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## **Co-ops Support Alternatives to EPA Regulation**

➤ *Current carbon dioxide regulatory scheme would be the wrong tool for the job*

Even as climate change legislation remains stalled in Congress, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has begun taking steps to regulate carbon dioxide under the federal Clean Air Act.

“This could lead to higher electric bills and an ‘economic train wreck,’” points out Glenn English, CEO of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). “The Clean Air Act wasn’t intended to deal with carbon dioxide. It was tailored to curb harmful pollutants like sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which it does effectively. Using it to regulate greenhouse gas emissions would essentially be like using a hammer to tighten a screw— that screw may eventually get hammered in, but using the right tool makes more sense and does the job without unintended harm.”

The Clean Air Act in its modern form was originally passed in 1970 to control specific pollutants on a local and regional basis. In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that the term “pollutant” in the Clean Air Act includes carbon dioxide, and left it up to EPA to decide whether or not to take any action.

Disregarding Congress’ original intent when it passed the Act, the EPA subsequently issued a finding that included carbon dioxide among other emissions that endanger public health and welfare. Several members in the U.S. House and Senate have introduced bipartisan proposals to stop EPA from using the Clean Air Act in this way. House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-Mo.), along with Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.) and House Agriculture

Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), recently introduced such legislation. Two other efforts are being spearheaded by U.S. Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-N.D.) and U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), ranking member on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

English says electric co-ops welcome and endorse the efforts of Congress to limit EPA's regulatory oversight, stressing that consumers can also have an impact on the issue. Through the nationwide Our Energy, Our Future® grassroots campaign at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), you can join with your local electric co-op in supporting members of Congress seeking other solutions.

“Affordable electric bills must be at the heart of this debate, and we’re fighting on behalf of consumers,” declares English. “Leaving matters up to unelected EPA bureaucrats is a major step in the wrong direction.”