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Murkowski and her lobbyist allies

By *Juliet Eilperin*

Sen. **Lisa Murkowski** (R-Alaska) is likely to postpone offering an [amendment](#) (pdf) next week that would bar the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant under the Clean Air Act, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The delay would give Democrats a little bit of breathing space on the politically sensitive issue of whether the Obama administration can take the lead on curbing greenhouse gases if Congress fails to act this year. Murkowski first attempted to offer the measure back in September, but as part of a leadership deal between the two parties, she had postponed the move until Jan. 20.

The maneuvering comes as The Washington Post has confirmed that two Washington lobbyists, **Jeffrey R. Holmstead** and **Roger R. Martella, Jr.**, helped craft the original amendment Murkowski planned to offer on the floor last fall. Both Holmstead, who heads the Environmental Strategies Group and Bracewell & Giuliani, and Martella, a partner at Sidley Austin LLP, held senior posts at EPA under the Bush administration and represents multiple clients with an interest in climate legislation pending before Congress.

In an interview, Holmstead said of the Murkowski amendment, "I certainly worked with her staff" on the exact phrasing of the measure in September.

"I was involved," he said, adding that Martella also helped advise Murkowski's aides on the matter. "The line out of the White House and the administration was that the amendment would block the car and truck rule" setting the first-ever greenhouse gas limits on emissions from vehicles, which are set to become final in March.

Holmstead represents industry interests including **Southern Company**, Duke Energy, Progress Energy and the Electric Reliability Coordinating Council on climate matters, according to congressional lobbying registration forms, while Martella represents the **National Alliance of Forest Owners** and the **Alliance of Food Associations** on the same subject.

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Murkowski spokesman Robert Dillon said the senator, who is set to return from Afghanistan Monday, has not made a final decision on whether to offer her amendment on Jan. 20, but her staff is presenting her with multiple options.

Some Republicans are worried the Democrats will offer a second-degree amendment to the measure which would codify the Obama administration's [effort](#) to limit any future greenhouse gas limits to facilities that emit at least 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide a year.

"The possibility of a second-degree amendment plays into our consideration into how to advance the EPA issue," Dillon said.

He confirmed that both Holmstead and Martella helped with the EPA amendment, but added, "Senator Murkowski and her staff write all of her amendments."

"What they offered was technical assistance," Dillon said, adding the senator solicited feedback from the EPA and Senate Democrats as well.

[Emily Figdor](#), who directs the federal global warming program at the advocacy group Environment America, said the fact that Murkowski continues to explore different legislative options shows the uphill battle she faces in attacking EPA's Clean Air Act authority.

"Striking at the heart of the Clean Air Act isn't a popular thing to do," said Figdor, adding that as of last month Murkowski ranked as the top congressional recipient of donations from electric utilities.

And Frank O'Donnell, president of the advocacy group Clean Air Watch, said, "It's not a total shock that ex-Bush administration officials are ghostwriting for Murkowski on climate, though she ought to come clean and admit it so we can understand that big polluters are behind her initiative."

BY JULIET EILPERIN | JANUARY 11, 2010; 3:55 PM ET

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I can't believe that people just don't get it that the burning of fossil fuels emits all kinds of poisons and toxins that come back to contaminate all that ingest air and water. Whether or not that burning of fossil fuels emits CO2 in massive quantities and that emission is a contributor to the current off-the-chart warming trend is a secondary and indirectly related consideration when speaking of clean air. No one can argue against the fact that reckless foresting (or should I say deforestation) practices also have a very direct effect, not only on the air, but on entire ecosystems (including the one men are in), and industry has done a very poor job of regulating anything other than their profits.

POSTED BY: HALIFAR59 | JANUARY 17, 2010 8:42 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I cannot believe that people cannot understand: the relationship between CO2 dissolved in the oceans and the CO2 found in the atmosphere is somewhat fixed. As oceans warm, CO2 comes out of solution and enters the atmosphere, thus increasing the level of atmospheric co2. Just like a cold beer on a warm day. Because the rise in CO2 levels lags the rise in temperature by 600 - 1000 years, CO2 can hardly be a causal factor. Since CO2 is

such a small components of our atmosphere, it is practically negligible when you consider the major greenhouse gas: water vapor. Now consider the cycle: the sun warms the water, evaporation creates water vapor, clouds form and provide shade from the sun's rays, the moisture condenses and is returned in the form of precipitation. The big bad factors are the solar output and the deep ocean currents. The models overstate the CO2 forcing and the highly-manipulated input make the whole endeavor suspect.
www.onecitizenspeaking.com

POSTED BY: ONECITIZENSPEAKING | JANUARY 15, 2010 12:55 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Everything I've seen says there is a direct link between CO2 and climate. This is due to the simple fact the CO2 reflects heat in the same way that window glass reflect heat back into a car, a house, or for that matter a greenhouse. If the heat has no where to go then the temperature increases and frozen stuff like the ice cube, the north pole, and glaciers begin to melt faster to compensate. The more CO2 in the atmosphere the more heat retained and the faster the melting or temperature rise.

