

Today, Republican leaders in the [House Energy and Power Subcommittee](#) called a hearing to discuss climate change. Has the Right suddenly taken an interest in responding to climate change?

As you might anticipate, the answer is no. The hearing, entitled "[The Obama Administration's Climate Change Policies and Activities](#)," focused on attacks to the President's [Climate Action Plan](#), challenging the Plan's application and assumptions, from the need to address climate change, to the President's authority to act in the face of Congressional opposition, to the economic impacts of implementing the Plan, particularly with regards to job protection and creation. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz and EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy testified at the hearing (representatives from [eleven other agencies](#) were also called, but were not present—a sore point hammered home by Subcommittee Republicans throughout the hearing).

The purpose of the hearing, not surprisingly, was not to ask "[Why aren't you doing more to protect Americans from this grave threat?](#)" More unfortunate, though, was the lack of other meaningful discussion on the merits and means of addressing greenhouse gas pollution.

The question of the hour was something close to "Will you restrict your answer to 'no?'" With some exceptions, representatives from both parties traded cross-examination on the political talking points of climate change. Throughout, the representatives spoke far more than—and frequently over—the agency witnesses ostensibly called to account for their actions.

This dynamic is probably a product of the fundamentally flawed purpose of this hearing. Whatever smoking gun the Energy and Power Republicans would like to uncover in the Administration's climate response doesn't seem to be there, and Congressional aides and advisors should be able to handle any clarification questions the individual representatives might have about the new climate change policies. President Obama's recent announcement on climate change irritated some in Congress—but we didn't need a hearing to find that out.

(Maybe the most striking reveal of the hearing, for those who haven't heard it yet, is recently-appointed Administrator McCarthy's extreme Bostonian pronunciation of the issue. If the Administration is serious about addressing climate change, expect to hear a lot about "Cobbon pollution" in the years to come.)

Compare this hearing to the idea suggested at the hearing by Representative Henry Waxman (D-California), and echoed later by Representative Jan Shakowsky (D-Illinois) (Full Disclosure: Representative Waxman is a member of the [Emmett Center's](#) Advisory Board).

Following a muddled attempt by Representative David McKinley (R-West Virginia) to expose the “reality” of climate change (good news: it isn’t occurring), Waxman responded “I think this illustrates why we need a committee where we bring in the scientists. . . . We need scientists to come in here and talk about the science.” Given the confusion displayed by Representative McKinley and others on the issue, this might be a hearing worth holding.

For now, you can watch today’s hearing, in its entirety, [online](#).