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Sanders unveils plan to address climate change

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Sanders' plan, which the Washington Post notes "reads like an environmentalist's wish list", includes a pledge to cut emissions 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050, which would be achieved through a carbon tax-something that Congress has repeatedly blocked over the years, but which the global economy (including some oil companies) is beginning to align toward.

Since the start of the campaign, the three Democratic presidential contenders have tried to outdo one another on their commitment to fighting climate change -making a striking contrast with Republican presidential candidates who deny climate change is occurring.

"The climate plan released by Senator Bernie Sanders today shows that he has broken free of the corporate and 1 percent money that has held back climate policy for far too long", Greenpeace U.S. executive director Annie Leonard said.

Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders signs autographs with supporters following a rally on October 3, 2015 in Boston, Massachusetts.

The release of Sanders's climate change plan follows closely on the heels of a detailed proposal on immigration, which Sanders is scheduled to highlight in a live-streamed event Monday afternoon from Washington.

In addition to his proposed increased investments in clean energy, Sanders emphasized a transition to an electric vehicle-based infrastructure system, which he said is similar to the way the United States built a highway system in the 1950s and 1960s. In 2013, Sanders and Sen. Economists across the ideological spectrum – from liberal New York Times columnist Paul Krugman to Gregory Mankiw, a Harvard professor and former chairman of President George W. Bush's Council of Economic Advisers – have argued that putting a price on carbon is the most efficient means of disincentivizing fossil fuel pollution.

"He's been campaigning and talking about climate change for quite some time".

According to analysis of Environmental Protection Agency models by the libertarian Cato Institute, the Clean Power Plan would only avert only 0.019 degrees Celsius of warming by the year 2100 – an amount so small that it couldn't be detected.

To reduce fossil fuel development, a Sanders presidency would ban offshore and Arctic drilling, mountaintop removal coal mining, and exports of oil and natural gas.

Bernie Sanders' plan has similarities to the climate plans laid out by his two current political rivals, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley.

“It is an embarrassment that Republican politicians, with few exceptions, refuse to even recognize the reality of climate change, let alone are prepared to do anything about it”, Sanders' plan states.

Sanders, who has identified climate change as the chief threat to USA national security, will also tie his climate agenda to his broader message of combating economic inequality and confronting what he calls “the billionaire class”.

Sanders chastised Republicans for their obstruction of climate policies, saying, “Sadly, we now have a Republican Party that is more concerned about protecting the profits of Exxon, BP and Shell and the coal industry than protecting the planet”.