

We have already seen the U.S. leadership challenged in this area with President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris accord—the only nation in the world that has done so. Who has filled that void? Quite frankly, it has been China.

Do we want to cede our leadership globally to a country with a controlled government economy like China or do we want to reassert U.S. leadership? We are going to have a chance to do that tomorrow with a vote in the U.S. Senate. I urge my colleagues to support the Congressional Review Act resolution I have filed, S.J. Res. 53.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking my friend and colleague from the State of Maryland, Senator CARDIN, for bringing this resolution to the floor of the Senate—as he said, we will be voting on it tomorrow—but also for his long-standing support and efforts in trying to protect our environment, to protect the Chesapeake Bay, and to address the urgent issue of climate change, which anybody with eyes can see is already having a devastating impact on communities throughout our country and, indeed, throughout the world.

I am also very pleased to be here with our colleague, the Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, who has made this such an important cause and has kept the Senate focused on this pressing issue.

As Senator CARDIN indicated, under the previous administration, under the leadership of President Obama, as a country we adopted something known as the Clean Power Plan rule. This was a historic step forward. It was a blueprint to create more good-paying jobs in the clean energy sector. In fact, we have seen a tremendous growth of those jobs in the area of solar and wind power and other jobs.

That Clean Power Plan rule, under the Obama administration, also really addressed the issue of carbon pollution in the atmosphere, beginning to reduce it significantly, to offset the damage and real costs we are already experiencing in communities from that climate change.

As Senator CARDIN said, this is an area where there are huge communities, if our country moves forward, in the area of clean energy jobs. Right now, with this new Trump administration action, we are ceding the playing field to China, which is happily seizing the initiative and moving forward and creating more and more jobs in the clean energy sector. If we don't wake up, we are going to lose that important global competition in the vital sector to China, which has established a goal of dominating the area of clean energy technologies by 2025.

Instead of building on the progress of the Obama administration, on June 19, the Trump administration decided to repeal and roll back these important

rules that have been put in place and substitute them with something that, in the worst case, actually makes the situation much worse than even before these Trump rules and, at the very least, is a huge retreat from the progress we were headed toward under the rules of the previous administration.

Let me just point out the analysis that was done by a very good organization called Resources for the Future. They looked at their analysis of this Trump proposal, which I agree with Senator CARDIN is better termed the "Trump dirty power plan," and they concluded it would do very little, if anything, to address climate change and would have an adverse air quality impact in many of our States.

Some people may recall when the Trump version of this power plan, the "dirty power plan," was released last year, people looked at the EPA's own analysis of that rule, and it showed that 1,630 of our fellow Americans would die prematurely under the Trump provisions compared to the Obama-era provisions.

So when the Trump administration released this most recent version of their amended plan back in June, they made it really difficult to put together all the data so people would not be able to connect the dots in many of these areas, but Senator CARDIN has presented some of the results of this. I want to emphasize those and put them in somewhat different terms, which is, what does the Trump rule accomplish compared to the Obama rule on some of these issues?

So with respect to carbon dioxide emissions, the Trump rule would reduce carbon dioxide emissions, carbon pollution emissions, by 2.7 percent of what the Obama administration would have done—2.7 percent of what the rule they are replacing would have done.

With respect to sulfur dioxide, the Trump plan reduces sulfur dioxide emissions by only 1.9 percent of what the Obama administration's rule would have done.

When it comes to nitrous oxide, the Trump proposal, the Trump plan, reduces nitrous oxide by only 2.5 percent compared to what the Obama provisions would have done.

If you take all of these together, you can see it is a really anemic proposal that takes us way backward compared to where we were. That is why I support Senator CARDIN's efforts on the floor, with the vote tomorrow, to say no, to say no to the Trump administration's efforts to roll back the progress on clean air, to roll back the progress on clean water because a lot of that pollution settles in places like the Chesapeake Bay, and to roll back progress on climate change, which we know is hitting our communities as we speak.

I want to give some additional Maryland examples here. The Baltimore Sun ran a story a little while back about the staggering costs that Maryland and

Marylanders would have to pay to build seawalls to protect communities from sea level rise. A study from the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development found that in the coming decades, seawalls to protect thousands of homes, businesses, and farmlands from Ocean City to Baltimore City will cost more than \$27 billion—\$27 billion.

