

## Climate measure catches more heat

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A cap-and-trade program to curb CO2 and other so-called greenhouse gas emissions and penalize businesses emitting them faces new opposition among moderate Senate Democrats.

Cap-and-trade, along with sweeping changes in health care, are the Obama administration's two principle initiatives, but polls already show more Americans oppose (55 percent) than support (40 percent) the yetto-be-approved health program, according to a recent Rasmussen Reports.

Worries about further alienating voters who are struggling in a down economy prompted "at least a half dozen" moderate Democratic senators to urge the White House to give up its plan to force conversion from fossil-based fuels to alternative energy, the Web site [Politico.com](http://Politico.com) reported. Few, if any, Senate Republicans are expected to support the measure. Without moderate Democrats, it is unlikely cap-and-trade can pass the Senate.

In a mere half year, much has changed. There was Climategate, the controversy over leaked documents from the U.K.'s East Anglia University Climate Research Center that appear to show climate scientists blackballed dissenting views while manipulating and perhaps destroying data to make a case that global warming was occurring at an alarming rate.

Then there was the Copenhagen climate summit fiasco this month where 193 nations had hoped to agree on worldwide greenhouse gas emission curbs. The summit fizzled when only a handful of major nations agreed only to keep working independently to cut their own emissions but without enforcement guarantees. Developing nations, including China, now the world's largest greenhouse-gas emitter, refused to agree to any absolute reduction goals, but nevertheless insisted developed nations like the United States must pay them tens of billions annually to develop alternatives to fossil fuels.

More recently, a Russian think tank alleged temperature data from that nation used by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was cherry-picked, grossly inflating readings for nearly half a century. Russians called for a complete re-evaluation of the global temperature record, upon which the global warming theory is based.

Moderate Democrats may fear voter backlash if they approve another sweeping government program, effectively imposing higher energy prices. They may fear voters more than the lobbying clout of environmental groups and utilities backing the cap-and-trade scheme, which would give the government power to artificially create a "market" for carbon emission allowances that companies could buy and sell.

Meanwhile, some Democrats are scurrying for alternatives to cap-andtrade, such as taxing emissions, with proceeds passed on to consumers, or taxing only power plants. Given growing public awareness of global warming's lack of scientific justification and the lingering economic downturn, the Senate should reject any plans to regulate CO2 emissions.