

PRESIDENT OBAMA REVEALS THE CLEAN POWER PLAN

Sweeping climate change program aims to reduce US GHG emissions by 32% by 2030

This week President Obama proposed sweeping policy changes that could close hundreds of [coal-fired power plants](#) and create a favorable environment for the expansion of solar and other renewable energy sources. The Clean Power Plan regulation, if it withstands legal challenges, will cut emissions 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

The natural gas industry, which had been supported by the Obama Administration for being a cleaner alternative to coal, will likely take a blow. The plan will reward early investments in [wind and solar](#) power, with hopes of having the country generating 28 percent of its power using renewables by 2030.

Does this provide momentum ahead of Paris climate talks? Yes, says U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Obama's leadership on combating climate change was essential for encouraging other key countries to commit to securing a "universal, durable and [meaningful agreement](#)" in Paris, said Ban's spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

Why can President Obama [act unilaterally](#) without the support of Congress? A 2007 Supreme Court ruling classified CO₂ as a pollutant, making it under the regulation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the [Clean Air Act of 1970](#). Interestingly, most steps taken since the 1980s to slash pollution from existing power plants have relied not on new legislation but on the decades old act.

[Watch the video of President Obama's Climate Change Action Plan](#)

UN DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE SET FOR APPROVAL

Member states agree on 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030

When world leaders meet at a summit in late September, just before their annual meeting at the U.N. General Assembly, they are expected to formally adopt the [17 new SDGs](#) for 2030. These goals will replace the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were adopted at a summit in 2000 and are to be completed by the end of 2015.

We [reported](#) in January that the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) will not cut the number of sustainable development goals, despite criticisms that it is too long and "unwieldy" to be effective.

Of note, several goals deal specifically with environmental issues: water, energy, water, energy, oceans, forests, including one that echoes President Obama's recent plan: #13. Take urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts.

[SEE ALL GOALS HERE](#)

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS...

White House Climate Change Edition

300,000

is the forecasted reduction in missed workdays and schooldays by adopting the Clean Power Plan.

2014

was the hottest year recorded globally.

530

million barrels of oil is the forecasted savings by adopting the fuel economy standards for Model Year 2014-2018.

155

billion US Dollars is the forecasted saving to consumers from 2020-2030 by adopting the Clean Power Plan.

85

US dollars per year is the forecasted saving in the energy bill for the average American family.

82

percent of US greenhouse gas pollution comes from carbon dioxide.

35

US states already have renewable energy targets in place.

32

percent of total US greenhouse gas emissions comes from the electricity sector.

30

billion dollars is the estimated cost of droughts and heatwaves in 2012.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE: MORE MIXED MESSAGES

In Japan, one of the largest lenders, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group ([MUFG](#)), will set new criteria to reduce the practice of [cross-shareholding](#), long criticized as fostering close relationships between senior leadership and large shareholders.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles south of Japan, an Australian court [dismissed a test case](#) brought forth by the Australasian Centre for Corporate

Responsibility centered around the rights of [Australian shareholders](#) to bring resolutions forward at the AGMs of Australian companies.

Lastly, a bit of a surprise! The JPX-Nikkei Index, a stock index with some of [Japan's best companies](#) will soon include one of its most controversial: Tokyo Electric Power Co, or [Tepco](#), the utility behind the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl.

WHAT WE'RE READING THIS WEEK



The Economist: The cost of inaction.

Recognising the value at risk from climate change ([link](#))

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT (PRI) MAY MAKE CHANGES TO PRINCIPLES

The [PRI](#), which boasts a signatory base of nearly USD 59trn and will celebrate its 10-year anniversary next year, may be revising its six Principles. The upcoming revision aims to improve signatories' accountability to the initiative. This may mean that new levels of membership will reflect signatories' levels of commitment to [responsible investment](#).

Chair Martin Skancke notes that celebrating the 10-year anniversary calls for some goal setting, saying that "targeting ever-greater mainstream incorporation of the concepts that we've spent the last decade formalizing must be a key goal of the next 10 years."

[READ THE PRI STRATEGIC PLAN HERE](#)

"We wouldn't get on a plane if there was a 5% chance of the plane crashing, but we're treating the climate with that same level of risk in a very offhand, complacent way."

—Nick Robins, co-director of the Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System at the UN Environment Programme

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Is your office too cold or too warm in the summer? The answer may have more to do with your gender than you thought. Turns out office thermostats are set for men's comfort. It's science.

[READ MORE](#)