



Unions Slam Obama EPA Rule

Mine workers union says regulations will cost 152,000 jobs



Wyoming coal mining / AP

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Labor unions criticized the Environmental Protection Agency's new regulations on carbon emissions from power plants on Monday, highlighting growing tensions between the environmentalist and working class arms of the Democratic Party.

Those tensions have come to the forefront

as leading Democrats embrace environmentalist policies backed by billionaire political donors that are generally opposed by members of the party's rank and file base.

Some labor unions, groups generally considered loyally Democratic, rebelled on Monday after the EPA released its new regulations, which studies have suggested will carry hefty economic costs.

United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) president Cecil Roberts [blasted](#) the proposal, saying it would leave tens of thousands of the union's members unemployed.

"The proposed rule ... will lead to long-term and irreversible job losses for thousands of coal miners, electrical workers, utility workers, boilermakers, railroad workers and others without achieving any significant reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions," Roberts said in a statement.

According to a UMWA analysis, Roberts said, the rule will cause 75,000 job losses in the coal sector by 2020, rising to 152,000 by 2035.

"When a U.S. government economic multiplier used to calculate the impact of job losses is applied to the entire economy, we estimate that the total impact will be about 485,000 permanent jobs lost," Roberts said.

Other studies have also found that the rule will lead to significant job losses. An [analysis](#) commissioned by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that the regulations will "lead to an average of 224,000 fewer U.S. jobs every year through 2030."

The regulations also drew fire on Monday from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), which warned they "focus solely on the environmental aspect of public policy at the expense of balancing our nation's economic and energy needs."

The IBEW cautioned against attempts to reduce carbon emissions "at the expense of a balanced energy portfolio capable of meeting the demands of modern society."

"The jobs of thousands of working men and women and the well-being of their communities are also worthy of saving," the union said.

IBEW has previously split with President Barack Obama on key aspects of his energy policy agenda, including the Keystone XL pipeline, which the president has repeatedly refused to approve.

The union has [called](#) Keystone "a vital project that would create 20,000 construction and manufacturing jobs, generate \$585 million in state and local taxes plus another \$5 billion in property taxes and strengthen North America's energy independence."

That project has also accentuated divides between the Democratic Party's environmentalist and working class supporters. A number of labor unions, including IBEW, support the project. However, billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer has promised to spend \$100 million in favor of candidates who oppose the pipeline despite its [massive popularity](#).

Some unions have blasted the president's apparent political motives in delaying the

pipeline, most recently in mid-April.

“It’s clear the administration needs to grow a set of antlers, or perhaps take a lesson from Popeye and eat some spinach,” the president of the Laborers International Union of North America [said](#) at the time.

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