



## Obama to sign Paris climate pact despite SCOTUS stay



By Timothy Cama - 02/16/16 11:56 AM EST

The Obama administration will officially sign onto last year's international climate change pact, despite its top policy being put on ice by the Supreme Court.

Todd Stern, the State Department's top climate diplomat and negotiator for last year's Paris agreement, said Tuesday that the Supreme Court's judicial stay last week of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Power Plan doesn't change the administration's plans.

"It is entirely premature, really premature to assume the Clean Power Plan will be struck down but, even if it were, come what may, we are sticking to our plan to sign, to join," Stern told reporters in Brussels, Belgium, after he met with the European Union's top climate official, according to **Reuters**.

"We're going to go ahead and sign the agreement this year," he said.

The Supreme Court voted 5-4 last week to put the climate change rule for power plants on hold while 26 states and various energy interests litigate against it in the federal court system.

It was the first time the high court has issued a judicial stay when a lower court refused, and the first judicial stay when the merits of the case haven't not been heard by another court.

The move caused climate and diplomatic officials around the world to wonder if the United States could still meet its pledge to cut greenhouse gases 26 percent to 28 percent by 2025.

The agreement asks each of nearly 200 countries to limit carbon emissions to a level that they individually determined would be possible. The emissions cuts are not binding.

Stern also warned future Republican presidents against reversing course on the climate pact, saying it would give the country a "diplomatic black eye."

"Paris was seen as such a landmark, hard-fought, hard-won deal that, for the U.S. to turn round and say we will withdraw, that would inevitably give the country a kind of diplomatic black eye that I think a president of any party would be very loath to do," Stern said.

The Paris accord will officially become open for signatures April 22 at a U.N. meeting in New York City, which falls on Earth Day.

Fiji, a South Pacific island nation, was allowed to jump the line Friday to become the first country to sign it.

**TAGS: Todd Stern, Paris agreement, Climate change, United Nations, Clean Power Plan**