



GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Issue:

Environmental organizations and some scientists contend that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activities (anthropogenic GHGs) are the principal cause for an increase in average global temperatures. They argue that unless measures are taken to reduce these emissions, the cumulative effect over coming decades will result in adverse changes in the world's climate and weather. GHGs include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane.

Legislation to reduce GHG emissions by mandating a cap-and-trade program passed the House in June 2009, but was not taken up by the Senate. Since then, there has been much discussion and executive branch action to address GHG emissions.

Background:

Farm Bureau recognizes there may be an increase in occurrences of extreme weather. Even if GHGs are a factor, it is not clear if this is due to natural global climate cycles or other factors, such as GHGs. We do not believe unilateral action by the United States can make a difference on global temperatures or stop devastating weather events. Additionally, we do not support regulations that will increase costs for all Americans while not having a significant effect on the climate.

Farm Bureau does not support any actions or policy that federal agencies could adopt, or the utilization of any existing authority, to regulate emissions of GHGs. Farm Bureau does not support the current actions of EPA to regulate GHGs from new or existing power plants, particularly regulations based on unproven technologies or science, as it causes increased costs to produce food, feed, fuel and fiber without measurably addressing the issue of climate. Farm Bureau would especially oppose any regulation of GHGs from agricultural sources.

Farm Bureau does support policies and incentives that encourage the production and utilization of biofuels and renewable energy. The production and use of biofuels and renewable energy not only helps to reduce GHGs, but creates American jobs, encourages rural development, enhances our national security and protects Americans from price shocks. Increased biofuel production also diversifies our energy portfolio to make America more secure and resilient to the increasing costs for energy.

Farm Bureau believes that adaption strategies and tools can be utilized to face the challenges of more inclement weather and a changing climate. Appropriate funding and emphasis should be given to agricultural research. Having the technology, traits and production practices will be more beneficial than burdening the economy with additional regulations.

Regulatory Actions:

On June 25, 2013, the president released his climate action plan. The president directed EPA to establish carbon pollution standards for both new and existing power plants. Since then, EPA has proposed rules requiring future coal fired power plants to reduce their carbon emissions and utilize carbon capture and storage technologies and addition new regulations for existing power plants. Farm Bureau opposes this action as it will restrict the construction of new coal fired electric generating units. It also creates a burdensome regulatory framework for existing power plants and regulation of other industries in the future.

AFBF Policy:

Farm Bureau supports the following:

- Alternative energy sources, which will minimize atmospheric pollution;
- Market-based solutions, rather than federal or state emission limits, being used to achieve a reduction in GHG emissions from any sources;
- EPA's re-evaluation of burdensome emission control rules for farming practices, farm equipment, cotton gins, grain handling facilities, etc.; and
- The inclusion of the agricultural community as a full partner in the development of any policy or legislation.

Farm Bureau would oppose:

- Climate change legislation that establishes mandatory cap-and-trade provisions;
- Climate change legislation that is not fair, affordable or achievable;
- Any law or regulation requiring the reporting of any GHG emissions by an agricultural entity;
- Any climate change legislation that would make America less competitive in the global marketplace and put undue costs on American agriculture, business and consumers;
- Any climate change legislation until other countries meet or exceed U.S. requirements;
- Any regulation of GHG by EPA;
- Any attempt to regulate methane emissions from livestock under the Clean Air Act or any other legislative vehicle; and
- Taxes on carbon uses or emissions.

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