1990s, even though we have 50 million more people. A chief reason for this success is the energy revolution which was created by American ingenuity – not federal regulations." ([Jeb 2016](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Marco Rubio

"While outlining his proposals during a swing through Oklahoma – currently the fourth-largest producer of natural gas in the United States – the Florida senator decried in particular EPA's new rules to reduce greenhouse emissions under its Clean Power Plan.

The rules would have **'a devastating impact on affordable energy in exchange for little to no environmental benefit,'** Rubio said, while pledging to immediately stop them in their tracks.

'It would truly be one of the most expensive and costly regulations ever created. Yet Hillary Clinton has pledged to make defending and expanding it a top priority', Rubio said in remarks before the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association in Oklahoma City. 'As president, I will immediately stop this massive regulation. I'll pursue a sweeping overhaul of the regulatory system to make sure costs and benefits of new rules are accurately accounted for and that localities, states and industries can meet the timelines I set forward.'" ([The Guardian](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Rand Paul

"During a June 2014 Fox News interview, host Neil Cavuto asked Sen. Paul about the then-new proposal to curb carbon emissions from power plants. Sen. Paul said, 'The thing is, is we had a vote on cap and trade. The Democrats tried to pass it and they didn't have enough votes, so now they're going to try to do this through executive edict, and I don't think that's legal. I think if you want to pass legislation, try to get it through Congress. Come and talk to us. Try to convince us it's a good idea. But in my state, this is going to be higher electric bills and it's going to be more unemployment. ***So we're steadfast against it, and I will do everything I can to repeal this rule.***'" ([Fox News](#), 6/3/2014)

Chris Christie

"In a press release issued by the DEP [Department of Environmental Protection] yesterday, Gov. Chris Christie renewed his criticism of the plan, repeating the assertion that it is fundamentally flawed.

'The Clean Power Plan is yet another example of the Obama administration inappropriately reaching far beyond its legal authority to implement more onerous and burdensome regulations on businesses and state governments alike,' the governor said." ([NJ Spotlight](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Carly Fiorina

"Fiorina told a forum hosted by news organization RealClearPolitics, and sponsored by the [American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity], that she would repeal the entire package of EPA emission rules once in the White House. **'They're terrible. Every single one of them should be repealed,'** Fiorina told the forum on Friday during a question-and-answer session." ([Washington Examiner](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Mike Huckabee

“The former Arkansas governor has been adamant about his opposition to the Clean Power Plan, saying that it would [‘bankrupt families.’](#) On Monday, he doubled down on his opposition to the plan characterizing it as the president's [‘carbon crusade.’](#)” ([Yahoo! Politics](#), accessed 9/15/2015)

John Kasich

“The EPA is too punitive. And now they’re trying to impose a whole bunch of things on the environment and put people out of work. I’m not for that.” ([American Bridge](#), 8/12/15)

“Days from being finalized, the Clean Power Plan has major implications for Ohio, one of the nation’s most coal-reliant states and traditionally a swing state in presidential elections. It calls for tougher rules on coal-fired power plants, which Gov. John Kasich, a potential GOP presidential candidate in 2016, has worked with utilities to fight.” ([Toledo Blade](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Kasich also [signed on to the legal challenge](#) to the Clean Power Plan.

Bobby Jindal

“On the eve of the first Republican Presidential primary debate, three sitting governors who are vying for the GOP nomination – Scott Walker of Wisconsin, John Kasich of Ohio, and Bobby Jindal of Louisiana – enlisted their states in a legal challenge to the Obama administration’s coal power plant carbon dioxide emission regulation issued as a final rule on Monday.” ([Breitbart](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

“Michael Reed, a spokesman for Mr. Jindal, said in an email: “The president’s Clean Power Plan undermines the role of states in the federal Clean Air Act in an effort to realize a radical, liberal agenda that will lead to increased energy costs. While we believe the proposed rule should be immediately withdrawn, we are considering all options to mitigate the damage if it becomes final, including not submitting a plan.”” ([New York Times](#), accessed 9/15/2015)

