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EPA chief Gina McCarthy said Wednesday that the Obama administration is finished waiting for Congress to act on climate change and plans to bypass the legislative branch in developing a federal response.

Ms. McCarthy, who was confirmed last month as Environmental Protection Agency administrator, cited President Obama's June 25 speech at Georgetown University, in which he unveiled his Climate Action Plan and vowed to make combating climate change a priority of his second term. Mr. Obama gave "what I really think is a most remarkable speech by a president of the United States," said Ms. McCarthy in remarks at the University of Colorado Boulder. "Essentially, he said that it is time to act," she said. "And he said he wasn't going to wait for Congress, but that he had administrative authorities and that it was time to start utilizing those more effectively and in a more concerted way."

She insisted that reducing greenhouse-gas emissions could be accomplished without harming economic growth, calling the tension between the two priorities a "false choice." "We're going to do this year, next year, the following year, until people understand these are not scary things to do, these are actions we can all do, they're actions that benefit everybody, that will grow the economy, and they're actions that will protect the health and safety of individuals," Ms. McCarthy said.

The president's Climate Action Plan has come under criticism from Republicans, led by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who said in June the plan amounted to a "war on coal" and a "war on jobs."

"It's tantamount to kicking the ladder out from beneath the feet of any Americans struggling in today's economy," Mr. McConnell said.

In 2009, Congress rejected a bill to establish a cap-and-trade system designed to discourage greenhouse-gas emissions. That measure, known as the Waxman-Markey bill, passed the House but was defeated in the Senate at a time when Democrats controlled both houses.

Mr. Obama's plan comes after years of criticism from environmentalists who have faulted him for a lack of attention to global warming. The plan includes reducing carbon pollution from power plants, accelerating green-energy permitting, and increasing fuel-economy standards.

Ms. McCarthy said Colorado and Boulder are examples of jurisdictions that have taken positive action.

Electricity Pricing – August 20, 2013 Com Ed Average LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Aug, 2012	\$.03112
Sep, 2012	\$.03034
Oct, 2012	\$.02829
Nov, 2012	\$.03327
Dec, 2012	\$.03081
Jan, 2013	\$.03111
Feb, 2013	\$.03219
Mar, 2013	\$.03665
April, 2013	\$.03821
May, 2013	\$.03501
June, 2013	\$.03215
July, 2013	\$.04067
Aug 1 – Aug 19	\$.02864

Extended Temperature Forecast: Chicago Area

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	86	90	81	80	83
Low	69	73	64	62	65

