



# Lawmakers may soon shape U.S. energy future



addressed by Congress in the next year, relating to energy policy and climate change legislation. Although the scientific community disagrees on the effects of man-made carbon dioxide on global climate change, politicians in Washington D.C.

By Lydia Walters

Energy policy will soon take shape in Washington D.C. Former Vice President Al Gore testified before the Senate Foreign Relations committee in January on the urgency of drafting and enacting climate change legislation. There are several issues that are expected to be

are moving forward with drafting legislation that will significantly change the requirements for electric energy generation and the cost of electric energy in the U.S.

Here are some of the proposed policies that may take shape over the next

several months.  
**25x25 or a Renewable Mandate** – One of President Obama’s campaign platforms was 25x25. The idea is to have 25 percent of the nation’s energy supplied by renewables by 2025. This legislation is also referred to as a renewable mandate. Presently, only two percent of the U.S. energy supply comes from renewables, meaning that the national energy supply would have to increase 23 percent in the next 16 years. This goal doesn’t seem realistic for several reasons. First, the nation’s transmission grid is not structured for renewable energy. Second, renewable resources like solar and biomass are still in a developmental phase and are costly to implement. They are not ready for mainstream commercial use yet. Third, reaching this goal will be dif-

ficult for some areas of the country, especially the Southeast, because renewable resources are limited in the Southeast. Biomass is possible, but is costly and releases carbon dioxide.  
**Cap and Trade** - Cap and trade works like an auction. The U.S. government would set a national limit on the amount of carbon that can be released into the air. Coal Plant A emits more than the limit while Coal Plant B emits less than the limit. Coal Plant B sells its excess carbon credits to Coal Plant A. The problem is simply this. Speculators will set the cost for carbon credits, and if the number of credits available is limited, the price could be extremely high. A high price for carbon credits will result in higher energy costs for consumers. Cap and trade works like a tax for industries and consumers. The problem is – no one knows the tax rate.

## Energy Issues

East Mississippi Electric Power Association serves as your advocate on energy-related issues. Upcoming legislation has the potential to significantly increase the cost of electricity. If you would like to receive information about energy issues and pending legislation, please fill out the form at right.

You may be asked to call or write to your Congressional leaders as legislation is introduced.

**YES.** I would like to receive information about energy issues and/or pending legislation, relating to my local electric power association.

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