

Boxer promises GOP a fight on climate change

Mike Zapler, Bay Area News Group, 1-7-11

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Barbara Boxer had this to say Thursday to newly empowered Republicans aiming to block federal regulators from cracking down on greenhouse gas emissions: Not so fast.

The California Democrat, head of the Environment and Public Works Committee, vowed to "use every tool" to beat back any effort to undermine the Environmental Protection Agency's power to regulate carbon as an air pollutant. Her comments during a news conference were directed at Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., the just-installed chairman of the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee, who said this week that he is exploring ways to thwart the EPA.

"I want to tell him that I will use every tool available to me "... to oppose any legislative effort that threatens the health or safety or well-being of the American people," said Boxer, who was sworn in this week to her fourth term. "That includes his desire to stop the Environmental Protection Agency from carrying out its responsibilities under the Clean Air Act."

Republicans assumed power in the House this week and many, including Upton, are eager to wage battle over the hot-button issue of climate change. After Boxer and fellow Democrats failed to pass a sweeping climate change bill last year, the Obama administration has signaled that the EPA will move to regulate heat-trapping emissions as a pollutant under the Clean Air Act.

"We are not going to let this administration regulate what they have been unable to legislate," Upton said on "Fox News Sunday." He said Wednesday that he plans to hold hearings to explore ways to stymie or slow the EPA's efforts.

Any GOP effort to stop the EPA faces an almost-certain veto by President Barack Obama. But Upton said he is exploring other options, such as pressing for a delay in EPA regulations until legal challenges to the agency's authority are settled in court.

Some coal state Democrats, including Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, have proposed a two-year delay of any EPA climate change rules.