

Last week the Ambassador to the United States from the Peoples Republic of China paid a visit to my Congressional office in Washington, D.C. We exchanged pleasantries and then I got down to business utilizing my time with him to discuss international trade relations, currency manipulation, Taiwan, North Korea, and their recently expressed concern about the strength of the U.S. dollar.

The most interesting part of the meeting was not his answers to my questions but his statement about the importance of climate change and reducing greenhouse gases emissions. His words were that our two countries had a “shared interest” in this issue.

Why is China interested in the United States passing legislation reducing carbon emissions? It's simple.

China stands to benefit from the policy, not environmentally but economically.

China has emerged as an economic power and enjoys an expanding competitive advantage over the U.S. in manufacturing.

Congress will aid the Chinese economy by pushing cap-and-trade legislation.

Cap-and-trade is a proposal that would attempt to limit the amount of carbon produced in the United States.

In reality it's the largest tax increase in history.

I'm not the only one that thinks so, Congressman John Dingell the most senior Democrat in the House of Representatives stated: “Nobody in this country realizes that cap-and-trade is a tax, and it's a great big one.” The Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade proposal will weaken our economy, exporting U.S. manufacturing to China.

Some analysts estimate that 1.38 million manufacturing jobs will be lost under this legislation.

While our economy has contracted, China's economy enjoys a 6% rate of growth which is anemic by their standards. Cap-and-trade legislation will increase the cost of using coal to produce electricity in order to discourage its use. While we do this China continues to build one coal burning power plant each week.

China is the largest producer of greenhouse gasses in the world, by 2030 China will emit more carbon than the rest of the world produces today.

To make matters worse, there are no incentives in the legislation for building more nuclear power plants that produce zero carbon. France produces about 80% of its energy from nuclear power; we only produce 20% from nuclear. Instead of expanding nuclear energy use, the bill tries to tax coal out of existence.

Colorado will be disproportionately penalized under this system because we are reliant on coal for 71% of our electricity. While Colorado is penalized states in the northeast will be rewarded because they use hydropower.

Millions of lost jobs, higher energy costs, and what would we get in return?

Using the IPCC's climate projections and the National Center for Atmospheric Research's climate change assessment software, we get a negligible temperature reduction of one-tenth of one degree Celsius.

We should not adopt a policy that is an energy tax increase while our nation is mired in a deep recession. Instead we should embrace a diverse energy strategy that allows more domestic production to meet the needs of our economy, places our nation on a path toward energy independence, and points us toward a future focused on cost effectively produced renewable energy.

Cap-and-trade will increase the price of energy on American industries already fighting to stay alive and harm American households who are struggling to get by. Bringing it up now is another sign of how out of touch the majority party in Congress is with the plight of the average American.

Excessive greenhouse gases present a danger to our environment and we should reduce them.

However, we must do so in a rational way that balances the need to maintain a clean and sustainable environment with the need to create jobs and economic opportunities.

Unfortunately, this legislation will have a very marginal impact on the environment but will have a devastating impact on our economy while it is struggling to recover. For these reasons I am very opposed to this excessively harmful piece of legislation.

