



## Week ahead: UN climate talks under scrutiny

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Lawmakers will examine the Obama administration's plans for a major climate conference taking place later this month.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will meet on Wednesday to investigate the climate conference. The same day in the House, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee will discuss, in its own words, "the administration's empty promises for the international climate treaty."

Both hearings feature industry officials and scholarly experts — the Chamber of Commerce and the World Resources Institute in the Senate, economic consultants and the Cato Institute in the House — but no administration officials.

The United Nations Convention on Climate Change begins Nov. 30 in Paris. Officials hope to use the conference to craft a deal to cut worldwide carbon emissions and begin tackling climate change. Obama will attend the first two days of the meeting.

Republicans have looked for ways to muddy the waters for the Obama administration's climate conference strategy. Last month, they **pressured** Todd Stern, Obama's chief United Nations climate negotiator, on the status of the discussions and if officials might try to craft a plan that would take effect without congressional approval.

That topic — the degree to which the climate deal is legally binding and whether the Senate will get a say — is flaring up again.

Secretary of State John Kerry said Thursday that the deal will not be a full-blown treaty and won't have to be ratified by the Republican-controlled Senate. French and European Union officials **countered** that any final climate deal must have the force of law behind it.

Observers say the disagreement is mostly a matter of semantics, and the White House wouldn't discuss the subject on Thursday, noting that behind-the-scenes negotiations for the climate deal are still ongoing. But lawmakers — especially Republicans — will likely highlight the matter.

Elsewhere, the House Energy and Commerce Committee will mark up Rep. Ed Whitfield's (R-Ky.) resolutions targeting President Obama's climate rules for power plants.

The Congressional Review Act resolutions would block both the Clean Power Plan, which regulates carbon emissions from existing power plants, and a separate rule for new electricity sources. An Energy and Commerce subcommittee approved the resolutions last week and similar bills are awaiting action in the Senate.

"These two resolutions mark an important step in the committee's longstanding and ongoing efforts to protect jobs and affordable energy from this administration's regulatory agenda," Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) said in a statement.

Republicans have rallied behind the resolutions, but Obama is certain to veto any measure blocking his climate rules. Legal battles over the regulations are ongoing.

The House Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on Chairman Rob Bishop's (R-Utah) conservation fund overhaul bill on Wednesday.

Bishop's bill shifts the Land and Water Conservation Fund's focus from the federal government to the states, a reform he and other Republicans have long pushed for. But Democrats, conservation groups and even some Republican lawmakers have come out against the plan.

Off Capitol Hill, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy will talk about energy policy at a Bloomberg Politics event on Wednesday.