



# POLITICO

## [Barack Obama's campaign against coal](#)

By: Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings  
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During President Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, he declared one of his energy goals was to "bankrupt" the coal industry by making electricity prices "skyrocket." That policy statement kick-started the president's continuing war on coal miners, their families and the millions of Americans who rely on affordable coal-fired electricity.

Since his election, the president has tried at every turn to make that goal a reality — ardently supporting a cap-and-trade national energy tax and imposing onerous regulations on coal production. The president and his administration are waging a war on coal.

The nonpartisan U.S. Energy Information Administration has all but confirmed the president's aggressive war on coal with a report detailing a record number of coal-fired power plants to be closed this year — largely because of burdensome regulations and other compliance costs. Worse, 175 coal-fired power plants are scheduled to be shut down from 2012 to 2016, EIA estimated, requiring 27 gigawatts of electricity — enough to power 27 million homes — to be replaced by more expensive forms of energy.

The shuttering of record numbers of coal-fired power plants threatens thousands of the 555,270 direct and indirect coal-related jobs that help supply America with nearly half of its generated electricity and pay \$36 billion in wages.

The House Natural Resources Committee has, over the past 18 months, aggressively investigated the Obama administration's decision to rewrite a coal production regulation known as the 2008 Stream Buffer Zone Rule. This has been one of the most direct, yet covert, actions by the administration to destroy coal mining jobs and hurt coal production.

The Obama administration discarded a rule that underwent five years of environmental review and public comment; entered into a court agreement with environmental groups to rewrite the rule in an unachievable time frame; spent millions of taxpayer dollars and hired new contractors to do the rewrite; fired the contractors when it leaked that the revision would cost 7,000 jobs; attempted to manipulate data to conceal the true economic impact; and is now hiding its final rule from the public until after the election.

From Day One, the rewrite of this coal rule has been unorthodox. There now appears to be an administration-wide effort to hide from the American people what it is doing and the

impact this regulation will most likely have on U.S. energy production, thousands of U.S. jobs and our economy.

The Obama administration has repeatedly refused throughout this investigation to fully comply with official requests and congressional subpoenas for documents that could shed light on the decision to forcefully rewrite a coal production regulation that will very likely have dire economic consequences.

The president's war on coal knows no boundaries. Rewriting the 2008 Stream Buffer Zone Rule is just one example of the administration's assaults on coal production and the millions of American jobs it supports. Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency retroactively revoked a permit for a coal mine in West Virginia. This attempt to destroy high-paying jobs at a coal mine, already officially approved, permitted and under way, was ultimately struck down by a federal judge.

The president likes to talk about supporting an all-of-the-above energy plan. But he embraces policies, regulations and mandates that specifically punish U.S. coal, oil and natural gas producers. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, when giving the administration's definition of a national energy strategy at the Democratic National Convention last week, included many different types of energy. But he specifically excluded coal.

U.S. energy job creators need regulatory certainty and an open market to hire some of the 23 million Americans looking for work on this president's watch.

Hardworking coal miners around the country shouldn't have their livelihood vilified by the president — particularly when that livelihood is such an important contributor to the U.S. economy.

Americans deserve a true all-of-the-above energy plan that will help the unemployed get back to work, expand the economy, make the U.S. more energy secure and strengthen our economic competitiveness.

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