

Apply carbon tax on importers

Stefan Lutter's informative article explained the new EPA clean power plan regulations and how much we need to cut emissions to avoid climate change's worst effects.

I would like to add to his explanation of America's responsibility: "the United States is accountable for over 18 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions since 1850 (the second-worst offender is China, who is responsible for about 11.6 percent of emissions)." China's emissions are due, partially, to products shipped here, and therefore these emissions are on our behalf (if a U.S. business moves to China to make benefit from lower wages, our emissions declined, theirs went up, yet it's still our emissions if we consume those products). This type of accounting of a country's emissions is known as consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions.

China and India would be right to argue that their emissions are partially ours. But it's not a helpful argument.

What is helpful? It would be helpful if readers remind Representative John Katko: America is a net importer, especially from nations that haven't committed to capping emissions. If Congress enacts a carbon tax and applies it to imports from countries without an equivalent emissions price, then those countries would quickly enact a similar emissions pricing system. No country wants their manufacturers to pay U.S. carbon taxes on exports here.

We often bemoan our trade deficit and loss of manufacturing overseas. But, this deficit could become an asset: it can motivate other countries to cut their emissions as fast as us.

For more information, contact Citizens' Climate Lobby.

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