

Sec. John Kerry signs landmark climate agreement on behalf of US

April 22, 2016

The Paris Agreement, a multilateral agreement on the mitigation, adaptation, and financing of green house gas (GHG) emissions worldwide, was adopted during the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) held in Paris, France, in 2015. The agreement opened for signatures on April 22, with 196 parties signing on so far, including the United States.

Contention over how the agreement would go into effect in the United States has created tension between Senate Republicans and the Obama Administration. Historically, international agreements must be ratified by the Senate to take effect. However, the Obama Administration has claimed that the Paris Agreement will not require congressional approval, as most of the changes will be accomplished through executive actions.

The uncertain outcome of U.S. involvement in the deal has turned the US signing into more of a symbolic gesture. The agreement only goes into effect if 55 countries that produce at least 55 percent of global GHG emissions sign on, which is expected later this year.

Sources: E&E News, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
