



Obama's EPA Coal Plant Regulations: "Obamacare for the Atmosphere"

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The Obama administration has thrown down its latest gauntlet in its ["War on Coal."](#) On Monday, June 2, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy announced unprecedented restrictions on power plants, the alleged purpose of which is to combat global warming by drastically cutting carbon dioxide emissions.

The Daily Beast, a left-wing site that views global warming as a top threat to the planet, enthusiastically endorsed the move in an article by Jason Mark entitled "EPA's New Regulations to Cut Carbon Emissions Are Obamacare for the Air."

"Just like health care," wrote Mr. Mark, "the plan to change the energy industry relies on a complex set of rules that harnesses the power of the marketplace — and it will be as controversial." This is cause for cheer, he says. "Environmentally concerned voters will finally get what they paid for by giving their political support to President Obama when, Monday morning in Washington, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy unveils the draft of sweeping new regulations on existing power plants."

Jason Mark's *Daily Beast* article continued: "You can think of the power plant rules as Obamacare for the atmosphere: numbingly complex in an effort to ensure flexibility and fairness, based on a market system, and likely to transform a key sector of the economy for decades to come."

Numbingly complex like ObamaCare, yes; But "based on a market system"? Perhaps a fascist, corporate-state market system, in which politically connected companies reap huge cap-and-trade profits, but certainly not a "free market" system.

Administrator McCarthy's draconian proposals are turning out to be even worse than many critics expected. In a May 30 [commentary](#), the Cato Institute's Dr. Patrick J. Michaels, who is past president of the American Association of State Climatologists and a research professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia for 30 years, speculated that the new regulations would most likely require a 20-percent reduction in allowable carbon dioxide emissions. "The only way this will be possible," he said, "will be by upgrading almost all combustion units, and the ultimate cost of the upgrades will make coal noncompetitive with much-less-expensive natural gas-fired facilities."

But, lo and behold, when McCarthy released the new regulatory proposal it was far worse, mandating a *30-percent reduction* in CO₂ emissions.

“Climate change, fueled by carbon pollution, supercharges risks to our health, our economy and our way of life,” EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said, in announcing the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan. “This plan will clean the air we breathe while helping slow climate change so we can leave a safe and healthy future for our kids.”

The EPA’s webpage [“Learn About Carbon Pollution From Power Plants”](#) provides these scary “facts” to justify the painful (and impossible, say critics) new regulations:

Unchecked carbon pollution leads to long-lasting changes in our climate, such as:

- Rising global temperatures
- Rising sea level
- Changes in weather and precipitation patterns
- Changes in ecosystems, habitats and species diversity

These changes threaten America's health and welfare for current and future generations. Public health risks include:

- More heat waves and drought
- Worsening smog (also called ground-level ozone pollution)
- Increasing the intensity of extreme events, like hurricanes, extreme precipitation and flooding
- Increasing the range of ticks and mosquitoes, which can spread disease such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus.

All of these dire predictions have been shown repeatedly to be without scientific foundation. (See [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)

However, the EPA regulations will, if Congress allows them to stand, make good on Obama’s campaign promise in 2008 to make restrictions on coal so extreme that they would “necessarily bankrupt” anyone who attempted to build a new coal-fired power plant.

“If these rules are allowed to go into effect, the administration for all intents and purposes is creating America’s next energy crisis,” said Mike Duncan, president and CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. “As we predicted, the administration chose political expediency over practical reality as it unveiled energy standards devoid of common sense and flexibility. These guidelines represent a complete disregard for our country’s most vital fuel sources, like American coal.”

If these rules are allowed to go into effect, we can be certain that energy prices will skyrocket just like the costs of medical care under ObamaCare — and energy from all sources will become as scarce as quality healthcare.