

US Greenhouse Gas Bill May Pass Senate

Supporters and detractors of legislation to reduce US greenhouse gas emissions by 71 per cent by 2050 predict that there will be enough votes to allow a debate in the US Senate, but there may be more politics than policy development after that. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Republican staff director Andrew Wheeler says that the votes are there for the chamber to proceed with a floor debate on the bill from California Democrat Senator and committee chair Barbara Boxer. Wheeler says in the end, it is a question of whether the debate will be a legislative process “or a political exercise”, he says. “We’re hearing from the majority leader, ‘you have maybe a week’,” to debate the 157-page bill, released by Boxer last week, Wheeler says. “That is not enough time to debate the issues we did not debate in committee,” he adds. A key area of contention expected to arise in the debate are the bill’s provisions to contain the cost of reducing greenhouse gases from the electric power sector, natural gas processing, large industrials and transportation fuels, according to the committee members. Other potential battlegrounds include how international goods are accepted in the US from countries lacking similar carbon constraints and whether states with tougher carbon caps should be forced to enrol in the federal program. Boxer also estimates the carbon market would reap nearly US\$7 trillion through 2050 that the bill would allocate to transition industry to a low-carbon economy, kick-start carbon capture technologies and provide tax relief to compensate for higher energy bills.

[Source essa news]