

Californians bash Trump for bid to end climate change plan

February 28 2018, by Ellen Knickmeyer



President Donald Trump speaks during a ceremony honoring Reverend Billy Graham in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building, Wednesday, Feb. 28, in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

California stands in "complete opposition" to a Trump administration plan to scrap a policy slashing climate-changing emissions from power plants, its top air official said Wednesday at a U.S. hearing in a state helping lead the fight against global warming.

State officials joined hundreds of other opponents, including technology billionaire Tom Steyer, in speaking out against ending the Obama-era Clean Power Plan at the hearing in San Francisco, billed as the latest in a series of national "listening sessions" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"I know this is a listening session, and I'm asking you, who are you listening to? The voices of outdated technology of the past?" Mary Nichols, chairwoman of California's Air Resources Board, asked EPA officials.

"California is in complete opposition to the EPA's proposal," said Nichols, one of the highest-ranking officials speaking for Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown's administration.

It has pushed state programs that roll back reliance on coal-powered electrical plants, gas and diesel automobiles, and other carbon-burners.

"Now more than ever is the time for the United States to be a leader and a partner on this," Nichols said. "Not to walk away from this."

Brown's standing as one of the global leaders in the fight against climate change has put California, with the biggest economy and population of any state, at odds with Trump and EPA leader Scott Pruitt, who say they want to help coal-powered plants make a comeback.

Under Brown, California has committed to getting at least half its electricity from [renewable energy sources](#), such as coal and wind, by 2030.

Doctors, environmentalists, scientists, expectant mothers and at least two descendants of coal miners were among those who signed up Wednesday to urge the federal government to stick to former President Barack

Obama's plan for fostering renewable energy at [power plants](#) nationwide.

By late morning, none of those speaking at one of several halls at San Francisco's main library supported the Trump administration's effort to end the Clean Power Plan. Because of regulatory procedures, it could take years to repeal it, and expected lawsuits and other legal challenges could delay it further.

Numerous speakers cited predictions of growing numbers of respiratory illnesses and death if the U.S. backtracked on efforts to curb carbon pollution from car exhaust and other sources.

"Mr. Pruitt may not understand about asthma," Mary Zhu, a retired doctor in the San Francisco Bay Area, told EPA officials. "Go to an ICU, go to an ER, and then decide if you want to kill people."

Protesters ranging from schoolchildren to members of the American Lung Association also planned to rally against the repeal effort at San Francisco City Hall.

Opposition to the Trump effort was a given in California, with officials and members of the public stressing what they said would be national harm from the move and pledging a fight.

"This can't just be a sham listening session. Not when the health and prosperity of the American people is at stake," said Steyer, a hedge-fund magnate and Trump opponent who is active in the fight for renewable energy.

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