

For years, Paul Krugman has been [decrying](#) Paul Ryan's reputation as a reputable analyst of budget issues. That's not my area of expertise, and I'm agnostic on that issue. But Ryan's views about climate change don't bespeak serious thought about the issues.

The [Christian Science Monitor](#) reports that last Ryan spoke about climate change in a speech in West Virginia:

*"The president is issuing executive orders and regulations that exceed the parameters of the statutes that gave him the authority in the first place," Ryan said at Wednesday's breakfast.*

*Ryan added that regulations and taxes meant to deal with climate change "won't even solve the purported problem - all they end up doing is making the US economy less competitive."*

Ryan spoke with particular passion about the wonders of coal as an energy sources, saying

*"The design is to put coal out of business," Ryan said at Representative Capito's event, The Gazette reports. "Coal is the secret sauce to giving us abundant, affordable energy."*

Putting aside the disagreement imageable of a burger slathered with coal slurry, this statement does get across the extent of Ryan's support for the coal industry. Ryan capped off his analysis by saying "I don't see a solution here. . . I see an excuse to grow government, raise taxes, and slow down economic growth."

Are these the words of someone who actually spends time thinking about policy? Seemingly not. To begin with, seven Justices on the Supreme Court now agree that EPA has jurisdiction to regulate climate emissions, and its maiden effort to do so was largely upheld by the courts. Coal is less affordable than it seems because it causes widespread public health problems despite improved methods to control emissions. It's also increasingly losing favor because natural gas is economically more attractive. And of course, no one thinks that U.S. regulations can solve climate change — the plan is to work with other nations to achieve global reductions. There's no reason to believe that EPA climate regulations will meaningfully grow government, since they are a small add-on to existing regulations of power plants.

This is not an impressive performance. Ryan needs to do better if he wants to live up to his image as a serious policy person.

