

Alternative US emissions bill increases nuclear generation

Republican leaders in the US House of Representatives have introduced a “market-based” alternative bill to the cap-and-trade measure advocated by the Democratic majority to reduce industry greenhouse gas emissions. The Republican bill includes goals and incentives for 100 new nuclear plants and for boosting domestic oil supplies. The alternative bill does not put a limit or price on carbon emissions. Instead, the legislation sets a national goal for 100 new nuclear power plants by 2030, creates a Renewable and Alternative Energy Trust Fund and removes regulations and streamlines processes to increase domestic drilling for oil and gas. “The bill says we’re of the quaint notion that we ought to have market-based solutions,” says Representative Joe Barton, a senior Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. “That’s why there is no punitive measure on carbon.” Instead, the bill accelerates the regulatory process for building nuclear reactors. It also lowers costs for nuclear power plants by suspending tariffs and duties on foreign parts. Key Republican House members argue that the Waxman-Markey bill, which creates an emissions trading scheme, will cost millions of industry jobs and do little to halt climate change. “The very idea of a cap-and-trade is to create an additional cost burden on carbon-based energy,” says House Republican Conference Chair Mike Pence. “We believe there is a better way than passing an energy tax on every American household.”

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