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Contempt of Congress: House GOP reveals disdain for clean energy, livable climate with 450 planned amendments to Waxman-Markey and a more-of-the-same rehash of Cheney energy plan

Memo to House GOP: We get it. You don't believe in clean, safe sources of energy that never run out or in protecting our children and grandchildren from catastrophic global warming or in competing with China, Japan, and Europe for the jobs and industries of the future or in making polluters pay (see [House GOP pledge to fight all action on climate](#)).

But your list of **450 planned amendments** to Waxman-Markey during the markup next week — [insomniacs can download the list [here](#)] — goes beyond principled opposition to petty politics.

Two dozens amendments removing the tax benefits for each and every corporate member of the [US Climate Action Partnership](#) (which served as the basis of Waxman-Markey)? How proud the founding fathers would be to see you try to use the tools of governance for meaningless attempts at retribution.

And 50 separate amendments to let each individual state opt out? [*Plus a DC-opt-out amendment! It's nice to know you thought of us, too, even though you won't let us have any representation in our government, but, thank you, no, we want clean energy jobs and a livable climate.*]

I am interested to see details of the “American Hero Exemption and Credit,” but since it follows the “Defense Department Exemption,” I'm guessing it would be an amendment to exempt veterans from the bill. Of course, if America keeps following your ~~all of the above~~ more-of-the-same energy policy, then we'll end up with lots more veterans as it would mean our dependence on oil from unstable regions would keep rising and rising.

And what is the point of more than 100 amendments of the form:

- Suspends the Act should more than 1,000 jobs in Wyoming be lost due to implementation of this Act
- Suspends the Act should 2,000 jobs in Texas be lost due to implementation of this Act
- Suspends the Act should more than 5,000 jobs in Utah be lost due to implementation of this Act?

What can one say but, [Joe ‘get shade’ Barton and House GOP plan to fiddle furiously while planet burns](#).

And speaking of letting the planet burn, the House GOP has introduced its alternative bill (summary [here](#)). You can't really call it an alternative climate bill, since it doesn't stop US greenhouse gas emissions from rising and the words “climate change” and “global warming” hardly appear in it at all — except to strip any authority from the EPA to address the problem. **The bill doesn't define the GOP position so much as redefine it or rather undefine it** — the bill would undefine the word “pollutant” so that it doesn't include greenhouse gases, and undefine renewable energy so that it does include nuclear power.

Indeed, **the plan is almost indistinguishable from the infamous Cheney energy plan**. You'll remember that at the beginning of the Bush administration Cheney developed a “comprehensive” energy plan after consulting with a vast array of stakeholders — from “Exxon to “Mobil” as one pundit quipped. Well, the House GOP remove the staples and replaced the cover.

Frank O'Donnell, president of [Clean Air Watch](#), has an excellent critique first published by [Wonk Room](#), which I reprint below:

Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), the ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, today unveiled a cynical Republican alternative to the clean energy jobs legislation being developed by committee Democrats. Barton is arguing that his legislation is a “viable alternative to a mandatory cap and trade plan” that sets economy-wide standards for global warming pollution.

In reality, it’s hardly a viable alternative — only something that can be presented as one. This is basically a PR stunt aimed at conning the public to stay stuck in the same dirty energy rut that is destroying our economy and environment.

The Barton plan summary I’ve reviewed includes such choice items as:

- Repealing the Supreme Court decision which said the US EPA could limit greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act.
- Preempting state authority to reduce climate-related emissions. This is a direct attack on California and other states that have sought to avert the threat of catastrophic global warming and create green jobs.
- Providing regulatory and financial rewards to coal-burning power plants that use “currently available technology.” In other words, more dirty coal-fired plants that kill and sicken our children and grandparents.
- Providing new subsidies for hazardous nuclear power plants.
- Defines nuclear power and advanced coal technology as “renewable.”
- Repealing “decoupling” mandates that reward utilities for reducing wasted energy.
- Promoting more oil drilling off the coasts and Luntzian “environmentally sensitive American energy exploration” in the Arctic wildlife refuge.
- Subsidizing climate-killer fuels produced from coal, oil shale, methane hydrates, and tar sands.

While not quite ignoring the threat of climate change, Barton’s bill does spit in the face of science. The bill includes a provision that establishes emissions performance standards for new coal plants — but “all existing generating facilities are grandfathered.” Unsurprisingly, Barton’s proposed standards are laughably weak, only require coal plants to be as efficient as less-polluting natural gas plants by 2030. This proposal, combined with the incentives for new drilling, the reversal of fuel economy standards, and promotion of highly polluting alternative fuels, would guarantee that U.S. emissions would continue to increase without bound for the foreseeable future.

Barton is just blowing smoke: new subsidies for oil, coal, and nuclear, rollbacks of environmental standards, Orwellian language, and denial of the science of climate change. Wasn’t eight years of planetary and economic destruction enough?

Wasn’t 8 years of Cheney-Bush enough?

Related head-in-the-sand conservatives:

- House GOP leader Boehner on ABC: “The idea that carbon dioxide is a carcinogen that is harmful to

our environment is almost comical.”

- Rep. Barton: Climate change is ‘natural,’ humans should just ‘get shade’ — invites ‘expert’ TVMOB (!) to testify
- House GOP pledge to fight all action on climate.
- Virtually every conservative in the Senate voted against the Boxer-Lieberman-Warner climate bill even though that bill was inadequate to stopping catastrophic warming.
- James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) believes a cap & trade bill will return GOP to power “in 2010”
- Grover Norquist asserts that calls to take global warming more seriously will be “cheerfully ignored“
- 64% of GOP voters say global warming denier Palin is their top choice for 2012.
- “Several prominent party officials said they believe the GOP’s message is fundamentally sound when it comes to energy policy, pointing to that issue as one of the few political bright spots in recent years.“
- The Heritage Foundation even opposes energy efficiency
- The American Enterprise Institute is still crazy with denial and delay after all these years
- The Cato Institute believes adaptation is cheaper than mitigation.
- Columns by Charles Krauthammer and George Will and John Tierney have become science-free zones that demand more climate research while inveighing against all serious climate action and against all non-nuclear clean tech.

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