

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2015—15:54

## Paris climate change agreement faces hurdles in the USA

Susan Jaffe

But the international consensus to reduce global warming failed to move the Republican candidates competing for Obama's job. It merited just two brief asides during their debate two days later and is unlikely to win over Republicans in Congress.

"When I see they have a climate conference over in Paris, they should have been talking about destroying ISIS," said Ohio Governor John Kasich, to much applause.

And Donald Trump, the businessman-turned-politician at the head of Republican pack seeking the presidency, said it was "inconceivable" that Obama thinks that global warming "is the biggest problem this world has today."

While the Paris negotiators were at work, the US House of Representatives easily passed a Republican-backed bill to repeal the Administration's **Clean Coal Plan**, which seeks dramatic reductions in carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants that are essential if the USA is going keep its commitment to control greenhouse gases. Two weeks earlier, the Senate passed similar legislation.

Opponents of the Clean Power Plan are also fighting it in federal court, where 27 states filed lawsuits to block the regulations, claiming that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which issued the plan, doesn't have the authority to force states to reduce carbon emissions.

"It's going to cost hundreds of billions of dollars and hurt consumers and businesses," said Jack Mozloom, Media Communications Director, National Federation of Independent Businesses, one of 16 business and manufacturing groups also suing the EPA.

But in climate change skirmishes two weeks ago, opponents suffered losses.

Obama vetoed two joint congressional resolutions condemning the Clean Coal Plan. And Democrats defeated Republican efforts to include similar measures in the budget legislation the president signed into law before heading to Hawaii for vacation earlier this month. Republicans also failed to block funds for helping poorer countries adapt to climate change.

It may be possible to avoid another congressional confrontation on the issue, said Alex Hanafi, a senior attorney at the Environment Defense Fund's global health program who attended the Paris climate negotiations. The president can use something called "executive agreement" to approve the climate change accord, he said. "The provisions in the agreement are consistent with US law and thus the pathway for US participation won't require a stop in the US Senate."