Ted Cruz

“The President’s lawless and radical attempt to destabilize the Nation’s energy system is flatly unconstitutional and – unless it is invalidated by Congress, struck down by the courts, or rescinded by the next Administration – will cause Americans’ electricity costs to skyrocket at a time when we can least afford it. I urge leaders of both parties, including Democrats who represent communities that will be devastated by this reckless policy, to stand up against this Administration’s dangerous agenda of economic decline.” ([Ted Cruz 2016](#), accessed 9/11/2016)

George Pataki

Bloomberg BNA:

Do you support the Clean Power Plan? Why or why not?

Pataki:

“No. This is a classic top-down, government-imposed solution. It will result in higher costs of energy, an increase in the vulnerability of the electrical supply, and I think it's just completely wrong.

One of the approaches I had when I was governor was that environmental protection and economic growth are not inconsistent. In fact, they're synergistic when done in an intelligent way. When I left, we not only had led the nation with environmental initiatives, including numerous initiatives in energy, but we had the lowest unemployment rate – 4.3 percent in New York state – since they started keeping records.

This approach from the EPA is the opposite. It will hurt the economy, it will drive up energy costs and it doesn't encourage innovation. It just penalizes consumers. I also think it's of questionable constitutionality and legality.” ([Bloomberg BNA](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Rick Santorum

“If elected, he plans to immediately reverse Obama’s executive orders regarding Environmental Protection Agency regulations. He believes these regulations hurt U.S. industries, and that most of the pollution on the West Coast is generated by China.” ([Daily Gate](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

At a 2016 presidential forum sponsored by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, Santorum stated, “The regulations that we're seeing coming out of this administration have nothing to do with science. It's like a quasi-religious crusade for them. They want to eliminate fossil fuels. They don't care about the impact.”

“They don't care about affordable energy so we can have manufacturing jobs so the 75 percent of Americans who don't have a college degree can make things and provide for themselves and their families. They don't care about going to the Kum & Go and getting affordable energy so you have more money to spend on your family. They don't care about that.” ([Des Moines Register](#), accessed 9/15/2015)

Ben Carson

In response to pressure from ACCCE, the Carson camp issued the following statement with regard to the Clean Power Plan:

“A Carson spokesman told *E&E Daily* last night that the candidate, a retired neurosurgeon, opposes the Clean Power Plan, which aims to cut carbon emissions from the power sector. ‘He certainly has spoken out against the rule,’ Carson spokesman Doug Watts said.” ([E & E News](#), accessed 11/3/2015).

Candidates who support the Clean Power Plan

Hillary Clinton

“The Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan is a significant step forward in meeting the urgent threat of climate change. It sets a smart federal standard that gives states the flexibility to choose how to reduce carbon pollution most effectively. And it drives investments in clean energy and energy efficiency, reduces asthma attacks and premature deaths, and promotes a healthier environment and a stronger economy. It's a good plan, and as President, I'd defend it.” ([Hillary Clinton](#), accessed 9/11/2015)

Bernie Sanders

The Washington Post showcased a Tweet from Sanders praising Obama’s plan: “Pres Obama knows climate change is the great planetary crisis facing us & we must move boldly to transform our energy system #CleanPowerPlan” ([Washington Post](#), accessed 9/15/2015)

Martin O’Malley

Likewise, O’Malley took to Twitter to show his support for the new rule: “@POTUS’s clean power plan is a great step fwd, & I’d expand it to cover large emission sources beyond power plants.” ([Yahoo! Politics](#), accessed 9/15/2015)

Candidates yet to comment on the Clean Power Plan

Donald Trump

Donald Trump has not made a direct statement on the CPP to date.

Lindsey Graham

Lindsey Graham has not made a direct statement on the CPP to date. In December 2014 Graham [signed a letter to Gina McCarthy](#) asking for the rule’s withdrawal.

Jim Gilmore

Jim Gilmore has not made a direct statement on the CPP to date.

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