

Redacted - First Amendment

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Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2018 10:18 AM

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Subject: Are Republicans softening on carbon taxes?

<https://www.marketplace.org/2018/09/12/sustainability/have-republicans-learned-love-carbon-taxes>

Are Republicans softening on carbon taxes?

By Jed Kim

September 12, 2018 | 5:05 PM

The smoke stacks at American Electric Power's Mountaineer coal power plant in New Haven, West Virginia, in 2009. - SAUL LOEB/AFP/Getty Images

The Global Climate Action Summit kicked off today in San Francisco, bringing together around 4,000 political and business leaders, scientists and activists from around the globe with the goal of highlighting successful approaches to tackling carbon emissions. And a tax on those emissions is one of the approaches on the agenda.

It's a controversial idea that pretty much divides Americans along party lines. But not exactly. Republican Rep. [Carlos Curbelo](#) of Florida introduced a bill back in July that would institute a carbon tax — and he's signed up two GOP co-sponsors.

It's not a new idea. Democrats have embraced a carbon tax for years, but they've never gotten far with their Republican counterparts. Christina DeConcini of the [World Resources Institute](#) is excited about Curbelo's bill "because it's been more than 10 years [since] there's been Republicans in Congress really stepping forward in positive ways on climate change."

Curbelo said business leaders from BP, Dow Chemical and Unilever, among others, have signaled interest in discussing a tax.

But the bill isn't likely to come up for a vote as is. Republican leadership is firmly against a carbon tax, and the majority of GOP members of the House of Representatives recently voted for a nonbinding resolution saying it's a bad idea.

"The Curbelo bill isn't going anywhere," said Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, who led the Trump administration's Environmental Protection Agency transition team. "Some of the people who are foolish enough to support it are likely to be defeated at the next election."

But the politics aren't that clear cut, according to Noah Kaufman, who studies carbon taxes at Columbia University.

"There are definitely Republican congressman who are very uncomfortable with the idea of being the party that does not want to look for solutions on climate change, so I think that's the reason why you're seeing some movement," Kaufman said.

Republicans are facing a tough midterm overall. And Curbelo and one of his GOP co-sponsors, Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, represent purple districts. What happens in November could shape discussions to come.

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