

GOP Says Democrat Climate Bill is Another Tax

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Editor's Note: How do you feel about Cap-and-Trade legislation?

WASHINGTON (AP) – Republicans on Saturday slammed a Democratic bill before the House that seeks to address climate change, arguing that it amounts to an energy tax on consumers.

In the GOP's weekly radio and Internet address, Indiana Rep. Mike Pence said Congress should instead open the way for more domestic oil and natural gas production and ease regulatory barriers for building new nuclear power plants. "During these difficult times, the American people don't want a national energy tax out of Washington, D.C.," said Pence, the third-ranking House Republican.

Pence reiterated what GOP lawmakers have been saying for weeks: that the climate bill being considered in the House capping releases of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases would lead to much higher energy costs and accomplish little to counter global warming if other nations do not act as well. The bill's supporters counter that the increased costs can be minimized.

Pence outlined the alternative proposal that he and several other House Republicans unveiled earlier this week. The GOP plan included no mandatory limits on greenhouse gases — something that supporters of the Democratic bill argue is essential to reduce the risks of global warming.

Still, Pence maintains the GOP plan will promote nonfossil energy use.

"The Republican energy plan calls for more domestic exploration for oil and natural gas, renewed commitment to clean emission-free nuclear energy, investments in renewable and alternative energy technologies and incentives to spur greater conservation among individuals and businesses," he said.

The GOP plan calls for using revenue from more oil and gas drilling to promote renewable energy such as wind and solar; it also makes it easier to get approval to build more nuclear power plants. The proposal also sets a goal of doubling the number of nuclear reactors over the next 20 years.

When Pence introduced the GOP measure, the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called it "the same tired policies embraced" for years by former President George W. Bush "at a time when Americans are seeking new solutions to rebuild our economy and break our dependence on foreign energy sources."

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