

INTERVIEW-Nuclear power aids climate push - White House

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(Adds Browner comments)

WASHINGTON, Feb 16 (Reuters) - The White House is optimistic about climate change legislation in Congress and hopes an announcement to jumpstart the nuclear power industry will appeal to Republican skeptics, a top adviser to President Barack Obama said.

The Obama administration will announce on Tuesday an \$8.3 billion loan guarantee to help Southern Co. build two reactors, helping to invigorate the nuclear power industry after nearly three decades in which no new plants have been built.

Carol Browner, Obama's top energy and climate adviser, said she was hopeful about progress on energy and climate legislation that is currently stalled in the U.S. Senate.

"I'm always optimistic, as is the president," Browner told Reuters Insider in an interview.

"We're working hard, and we're encouraged by the conversations that are going on. Obviously this is very important legislation and we're going to do everything we can to make it happen," she said.

Browner noted that Republicans, many of whom oppose the climate bill, would take note of Obama's efforts to reach out on the issue of nuclear energy.

"We also hope that Republicans and others, supporters of nuclear (power), will take note that the administration is prepared to provide leadership on issues that are important to solving our energy future and creating a different energy future," she said.

(Reporting by Jeff Mason; Editing by Paul Simao)



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