



With Republicans in control of the House of Representatives, powerful Texans such as Rep. Joe L. Barton of the House Energy and Commerce Committee have vowed to check the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to use its existing authority to curtail greenhouse gases.

An even more ambitious challenge is coming directly from the Texas state government and leading Texas politicians. State Attorney General Greg Abbott, with the support of Republican Gov. Rick Perry, has filed seven lawsuits against the EPA in the last nine months.

In some ways, Texas' attack was bound to be bigger and bolder than it might have been from other states. After all, Texans proudly trace their lineage back to the defiant stand of Texas patriots at the Alamo and the days when Texas was an independent republic under the Lone Star flag.

"At times, they're their own country," said Bill Becker, executive director of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, a group of state environmental regulators. "They feel strongly, politically, that this is an issue that shouldn't pertain to them and they would like to proceed on their own terms."

And Texas corporations clearly have California in their gun sights, as reflected in their determined though ultimately unsuccessful attempt to roll back California state law in the recent election.

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