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## Why Pa. should opt out of EPA's carbon rules

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As of Sunday, state lawmakers will have exactly one year to make one of the most important decisions of their time in office:

Will Pennsylvania submit an implementation plan to the Environmental Protection Agency, as demanded under President Barack Obama's new carbon regulations?

For the well-being of every Pennsylvanian, it is imperative they do choose not to.

The stakes could not be any greater for the Keystone State. Officially called the Clean Power Plan, this regulation would force Pennsylvania to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent by 2030. In so doing, it would effectively hand over control of our state's energy grid to unelected federal regulators in Washington, D.C., and hurt Pennsylvania jobs and family budgets across the state.

This is unacceptable. Gov. Tom Wolf, legislative leaders and agency heads should not go along. Given the enormous costs and negligible benefits this regulation will bring about, they should tell the EPA, "No, thanks."

First and foremost, cutting power plant emissions so dramatically over such a short period of time will force many of our current energy sources — ones we've already bought and paid for — to shut down. This will come at an immense cost. We'll have to rely increasingly on renewables such as wind and solar that can be three and four times more expensive, according to the Institute for Energy Research.

But it won't be utility companies that wind up paying for this costly transition. It will be Pennsylvania families stuck paying higher bills.

A study by Energy Ventures Analysis estimates every household in the state will see gas and electricity bills jump by more than \$1,000 by 2020. Another study, by NERA Economic Consulting, shows the pain won't end there. Electricity rates will continue increasing by 14 percent on average each year through at least 2031, when the regulation is fully implemented.

Our state's job creators will be similarly hit. Industrial electricity rates are expected to spike by 62 percent by 2020 compared to 2012. Businesses — especially energy-intensive manufacturers that provide 1 in every 10 Pennsylvania jobs — will be forced to cut costs, including pay, benefits and the jobs themselves. Once the dust settles, the Heritage Foundation estimates we'll lose nearly 29,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs.

Adding insult to injury, President Obama's carbon regulations will produce essentially zero environmental benefits. According to a Cato Institute analysis of EPA's own climate models, the regulations will slow global warming by just 0.018 degrees some 85 years from now.

As for other supposed benefits, they were calculated using data that are two decades old. Even the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office found the EPA's cost-benefit analyses are "limited in their usefulness."

The "all pain and no gain" nature of this regulation is why it is absolutely critical that Pennsylvania not submit an implementation plan to the EPA. It's the only way to protect hardworking Pennsylvanians from the prospect of fewer jobs, lower incomes and less opportunity.

The only good news is that our state Legislature has a say in all of this. Unlike other states where unelected environmental agencies submit plans directly to the EPA — without any buy-in from elected representatives — last year Pennsylvania state legislators passed a law requiring their approval before any plan is submitted to the EPA. This important step toward accountability ensures Pennsylvania families' interests are protected.

Of course, Gov. Wolf could remove this looming specter by announcing Pennsylvania will not submit an implementation plan at all. We'd be in the company of six states that have made similar decisions in recent months.

Yet given the unlikelihood that will happen, it's up to state legislators to do what's best for their constituents. That means refusing to approve any plan that raises electricity rates on Pennsylvania families and destroys thousands of well-paying jobs.

These next 12 months will be among the most important of the legislators' time in office — and the most important for the well-being of all Pennsylvanians.