

Fruedenthal complains of 'real biases' in cap-and-trade bill

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CHEYENNE - Gov. Dave Fruedenthal has joined Wyoming's congressional delegation in opposing a bill that would attempt to limit climate change by regulating greenhouse gas emissions.

The bill should do more to recognize that fossil fuels will provide much of the nation's energy for decades to come, Fruedenthal said Wednesday.

"This bill has some real biases built in that, interestingly enough from my point of view, are negative for fossil energy," he said in his regular news conference.

Wyoming produces more coal than any other state, and coal generates a larger share of the nation's electricity than any other resource.

Rep. Cynthia Lummis voted against the bill last month and Sens. Mike Enzi and John Barrasso vow to oppose the bill in the Senate. Enzi and Barrasso both call the "cap and trade" proposal "cap and tax," saying the bill amounts to a tax on carbon dioxide emissions.

The bill would do little to stop greenhouse emissions, yet would increase energy costs for energy users, Enzi said Wednesday.

"The plan is for the government to print a bunch of certificates, not backed by anything, then give away and auction them among energy companies. Once the companies get the certificates they will pass the increased price of their energy products down to you and me, the consumers," Enzi said in a release. "Companies don't pay taxes, consumers do."

Under cap and trade, the government would issue a limited amount of greenhouse gas emissions credits to companies. Those companies then could buy and sell credits, and companies that reduced emissions would have surplus credits they could sell.

Over time, the government would limit the available number of credits.

Top Obama administration officials testified before a Senate committee Tuesday that the bill would cost the average household less than 50 cents a day by 2020 and would lead to an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse emissions by midcentury.

Enzi spokeswoman Elly Pickett said estimates that she's seen put the legislation's cost at nearly \$3,000 a year for a family of four. Other estimates range as high as \$4,600 a year, she said. Yet the bill would do nothing to limit greenhouse emissions from other countries, she said.

"Global climate change is exactly that - global," she said.

Fruedenthal's long-held position on climate change legislation has been that it should provide certainty about the future regulation of greenhouse emissions. More certainty should encourage companies to invest in building power plants and other energy projects, he has said.

The climate change bill doesn't provide that certainty, Fruedenthal said Wednesday.

"Setting aside the politics, there's so much money sitting on the sidelines that needs to move, and it's not going to move until we figure out how the carbon is going to be managed," he said.

Fruedenthal suggested that a simple cap on carbon emissions might work better than the elaborate bill.

"Just come up with a standard and say people have to meet it," he said. "I think there's the opportunity here for some more creative thought. I haven't heard it from the delegation, but I'm sure they're thinking about it, about ways to make this work."