

Obama promotes clean energy; GOP hits Dem spending

October 2 2010, By ERICA WERNER , Associated Press Writer



Outgoing White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel winks as President Barack Obama speaks in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Friday, Oct. 1, 2010, during an announcement that Emanuel will be stepping down to run for Mayor of Chicago. Obama announced that Pete Rouse will be interim Chief of Staff. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

(AP) -- Wind, solar and other clean energy technologies produce jobs and are essential for the country's environment and economy, President Barack Obama said in promoting his administration's efforts.

The president used his weekly radio and Internet address Saturday, a month away from congressional elections, to charge Republicans with wanting to scrap incentives for such projects.

"That's what's at stake in this debate," the president said. "We can go back to the failed energy policies that profited the oil companies but weakened our country. We can go back to the days when promising industries got set up overseas. Or we can go after new jobs in growing industries. And we can spur innovation and help make our economy more competitive."

Part of the House GOP's recently released "Pledge to America" calls for freezing spending from last year's stimulus bill. The stimulus included \$90 billion for clean energy projects ranging from electric vehicles to solar loan guarantees, although a big chunk of the money has already been obligated or spent.

Obama cited a solar power plant breaking ground in the Mojave Desert this month thanks to government incentives.

"With projects like this one and others across this country, we are staking our claim to continued leadership in the new global economy," Obama said. "And we're putting Americans to work producing clean, homegrown American energy that will help lower our reliance on foreign oil and protect our planet for future generations."

Republicans disputed Obama's criticism, saying they support investments in renewable energy technologies.

Senate Minority leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., took aim in the GOP radio response at government spending, saying Democrats are "maxing out the national credit card on a failed stimulus bill and a government-run health care bill."

He criticized Democrats for recessing Congress until after the elections without acting to extend the Bush-era tax cuts, which expire in January. Obama and Democratic leaders want to extend the tax cuts only for

individuals making less than \$200,000 and married couples making less than \$250,000, while Republicans and some rank-and-file Democrats want to extend tax cuts for the wealthy as well, a costlier proposition.

"Whenever they were asked about this looming tax hike, they just blamed the Republicans," McConnell said. "They said that Republicans will be to blame for some people getting a tax hike because we didn't think anyone should get a tax hike. ... The fact is, the best way to help individuals and small businesses and the economy is to give them all the certainty that their taxes won't be going up at the end of the year."

More information: Obama address: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>
GOP address: <http://www.youtube.com/gopweeklyaddress>

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