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E.P.A. Delays Plants' Pollution Permits

By JOHN M. BRODER
Published: March 29, 2010

WASHINGTON - The [Environmental Protection Agency](#) said Monday that it would not require power plants or other industrial sites to obtain federal pollution permits for emitting greenhouse gases before next January.

The statement formally affirms an agency announcement last month that it would phase in the regulation of climate-altering gases over several years, starting with the largest sources.

E.P.A. regulation of carbon dioxide and other gases that contribute to [global warming](#) is a hugely controversial matter arising from the agency's finding late last year that such gases are a threat to human health and welfare. Numerous state officials, industry groups and members of Congress have protested the agency's intent to regulate those gases, and the E.P.A. is facing what could be years of litigation.

President Obama and members of his cabinet have repeatedly said that they would prefer that Congress act to address climate change through comprehensive energy legislation. But the administration is moving forward with a regulatory plan in case Congress continues to be deadlocked on the issue.

[Lisa P. Jackson](#), the E.P.A. administrator, said the timetable announced Monday was a calibrated plan to begin to apply the Clean Air Act to major stationary sources of heat-trapping gases.

"It gives large facilities the time they need to innovate, governments the time to prepare to cut greenhouse gases, and it ensures that we don't push this problem off to our children and grandchildren," Ms. Jackson said in a statement.

The action clarifies and largely overturns a memorandum issued by the environmental agency in December 2008, a month before President George W. Bush left office. The Bush administration found that permits for emissions of greenhouse gases were not required unless the government issued a so-called endangerment finding that carbon dioxide and other such gases posed a danger to health and the environment. The Bush administration never made such a finding.

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