We have also seen dramatic flooding in the city of Annapolis that is already hurting the Naval Academy. This past week, we just had a famous national boat show, and in the middle of this boat show, there was huge flooding in the city of Annapolis. The costs to the city and that community are rising rapidly and have been well-documented.

I ask my colleagues to support Senator CARDIN's motion. Let's not go backward. Let's not go backward in terms of protecting our air. Let's not go backward in terms of the battle against climate change because going backward means less good jobs in America, it means more dirty air and more asthma, and it means ceding this important area to China and others in the global economy.

I urge my colleagues to support the motion of Senator CARDIN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote be extended until 4:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Seeing none, without objection, it is so ordered.

S.J. RES. 53

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am delighted to join my colleagues from Maryland and Delaware to support this resolution expressing disapproval of the Trump administration rescinding the Clean Power Plan and replacing it with its so-called affordable clean energy rule, which is a name fanciful enough to make George Orwell blush.

The first thing to understand about the so-called affordable clean energy rule is that it is a do-nothing rule, exactly as the polluters wish. EPA admits its own rule would do virtually zero to reduce carbon pollution. It requires zero emissions reductions at natural gas-fired powerplants, and it would allow coal-fired powerplants to make minor efficiency improvements and then run for longer hours. That could actually lead to an increase in carbon pollution.

This rule is designed to fool people into thinking that the Trump administration is obeying the Clean Air Act, but no one should be fooled.

From the get-go, the Trump administration made clear it didn't care about cutting carbon pollution, fighting climate change, or protecting the environment or public health. It cared about obeying the fossil fuel industry, not the law.

Within weeks of taking office, Trump's swampy Cabinet rolled out the red carpet for coal baron Bob Murray, who had an action plan for the administration. Here is Murray with Energy Secretary Perry, and look who is accompanying Murray at the meeting, our EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler, then Murray's lobbyist. It looks like a friendly meeting, and why wouldn't it be? Look at that, such a nice big hug. Isn't that sweet?

Murray was the major financial backer of the Trump administration, and this was his payback time. Individuals associated with Murray Energy were the largest source of donations to Donald Trump's Presidential campaign, and Murray himself chipped in a cool 300 grand for Trump's inaugural festivities. Murray was also one of the largest donors to election spending groups associated with disgraced EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, under whose tenure this botched ACE rule began.

So what was the first item on Bob Murray's action plan? To get rid of the Clean Power Plan. Bob Murray wasn't the only one who wanted to scrap the Clean Power Plan. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, two of the largest and most powerful trade associations in Washington, also asked the EPA to scrap the Clean Power Plan. That is no surprise. The independent watchdog group InfluenceMap found the chamber and NAM the two worst obstructers of climate action. They will not reveal their donors, but I believe they took lots of money from the fossil fuel industry and became its mouthpiece. They got paid, and this was the play.

The chamber and NAM were also aligned with shadowy fossil fuel industry front groups like the so-called Utility Air Regulatory Group and the American Council for Clean Coal Electricity—more Orwellian names. These groups also asked the EPA to scrap the Clean Power Plan and replace it with this toothless rule.

Is that unsavory enough? It gets worse. Guess who represented UARG, that Utility Air Regulatory Group. It was none other than fossil fuel industry stooge Bill Wehrum, who helped orchestrate a web of front groups, like UARG, which obscured and multiplied the influence of Wehrum's polluter clients—clients responsible for massive carbon pollution.

Naturally, Trump put this guy in as head of EPA's Air Office. Before Wehrum headed for the exits this summer, Murray's man Wheeler praised Wehrum for "tremendous progress" in repealing climate regulations. Pruitt to Wheeler to Wehrum—this is rank fossil fuel crookedness in plain view.

Several of us submitted comments laying out the financial and professional connections between the Trump officials who developed this bogus rule and the fossil fuel industry that asked for it. Those comments are posted on-

line and in the Federal Register. I urge you to have a look. Also available online is a report I did with Senator CARPER detailing Wehrum's industry ties and conflicts of interest. Median.com/@senwhitehouse will link you to all of this.

