



Houston News

New bill would cut greenhouse gases emitted from Texas refineries

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By Lee McGuire / 11 News

HOUSTON—If Texas were a country, the refineries lining the Gulf would make it the eighth-largest producer of greenhouse gases in the world.

“Texas is a major emitter of carbon, in part because we fuel the rest of the country,” State Sen. Rodney Ellis said.

Ellis wants the state to lead the way in cutting back. He’s filed a bill to give state regulators the authority to force energy companies to slash their greenhouse gas production.

“In Texas, we have pretty much put our head in the sand so far,” Ellis said.

The bill would make companies report exactly how much greenhouse gases they’re emitting today, and then the state would estimate what emissions looked like in 1990. Then, companies would have to cut emissions to those levels by 2023.

But not everyone would have to cut back.

If “Company A” wanted to keep on emitting, it could buy credits from a company that had cut back. The credits would cost money, and in the end, overall emissions would drop.

Critics say the bill would cost people their jobs.

“Hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs would go to other states and other countries. You’d have higher unemployment, higher energy costs and lower incomes for people who live in Texas,” David Guenther of the Texas Public Policy Foundation said.

Governor Perry said Texas, acting alone, wouldn’t slow global warming at all.

“(I’m) absolutely not interested in putting Texas at a disadvantage by imposing regulations that will have a huge negative impact on our economy while having no measurable effect on the environment,” Perry said.

“I don’t think there’s any real possibility that the big energy companies are going to pack up and leave Texas. Where would they go? The cost of simply moving the infrastructure just doesn’t make sense,” Ellis said.

Lawmakers return to work on Jan. 13.

Even if Ellis' bill were to pass, such strong opposition from Perry so early on means it would be a good candidate for a veto if it made it to his desk.