Utilities 'OK' with cap and trade,

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South Carolina utilities appear to be pretty pleased with the climate control and cap-and-trade legislation passed by the House of Representatives last week. However, if you ask the state's federal delegation the bill is the work of liberal devils.

Sen. Lindsey Graham said the bill inked in the House on Friday was "written by the anti-nuclear left."

Graham said the bill threatens to put greater burdens on utilities and businesses and will drive up the tax bill of every American by $175 directly and by $800 when one factors in the loss of domestic production the bill will create.

Rep. Gresham Barret, who voted against the legislation, said the bill will adversely affect millions of families already struggling to pay bills.

Barrett said, "Not only will the cost of energy increase, but this bill will result in an enormous loss of jobs in the United States and encourages outsourcing to countries such as China and India. In my district alone, it is estimated that there could be a loss of up to 4,500 jobs by 2012—which is unacceptable."

Meanwhile, spokesmen for both Duke Energy and the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA), of which Blue Ridge Electric is a member, said that, while the bill needs further work in the Senate, they are pleased it passed the House.



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In this photo provided by Duke Energy, Oconee Nuclear Station near Lake Keowee is seen.

"It allocated 35 percent of the allowances to the electric sector and that is a good thing," said Duke spokesman Tom Williams.

, but politicians are angry

He said the original legislation that would have required utilities to purchase emissions credits immediately would have been disastrous, adding that with companies being given 80-85 percent of the credits they will need in the early years, those savings will be passed on to customers.

"The coal-dependent states were listened to," Williams said. "The fact is that, if Congress doesn't act, the EPA will. The question is whether you want this decided by elected officials or appointed regulators."

NRECA spokesman Patrick LaVigne agreed that changes would be necessary in the Senate version.

"We need caps that are achievable given the existing technology," he said.

The lack of attention to the nuclear industry in the bill is of particular concern to Graham who told WKOC radio host Kevin Cohen on Monday that there is "nothing new for nuclear power" in the bill.

Graham said the Democratic left had to "break heads" and "beat up their own members" to get the votes for passage. "This is a bad idea written by the left," he said. "Climate change is real … we need cap and trade that won't put Americans out of business."

Barrett agrees.

"Construction of a new nuclear power plant represents 1,400-1,800 jobs during construction, with peak employment as high as 2,400 jobs. This is the kind of innovation that could get our economy moving again," he said.