The crony capture of EPA is not the only problem with the rule. The industry is so greedy and its hacks are so clumsy that they don't bother to align the rule with the scientific and economic evidence.

In court, Agency actions will be found to be arbitrary and capricious—and therefore invalid—if they are not the product of reasoned decision making.

In this case, it is clear that the EPA ignored the science, ignored the economics, and produced exactly what the fossil fuel industry told it to do: a do-nothing rule that took good care of the coal and natural gas industries.

What does the science tell us? According to the world's best scientific report, if we reduce carbon pollution by roughly half by around 2030 and reach net zero emissions sometime around the middle of the century, we stand a chance to hold the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Our own best scientists warn that if we don't limit carbon pollution, we will be hit with economic losses in the hundreds of billions of dollars per year by the end of the century. Legions of economists, investment banks, asset managers, central banks, credit rating agencies, and other experts warn of serious economic risks from climate upheaval. Here is a summary of just some of these warnings, which I have delivered to every colleague in the Senate. That, too, can be found on that Medium page.

Pruitt, Wehrum, and Wheeler ignored all of this for their do-nothing rule. The only voice that mattered was the polluter industry that they came from and will go back to in an oil-greased revolving door. This ACE rule is the exact opposite of reasoned decision making. But that was never the point. The fix was in. Even a bogus rule that courts throw out buys this crooked and corrupting industry time—time to keep polluting, time to burn through reserves, and time to use its political muscle to fend off action here in the Senate. If you are in the fiddling business and fiddle for money, fiddling while Rome burns is a fine economic proposition for you.

The Supreme Court has ruled that greenhouse gases are pollutants under the Clean Air Act. The EPA has found that greenhouse gases from powerplants endanger human health and welfare. Those determinations mean the EPA must limit carbon pollution, consistent with the law. This masquerade of a rule fails to do this, so it must be replaced with something effective, as a matter of law.

I ask colleagues to think carefully about their vote on this resolution. Do you want to endorse this record of ob-

vious industry capture? Do you want to side with this corrupting industry over your own constituents' health and safety? Do you want to go on record ignoring all the warnings from the Bank of England, from Freddie Mac, from Nobel Prize-winning economists, and from hundreds of our own government's most knowledgeable experts?

The fossil fuel industry—its voice full of money, as F. Scott Fitzgerald might say—has drowned out the voices of everyone else for too long here. But you can't shout down the laws of physics. You can't shout down the laws of biology, chemistry, and economics. Those laws will have their way, and we have been well warned. So, please, let's turn the corner to a brighter day where decency rules, not industry political thuggery; a brighter day where facts and science matter more than dark money and paid-for denial; and a brighter day where we don't give our grandchildren daily cause for shame. It is time to wake up, and this vote is a chance to do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

HONG KONG

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, as we speak, the brave people of Hong Kong are demonstrating to protect their freedoms from the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing. Chinese state TV has portrayed these millions of demonstrators as violent anarchists and separatists, but these Hongkongers are merely insisting that China live up to the promises it made to Hong Kong and the United Kingdom—promises China made as binding conditions of the transfer of sovereignty from London to Beijing.

The Chinese Government promised that Hong Kong would enjoy a high degree of autonomy, including many of the freedoms that Beijing denies to its more than 1 billion subjects on the mainland, but, as the world has learned through bitter experience, the Chinese Communist Party's promises aren't worth the paper they are written on. Slowly but surely, Beijing has chipped away at the independence it promised Hong Kong—disappearing citizens guilty of wrongthink, undermining Hong Kong's longstanding political and judicial systems, and issuing menacing threats of military intervention to crush the demonstrations.

Most Americans are rightly outraged by China's brutal crackdown in Hong Kong. Daryl Morey is one of them. He is the general manager of the Houston Rockets. Just a few days ago, he tweeted a simple and justified phrase: "Fight for freedom. Stand with Hong Kong."

Morey probably knew his words would offend the Chinese Communist Party, but he was also violating a different party line—that of his own league, the NBA. For daring to speak up about Hong Kong, Morey was disavowed by his team, his fellow executives, and some of the most famous