

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

HEARING CHARTER

Pitfalls of Unilateral Negotiations at the Paris Climate Change Conference

Tuesday, December 1, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

PURPOSE

The Committee on Science, Space and Technology will hold a hearing entitled *Pitfalls of Unilateral Negotiations at the Paris Climate Change Conference* on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, in Room 2318 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing will examine the various scientific and policy issues surrounding the United States commitment to a United Nations-led effort to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

WITNESS LIST

- **Mr. Oren Cass**, Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research
- **Mr. Andrew Grossman**, Associate, Baker & Hostetler LLP
- **Dr. Andrew Steer**, President and CEO, World Resources Institute
- **Dr. Bjørn Lomborg**, President, Copenhagen Consensus Center

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) is meeting in Paris from November 30 to December 11. COP21's objective is to achieve a legally binding agreement on greenhouse gas emissions from all nations of the world.¹ In November 2014, the Obama Administration announced that the U.S. would reduce its economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 26%-28% by 2025 compared to a 2005 baseline, and re-iterated this pledge this past March to the international community through the "Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)."² So far the Administration has not released an analysis on how it developed this pledge compared to other levels of commitment to reduce greenhouse gases. In addition to a pledge to reduce such emissions, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009 pledged to raise \$100 billion annually for a Green Climate Fund to aid developing countries coping with climate change.³ It is unclear how the Administration intends to fund any public financial support without Congressional approval through the authorization and appropriations

¹ <http://www.cop21paris.org/about/cop21>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/31/fact-sheet-us-reports-its-2025-emissions-target-unfccc>

³ <http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2009/12/17/17climatewire-hillary-clinton-pledges-100b-for-developing-96794.html>

process.⁴ The Green Climate Fund faces considerable uncertainty with a lack of financial commitments from developed nations.⁵

An important policy debate lies in how the Obama Administration intends for the United States to meet its proposed commitments to the United Nations on greenhouse gas emissions (the INDC) and financial aid (Green Climate Fund) that will bind future Administrations and Congresses for the next decade. In addition, the Obama Administration expects the EPA's Clean Power Plan (announced last August, but not published as final until October) to play a central role towards achieving this pledge, while the Plan appears to have little effect on global warming. Furthermore, at least twenty-six states have sued EPA over the Clean Power Plan, citing an overreach of the agency's authority under the Clean Air Act and an unlawful attempt to usurp states' ability to regulate electrical generation systems as the basis for their challenge.⁶ These legal challenges, in addition to the complicated implementation schedules associated with regulations, make it unlikely that the Plan will be actually implemented, and thus call into question the Administration's ability to make commitments to limit greenhouse gases to the United Nations without support from the majority of states or the U.S. Congress.⁷

⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/30/business/getting-to-100-billion-in-climate-change-aid.html?_r=0

⁵ http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/green-climate-fund-faces-uncertainty-115111300600_1.html

⁶ <http://www.rpc.senate.gov/policy-papers/avalanche-of-opposition-hits-epas-co2-rule>

⁷ http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/21ffe37a-8052-4498-ba78-18395db0fc42/holmstead.pdf