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Will EPA Drop New Coal Carbon Capture Requirement?



The EPA may be backing off its [carbon capture](#) requirements, according to [InsideEPA](#).

The agency's original draft of the [New Source Performance Standards](#) (NSPS) for carbon dioxide would require all new coal-fired power plants to meet a standard of 1,100 pounds of CO₂ per MWh of power produced, which can only be achieved with partial carbon capture and sequestration (CCS).

InsideEPA cites an informed source who says a revised draft recently sent to the White House for interagency review drops the requirement that new coal plants install partial CCS, primarily out of concern about the EPA's ability to defend the technology in court. The argument that [carbon capture is a bankable technology](#) is crucial to the Obama administration's carbon standards for power plants; however, to date, attempts to produce a working coal-CCS project in the US have either failed or are close to failure.

Regardless of whether or not the CCS stays or goes, the likelihood of new [coal](#) power plants being built in the USs is extremely low. However, the CCS mandate sent a message that "high CO₂ intensity fuels will not be part of the future," the InsideEPA source is quoted as saying. So the EPA may have some convincing to do before the White House will accept dropping the standards. With the United Nations [climate talks in Paris](#) later this year, dropping the CCS may also hurt the Administration internationally.

Before the EPA can proceed with its existing source performance standards to cut greenhouse gas, a final NSPS must be in place. The EPA is considering various alternatives that would allow it to finalize the NSPS without the CCS, including ultra super critical pulverized coal (USCPC) and integrated gasification combined-cycle (IGCC) without CCS.

EPA declined to comment on the contents of the draft final NSPS. The [final rule](#) was originally slated to be released in January. It is now slated for publication in August.

Photo: [coal power plant](#) via Shutterstock.

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