



Progressive Budget Would Tax Literally Everything To Slightly Slow Global Warming

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The Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) has released a budget for 2017 that would tax virtually everything Americans do in order to slow global warming by negligible fractions.

The CPC budget features taxes on carbon dioxide (CO₂), huge increases in green energy subsidies and new cash to enforce Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations. It would add another \$9.9 trillion to the national debt by 2026. The current national debt is roughly \$19 trillion.

“This is the only budget in Washington that truly accepts the urgency of the climate crisis,” Lukas Ross, a spokesperson for the environmental group Friends of the Earth, wrote in a Thursday press release. “From reigning in Big Oil to investing in clean renewable energy, this is the policy vision we need to ensure a just and speedy end to the era of fossil fuels. In the face of record inequality and looming climate disruption, debating between different shades of austerity is simply unacceptable. Budgets are about priorities, and the budget of the Congressional Progressive Caucus prioritizes the well-being of people and the planet.”

Much of the budget’s spending increases are said to be paid for by a new tax of \$25 per ton on CO₂ increasing annually by 5.6 percent. The caucus predicts this would bring in an additional \$79 billion, 25 percent of which the budget would directly redistribute to low income families. Such a tax would have only a “negligible” impact on global warming.

If the government levied a tax on CO₂, the cost of producing goods and services that use CO₂ as a component would increase as well. Any good transported via truck or car would also increase price. Thus, taxing carbon dioxide effectively taxes almost everything.

Additionally, critics say carbon taxation disproportionately harms the poorest members of society. A 2009 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that a carbon tax

would double the tax burden of the poorest households, making it nearly impossible to have both a carbon tax and a living wage. A tax on such emissions would make the tax burden of the poorest households three times greater than the richest households, according to the study.

Only four nations — Ireland, Sweden, Chile, and Finland actually have such carbon taxation today. The largest economy to ever have a carbon tax, Australia, repealed it in 2014.

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The budget would invest billions more into green energy research and subsidies, paid for by coal, oil and natural gas companies. Currently, solar and wind power get 326 and 69 times more in subsidies respectively than coal, oil, and natural gas per amount of energy generated according to Department of Energy data.

Finally, the budget would increase funding for EPA programs such as President Obama's Clean Power Plan.

The Plan is expected to cost a staggering \$41 billion annually, but likely won't have a large impact on global warming. According to analysis by the libertarian Cato Institute using models created by the EPA, the Clean Power Plan will only avert 0.019° Celsius of warming by the year 2100, an amount so small it can't be detected.

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