

# EPA issues timetable for greenhouse gas emission rules

**Matthew L. Wald New York Times, 12-24-10**

The Environmental Protection Agency announced a timetable on Thursday for issuing rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and oil refineries, signaling a resolve to press ahead on such regulation even as it faces stiffening opposition in Congress.

The agency said it would propose performance standards for new and refurbished power plants in July 2011, with final rules to be issued in May 2012. Proposed emissions standards for new oil refineries will be published in December 2011, it said, with the final rules due in November 2012; rules for existing plants would come later.

But the EPA was vague on how stringent the rules would be and how deep a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions would result.

Gina McCarthy, the assistant administrator for air and radiation, said the rules would be "cost-effective" but declined to be more specific, saying only that the agency would consider the costs and benefits of available control technologies.

That left open the question of how much money the agency would demand that an industry spend to avoid emitting carbon dioxide.

The EPA seemed at pains to appear reasonable on the challenges of an industry transition: In a conference call with reporters, McCarthy emphasized that the agency would take a "sensitive and collaborative" approach in issuing rules for plants and refineries.

Having declared greenhouse gases to be a threat to public health last year, the agency begins regulating those emissions on Jan. 2 under the Clean Air Act.

The rules for new power plants and refineries are certain to be challenged by industry, some states, and many Republicans in the House of Representatives who have vowed to limit the agency's regulatory powers.

The EPA's announcement drew swift criticism from Rep. Fred Upton, the Michigan Republican who will become chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee next month. "We should be working to bring more power online, not shutting plants down," he said in a statement.

"We will not allow the administration to regulate what they have been unable to legislate," he said. "This Christmas surprise is nothing short of a backdoor attempt to implement their failed job-killing cap-and-trade scheme," he said.

In the conference call, McCarthy emphasized that the EPA was not imposing a "cap-and-trade" system, a market-driven system that sets a price on carbon dioxide and a ceiling on greenhouse gas pollution while allowing companies to trade permits to meet it.

California, which adopted landmark global warming legislation in 2006, is far ahead of the EPA's latest move. The state just adopted a cap-and-trade system that will force major polluters to reduce emissions or pay millions for credits that allow them.