

Debate

The Impact of Carbon Restrictions

ISSUE: Will carbon restrictions benefit both the nation and the environment in the long run?

To combat global warming, the Obama administration used the wide-scale reach of the Clean Air Act to push through regulations placing limits on air pollution. This extends the power of the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate sources of greenhouse gases. One major goal is to obtain a 30 percent reduction in emissions from coal-powered plants by 2030.

The new regulations could have major benefits for the nation. The average age of U.S. coal plants is 42 years, making them less efficient than newer coal plants. Power plants also account for 38 percent of the nation's carbon emissions. Stricter regulation of power plants could reduce carbon emissions and hinder global warming.

On the other hand, many utilities see the regulations as too burdensome and believe they will result in lost jobs. States such as Arkansas would also be affected due to their reliance on coal-powered plants. This has led the EPA to reconsider the timetable and provide more flexibility to states in implementing these changes. The Trump Administration attempted to slow down placing limits on air pollution. In fact, air pollution increased during the Trump administration after a seven-year decline.

There are two sides to every issue:

1. *Carbon emissions regulations will benefit both the nation and the environment in the long run.*
 2. *Carbon emissions regulations will be detrimental to the nation because it will cause many to lose their jobs.*
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Sources: Coral Davenport, "Obama Builds Environmental Legacy with 1970 Law," The New York Times, November 26, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/27/us/without-passing-a-single-law-obama-crafts-bold-environmental-policy.html> (accessed March 10, 2015); Sarah D. Wire, "Arkansas Joining States Challenging EPA on Emissions," Arkansas Online, March 10, 2015, <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2015/mar/10/arkansas-joining-states-challenging-epa/> (accessed March 10, 2015); Richard Wolf, "Supreme Court Limits Greenhouse Gas Emissions," USA Today, June 23, 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/06/23/supreme-court-greenhouse-gas/8567453/> (accessed March 10, 2015); Juliet Eilperin and Steven Mufson, "Everything You Need to Know about the EPA's Proposed Rule on Coal Plants," The Washington Post, June 2, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/epa-will-propose-a-rule-to-cut-emissions-from-existing-coal-plants/2014/06/02/1qjwvz0j_story.html

**This debate issue was developed by O. C. Ferrell and Linda Ferrell © 2021. This case was prepared for classroom discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative, ethical, or legal decision by management. All sources used for this case were obtained through publicly available material.*

coal-plants-by-up-to-30-percent/2014/06/02/f37f0a10-e81d-lle3-afc6-aldd9407abcf_story.html (accessed March 10, 2015); Mark Drajem, "EPA Considers Delaying Carbon Deadline After Utilities Object," Bloomberg, February 17, 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-17/epa-considers-revised-timing-for-complying-with-power-plant-rule> (accessed March 10, 2015); Matt Stieb, "Air Pollution Increase Under Trump, Despite His Claim of World's 'Cleanest Air,'" New York Magazine, October 24, 2019, <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/10/air-pollution-increases-under-trump-after-7-year-decline.html> (accessed January 31, 2020).