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Gillibrand pushes bill to cut air pollutants

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WASHINGTON — Sen. Kirsten E. Gillibrand and other senators are pushing a bill to reduce three key air pollutants, without addressing carbon dioxide — a chief culprit in the more controversial issue of climate change.

While Mrs. Gillibrand, D-N.Y., supports regulation of carbon dioxide, backers of the three-pollutant bill have made clear that their bill is separate from the climate legislation, which remains stalled in Congress.

The bill, whose chief backers are Sens. Tom Carper, D-Del., and Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., slashes emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, which are the main contributors to acid rain, as well as mercury, a source of pollution in lakes, rivers and streams.

Mrs. Gillibrand touted the legislation in a press release last week. It has the endorsement of the Adirondack Council. Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., is a cosponsor.

The bill would cut sulfur dioxide emissions by 80 percent, from 7.6 million tons in 2008 to 1.5 million tons in 2018. It would cut nitrogen oxide emissions by 53 percent, from 3 million tons in 2008 to 1.6 million tons in 2015. It would cut mercury emissions by at least 90 percent no later than 2015.

The legislation goes to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, which has not scheduled action. Mrs. Gillibrand is a member of the panel.