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10.05.2009 | 64°F

Emissions edict

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The Obama administration has given the green light, so to speak, to the Environmental Protection Agency to move ahead with rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions from large power plants and industrial polluters. This was action the president wanted from Congress, but Capitol Hill can be an uphill climb when it comes to environmental regulations opposed by utilities, oil companies and industries heavy on carbon dioxide emissions.

Those industries, historically, want much softer rules and often try to justify resistance by saying that stronger environmental regulation will hurt business and agricultural interests. But the administration is trying to speak to that by exempting from the proposal farms and small businesses and others that don't really throw out all that much carbon dioxide.

Coal-burning power plants, however, would be affected, as would large industries that produce most greenhouse gas emissions. The largest such industries cause well over half of such emissions in this country.



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Obama's predecessor was not much interested in tackling the greenhouse gas problem (some in the Bush administration were reluctant to admit global warming even existed). Delay has not just made the problem worse, but also made the United States look like a reluctant international partner in the effort to improve the quality of the environment and to preserve the planet for those who travel it in the future.

The notion of sending the EPA out first with stronger rules goes a bit against the president's

inclination to work with Congress. But too much time has been lost, eight years' worth.

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