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## Senate committee holds hearing on bipartisan climate bill

December 2, 2014

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on December 2 to assess a bipartisan climate bill introduced by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Chris Murphy (D-CT). The Super Pollutants Act of 2014 (S. 2911) would lower emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs), which have a shorter life span in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide but a much more potent warming effect on the climate. Key SLCPs are black carbon, a component of particulate matter that is emitted by diesel engines, fluorinated gases and substitute hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are used in refrigeration and air conditioning systems, and methane, which is mainly emitted by energy and agriculture sectors.

Advocates for the bill see it as an opportunity to take bipartisan action on climate change because reducing SLCP emissions would reduce warming with relatively minor economic impacts. These efforts are also less controversial than attempts to regulate carbon dioxide emissions. Witnesses at the hearing emphasized the potential public health benefits of limiting SLCPs, which can cause respiratory and cardiovascular issues, and the associated healthcare cost savings. However, some Republicans expressed concern that the measure could exacerbate economic inequality, arguing that costs associated with reducing SLCPs could drive up energy costs and disproportionately impact low-income Americans.

The bill must pass a vote in the committee in order to be considered by the full Senate.

Sources: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee website

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