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## Paris Climate Change agreement to be signed in New York

Susan Jaffe

Representatives of **some 155 countries** are expected at the signing ceremony, including President François Hollande of France, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other heads of state. President Barack Obama will be in Europe but he “is proud the United States will join the historic Paris Agreement this week, on the first day it is open for signature,” White House spokesman Frank Benenati said.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged all countries to ratify the agreement as soon as possible. “It is in their national interest to implement the agreement and reap the benefits of sustainable global climate action,” he said in an email to *The Lancet*.

The signing ceremony “is a significant milestone and demonstrates the continued momentum for climate action,” said Nat Keohane, who directs the Environmental Defense Fund’s global climate program.

After 195 nations adopted the agreement last December, signing the agreement indicates the countries’ willingness to take the next step to ratify it. When 55 countries responsible for at least 55 percent of global emissions do so, the agreement takes effect. That could happen this year said UN spokeswoman Devi Palanivelu, noting that several countries are coming to New York with ratification documents they will submit after signing the agreement.

But things are not moving as swiftly in the US. Responding to a lawsuit by 27 states, a federal court temporarily barred the Obama Administration’s Environmental Protection Agency from implementing its **Clean Power Plan**, which seeks cuts in carbon emissions from coal plants.



US Secretary of State John Kerry (center) delivers his remarks at the Caring for Climate Business Forum during the COP21 the World Climate Change Conference in Paris

Jonathan Raa/Pacific Press

It could threaten electric power reliability and increase costs, said Cynthia Meyer, spokeswoman for Attorney General Ken Paxton of Texas, one of the states suing EPA.

The plan is considered essential to meeting **the US climate change pledge of a 26–28 percent cut** in 2005-level greenhouse gas emissions by 2025.

The climate agreement also comes amid the most contentious and unpredictable presidential campaign in decades. While Democratic candidates support it, Republicans oppose the president’s global warming efforts. “I think there’s a change in weather,” Donald Trump, the leading Republican contender told the *Washington Post* last month. But he added, “I am not a great believer in man-made climate change.”