



CO2 Emissions Increase Under Obama

By Michael Bastasch

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It's all over, guys. Global warming has won.

Well, maybe that's a slight overstatement. The EPA [reports](#) that greenhouse gas emissions rose from 2012 to 2013, despite Obama administration efforts to reduce gases they say will cause catastrophic global warming.

The EPA [reports](#) a "two percent increase in greenhouse gas emissions in 2013 from 2012 levels, but a nine percent drop in emissions since 2005." Keep in mind that the U.S. saw a huge decrease in emissions after the recession hit in 2007. Now after years of low growth, the economy is picking up again, raising carbon dioxide emissions.

The EPA said the increase in emissions was due to an "increase in the carbon intensity of fuels consumed to generate electricity due to an increase in coal consumption"—due to economic factors, and also frigid winter weather that decreased gas production.

"Additionally, relatively cool winter conditions led to an increase in fuels for the residential and commercial sectors for heating," the EPA notes. "In 2013 there also was an increase in industrial production across multiple sectors resulting in increases in industrial sector emissions. Lastly, transportation emissions increased as a result of a small increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and fuel use across on-road transportation modes."

"Since 1990, U.S. emissions have increased at an average annual rate of 0.3 percent," according to the agency.

News of increasing U.S. carbon dioxide emissions comes as President Barack Obama pledges to cut emissions 26 to 28 percent by 2025— a promise he made to the United Nations. Obama is trying to galvanize international support for a global climate treaty to be agreed to in Paris later this year.

The White House has touted agreements its made with China and Mexico to curb carbon dioxide emissions. China promised to peak its emissions by 2030, and Mexico says it'll peak its

emissions by 2026. But both of these countries will be drastically increasing their carbon footprint in the near-term, a reality that Republicans have been eager to point out.

“I will do everything in my power to prevent taxpayer dollars from being spent by unelected United Nations bureaucrats to dictate U.S. energy policy, especially when it puts American competitiveness, jobs and livelihoods at risk,” Oklahoma Republican Sen. James Inhofe said in a statement.

The president, however, plans on making tackling global warming, including leading the way on a global treaty, a major part of his legacy. In fact, his administration has been working quietly behind the scenes trying to get other countries to agree to emissions cuts.

“If I can encourage and gain commitments from the Chinese to put forward a serious plan to start curbing their greenhouse gases, and that then allows us to leverage the entire world for the conference that will be taking place later this year in Paris,” Obama [told](#) VICE News in an interview.

“When I’m done, we’re still going to have a heck of a problem, but we will have made enough progress that the next president and the next generation can start building on it,” Obama said.

But will Obama’s U.N. pledge, combined with his domestic plan to reduce coal power, even have a measurable impact on global warming? Not likely. It’s not even clear if cutting emissions in all industrialized countries would abate that much predicted temperature increase.

“But no matter the details, any U.S. plan will never contribute much to mitigating future global climate change,” [wrote](#) Patrick Michaels and Chip Knappenberger, climate scientists with the libertarian Cato Institute.

“Even under the assumption we cut our fossil fuel emissions 100 percent by the year 2050... the amount of future global warming that will be averted is about 0.05°C by the year 2050 and 0.14°C by the year 2100. That’s it!” Michaels and Knappenberger wrote.

“Fourteen-hundredths of a degree— that’s what all the hubbub over carbon taxes, power plant emissions restrictions, Keystone XL pipeline, electric cars, ethanol, etc. is all about,” they added.