



POLITICS

Does Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez really want to get rid of ‘farting cows’? Not yet, at least

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KEY POINTS

The ambitious “Green New Deal” resolution put forward by freshman Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., aims to fundamentally reimagine the U.S. economy with the environment at top of mind.

Among its proposals, the resolution would have the U.S. creating “net-zero” greenhouse gases in 10 years.

Why “net zero”? “We set a goal to get to net-zero, rather than zero emissions, in 10 years because we aren’t sure that we’ll be able to fully get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast,” a summary of the proposal says.



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Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York, and US Senator Ed Markey (R), Democrat of Massachusetts, speak during a press conference to announce Green New Deal legislation to promote clean energy programs outside the US Capitol in Washington, DC, February 7, 2019.

Saul Loeb | AFP | Getty Images

The “Green New Deal,” unveiled Thursday, sets sky-high goals to cut greenhouse gases to nearly zilch — but it’s not committed to getting rid of “farting cows” just yet.

That’s according to an initial [outline](#) of the ambitious new resolution put forward by freshman Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., and Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., which [aims to fundamentally reimagine the U.S. economy with the environment at top of mind](#).

Markey and Ocasio-Cortez, the 29-year-old democratic socialist, called for completely ditching fossil fuels, upgrading or replacing “every building” in the country and “totally overhaul transportation” to the point where “air travel stops becoming necessary.”

They also aimed to have the U.S. creating “net-zero” greenhouse gases in 10 years.

Why “net zero”? The lawmakers explained: “We set a goal to get to net-zero, rather than zero emissions, in 10 years because we aren’t sure that we’ll be able to fully get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast.”

As the fine print states, published the FAQ goes with the phrase “farting cows” removed to



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[John Roberts' tweet: latest version of FAQ's on her blog has removed the "f" word in favor of "emissions from cows" Holy cow](#)

Language notwithstanding, greenhouse gas emissions from cows have a bigger environmental impact than one might expect.

Methane gas produced by bovine flatulence contributes a significant portion of the greenhouse gases contributing to global warming, [according to the United Nations](#).

Livestock farming produces about 18 percent of all those environmentally damaging gases — and about a quarter of that chunk comes from cow farts and burps, [the U.N. says](#).

The lawmakers appear to recognize this. One of the Green New Deal's 14 infrastructure and industrial proposals is to “work with farmers and ranchers to create a sustainable, pollution and greenhouse gas free, food system that ensures universal access to healthy food and expands independent family farming.”

Spokespersons for Markey and Ocasio-Cortez did not immediately respond to CNBC's questions about the reference to cow farts in the summary of their Green New Deal.

In the meantime, America's nearly [100 million cows](#) can look forward to years of munching grass and passing gas still ahead of them.

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