POSTED BY: WAYNEPOST1 | JANUARY 14, 2010 8:21 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I believe a new "ICE AGE" is on the horizon.
How much of an impact can one volcano have on the environment? Al Gore must love seeing his name in the paper. Its easy to predict something that you wouldn't be alive to see!

POSTED BY: TBTONY15 | JANUARY 13, 2010 10:23 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

LAAF, you are wrong with both of your arguments. You say, there are 3 perspectives:
1) We cause global warming
2) We don't cause have global warming
3) We don't know.
The largest group of scientists belongs to 3)." No, by far the largest group of scientist with climate relevant knowledge say 1 - and they say it with increasing certainty.

Secondly, the argument that predicting long term climate is more difficult than weather forecasting the coming week, is misguided too. Specifics are often more difficult to predict than trends and large-scale patterns. For instance, it can quite easily be predicted how many children are born in say Italy in 2011, but much less difficult whether a given family will have a child - and if you cast dice, you can't predict one outcome but if you do it 1000 times, you know pretty well what distribution you get. The big climate models are not built by first predicting tomorrow, then the day after ... and then 100 years. Some of the same theories are used, but you answer different kinds of questions by different techniques, and it happens to be easier to work the larger aggregate numbers.

POSTED BY: OLEW | JANUARY 13, 2010 2:32 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

EPA should have nothing to do with regulating and establishing a carbon tax. ONLY Congress can establish taxes, not a non elected government agency. So the EPA should NOT have the rights to regulate CO2.

There are 3 perspectives here:

1) We cause global warming
 2) We don't cause have global warming
 3) We don't know.
 The largest group of scientists belongs to 3).
 Ask yourself this question. If we cannot predict the global climate with a precision in a 24h-7 day period, how can we - reliably - create a computer model for 100 years in the future?

Guess what - WE CANNOT.

POSTED BY: LAAF | JANUARY 12, 2010 7:08 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I agree with David.

The GOP has done nothing but try to delay anything being done to reduce global warming.

Unfortunately by the time they wake up it will be VERY difficult to affect what will happen.

Poor long term investment choices: costal properties and a lot of Florida (which is barely above current sea level).

POSTED BY: IQGT0 | JANUARY 12, 2010 6:57 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

To Mr. Al Gore, and all other "Concerned Environmentalists"; What are your thoughts on the ongoing suppression of the alternative use of conventional Energy ? Specifically, the fact that it's illegal for any gasoline powered vehicle in the USA from 1996 to the present to emit TOO LITTLE polluting Exhaust Emissions ! This is the EPA-OBD II vehicle Emissions Inspection Law that mandates 14.7 parts of Air to 1 part of Fuel systems for all such vehicles. It is entirely possible to safely convert gasoline into a vapor that is 100 parts of Air to 1 part of Fuel. With this, even the largest SUV could easily get 50 + MPG, and emit far less Emissions, with an increase in power, and much longer engine life. But the resulting exhaust will not generate enough polluting Exhaust Emissions to register the EPA OBD II mandated 3/10ths. of a Volt on an Oxygen (O2) Sensor. During an Emissions Inspection this will result in an "O2 Sensor Failure Code". Exemptions are granted for vehicles that have been legally converted to operate on Natural Gas, Propane, or Hydrogen. But not for vaporized gasoline. Thus, it is entirely possible for any gasoline powered vehicle 14 years old or newer to fail an Emissions Inspection for not generating enough polluting Exhaust Emissions ! I was just wondering what your thoughts are on this issue. Thanks ! Gary

POSTED BY: GARYK2 | JANUARY 12, 2010 6:47 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Industry lobbyists writing GOP energy policy?
 I'm shocked. Shocked, I tell you.

EPA regulatory authority over greenhouse gas pollutants came after a Supreme Court order. The finding that these pollutants endanger human health is well supported. EPA's authority to restrict emissions from the largest pollution sources is a crucial tool, and Congress should let EPA do its job.

POSTED BY: DAVIDSCOTT1 | JANUARY 12, 2010 8:57 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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