

President Obama's last Environmental Protection Agency head told us as much, saying: "U.S. action alone will not impact world CO₂ levels." That is a quote from her. She said: "U.S. action alone will not impact world CO₂ levels." That was spoken by the previous EPA Administrator.

You need emissions-heavy countries such as India and China on board first. That is just a scientific fact, although I suspect our friends on the left will conveniently ignore it because the point of this whole exercise is sadly obvious. It is not about science or global warming at all. It is all about making privileged elitists—elitists who may not feel the pinch of a higher utility bill or the pain of a lost job—feel as if they did something.

There is another reason why the echoes of ObamaCare here are so unmistakable. The President's national energy tax represents a direct attack on the American middle class.

Experts say it would devastate entire swaths of our economy and could lead to a loss of nearly half a million jobs, according to one AFL-CIO labor union estimate. In fact, the head of that union, the United Mine Workers of America, said this energy tax would lead to long-term and irreversible job losses.

The national energy tax would also shift middle class jobs overseas, shatter our manufacturing base, and drive up energy costs for families. It is a dagger aimed right at the heart of the American middle class, at a time when our constituents are already struggling under the weight of so many of this administration's other failed policies.

Let's not forget: Opportunity has already decreased for too many families under this President's watch. Millions of our friends and neighbors are still out of work, and the economy is at a standstill.

This is President Obama's plan, to squeeze the middle class even harder, ship American jobs overseas and to do it by going around Congress? It is clear that the President is trying to impose this national energy tax via Executive order because he knows the representatives of the people would never vote for it.

He knows that Congress already rejected a similar national energy tax when he tried to pass it back in his first term. Maybe he is avoiding legislative accountability because he knows this energy tax is too cruel, because he knows it would have an especially devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of our society—the poor, the unemployed, and seniors on a fixed income.

It is a curious thing. The same elites who like to lecture us from their privileged perches about helping others are often the same people who seem to care the least about who their extreme policies hurt. To them the American people are just *hoi polloi*, the commoners who these elites think need their enlightened guidance.

That is especially true when it comes to coal-mining families in my State, good people who this administration hasn't even bothered to hear from. Kentucky miners know that coal keeps the lights on. All they want to do is provide for their families and put food on the table.

They have committed no crime, they have done nothing wrong, but the Obama administration has declared a war on them all the same. A White House advisor was quoted as saying that a war on coal is "exactly what's needed."

These are callous positions, to be sure, but they are easy things to say when you live hundreds of miles away, when you don't have to live with the real-world consequences of your ivory tower ideological fantasies, when you don't have to see the raw human costs of your schemes. That certainly was the approach the administration took when it scheduled listening sessions to discuss its anti-coal regulations. It only wanted to hear applause from fellow leftwing elites, so it didn't schedule a single listening session in coal country—not one.

This is what one miner said at a coal listening session that I hosted in Eastern Kentucky after the administration refused to attend: "Our biggest worries now are just trying to keep a roof over our heads [and] food on the table."

He is not alone, and he needs to know this: We are on the side of the aisle that hears him. We are not going to let this administration's anti-middle class policies go unchallenged.

That is why today I am introducing legislation, the Coal Country Protection Act, that would push back against the President's extreme anti-coal scheme. It would require that simple but important benchmarks be met before his rules could take effect.

The Secretary of Labor would have to certify that it would not generate loss of employment. The Director of the Congressional Budget Office would have to certify that it would not result in any loss in the American gross domestic product.

The Administrator of the Energy Information Administration would have to certify it would not increase electricity rates, and the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the president of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation would have to certify that electricity delivery would remain reliable.

It is just common sense. That is why I call upon the majority leader to schedule a vote on this legislation immediately and to help us pass it, because Kentucky mining families are counting on him and so are countless middle-class families in my State and across the country who stand to get hurt by this administration's cold ideological attacks.

If the majority leader and Senate Democrats stand in the way of passing this bill, Kentuckians and the American people will remember who stood

with them and who worked against them. I imagine they will want to send a majority to Washington that would actually work for the middle class for a change, instead of hurting seniors and shipping jobs overseas.

At the end of the day it comes down to this: The President's national energy tax is ObamaCare 2.0. It is a massive big-government boondoggle that is being marketed as something it isn't. It is an idea that will not even solve the larger problem it purports to address, and it will hurt the middle class.

So the President can pretend his national energy tax is about helping the environment, but we know better. It is not going to do a thing to meaningfully control global carbon emissions. This is really about growing government. It is really about making leftwing elitists feel better about themselves, and it is really about helping political supporters in places such as California and New York while inflicting serious pain on people and places like Kentucky.

I am going to continue to fight. Kentuckians deserve no less. I am going to keep vigorously fighting against the Obama administration's continued war on coal jobs and this extreme, extreme anti-middle class national energy tax in particular.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees and with the majority controlling the first half of the time.

The Senator from Illinois.

GLOBAL WARMING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise in morning business to respond to the Republican Senate leader who just spoke.

I preface my remarks by making the claim that I have made on the floor now three different times, and I am still waiting for the first Member of the other party to come to this Senate Chamber and to dispute what I am about to say.

The Republican Party of the United States of America is the only major political party in the world today that denies global warming.

I have said it. I am waiting for them to come forward and say: No, there is another one somewhere. One said: Well, we think there is one in Australia.

Really? So the entire world understands that global warming is a challenge except for one political party, the Republican Party of the United States of America.