

White House pushes climate change efforts

May 6 2014



Senior White House counselor John Podesta speaks during the daily briefing at the White House on May 5, 2014 in Washington

The White House will focus this week on its efforts fighting climate change as a new environmental assessment is released, an official said Monday, amid pushback from a reticent Congress.

The president will give televised interviews with various meteorologists Tuesday to discuss the findings in the third US National Climate Assessment, said special advisor John Podesta.

The assessment "will be the most authoritative and comprehensive source of [scientific information](#) ever produced about how climate change is going to impact all regions of the United States and key sectors of the national economy," Podesta said Monday during a daily White House press briefing.

Drought in the state of California, prairie fires in Oklahoma and rising ocean levels on the east coast, particularly in Florida, are all examples of its effect on the environment, he said.

"Hundreds of the best climate scientists from across the US, not just in the public sector but in private sector as well, have worked over the last four years to produce this report," he said.

The assessment is meant to provide "usable knowledge that state and local decision-makers can take advantage of" when facing climate-change challenges, Podesta added.

The fight against climate change figured prominently among Obama's campaign promises during his 2008 presidential bid, but the issue was relegated to the back burner after a bill failed in Congress early in his first term, when Democrats still held both houses.

Republicans, who now hold a majority in the House of Representatives, reject new federal laws on emissions, which they say harm growth and employment.

And Democrats from states that are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, such as oil-rich Louisiana and coal-rich West Virginia, have also come out against a transition to green energy.

During his January 28 State of the Union address, Obama reiterated that [climate change](#) is real and promised unilateral action, without Congress,

to promote his energy agenda.

The administration has already taken regulatory measures, in particular in introducing tougher federal standards for vehicles.

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Citation: White House pushes climate change efforts (2014, May 6) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-05-white-house-climate-efforts.html>

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