

Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski has introduced [a resolution](#) under the Congressional Review Act to disapprove EPA's Clean Air Act [endangerment finding](#) for greenhouse gases, which in turn would remove the basis for Clean Air Act regulation. It's not going to pass or be signed by the President, of course, but the resolution is designed to put supporters of climate change legislation on the defensive. The Democrats can't simply bury this resolution, because the CRA allows 30 senators to force its consideration on the Senate floor. In any floor debate, the resolution is designed to skew the conversation against supporters of climate action, since no one thinks the Clean Air Act is the perfect vehicle for dealing with greenhouse gas emissions. And it may well be a preview of how tough it will be to get a climate bill through the Senate. The Democrats are going to need all the votes they can get, so it's not a good sign that Murkowski has already gained 39 cosponsors for her legislation, including Democrats Mary Landrieu (LA), Blanche Lincoln (AR), and Ben Nelson (NE).

It's worth noting two things about the resolution. First, although its supporters are presenting it as just a way to avoid doing the wrong thing on climate, that's not what they actually have in mind. As Alice Kaswan [points out at CPR Blog](#), this is just obstructionism. Murkowski's resolution, Kaswan writes, "only ties EPA's hands, it does not advance a more constructive solution." In fact, it would make any legislative solution less likely, by relieving the pressure applied by threats of regulation. The resolution is also premature. There's no rush to tie EPA's hands, since so far EPA has not yet adopted or even proposed any regulatory measures dealing with greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act.

Which brings us to the second thing. The resolution doesn't say that EPA is approaching global warming in the wrong way, although that's what its supporters claim it's about. Instead, it squarely denies either the reality or the threat of climate change. It would disapprove EPA's findings that greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare and that emissions from motor vehicles cause or contribute to the global warming problem, not any identifiable policy action taken on the basis of that finding. Murkowski should explain why she thinks Congress is better qualified than EPA to answer the endangerment question, instead of pretending that she's worried about the relative ability of the two institutions to deal with the problem once it's acknowledged.