

# Boxer-Kerry Climate Bill Improves on House Version, but Consumer Rebates Are Needed and Nuclear Subsidies Must Go

## Statement on the “Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act”

**Mike Tidwell, Director, Chesapeake Climate Action Network**

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“CCAN congratulates Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and John Kerry (D-MA) for their work to curb global warming emissions and shift to a clean energy economy. It is absolutely critical that the United States take action to show its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions before the international climate negotiations in Copenhagen in December. The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act, introduced September 30th, would put the U.S. on the right path, although it doesn’t go far enough.

“The bill is an improvement over the House-passed American Clean Energy and Security Act for two main reasons: there is a 3% increase, from 17 to 20%, in the 2020 target for emissions reductions and, more significantly, it upholds the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate global warming pollution from coal plants and other stationary sources of emissions.

“However, there are a number of areas that need strengthening or clarification when the bill is marked up (amended) by the full Environmental and Public Works committee:

“It is unclear how many of the permits to emit pollution will be auctioned and how much of the revenue raised will be returned to consumers a

direct way to help offset higher energy bills during the transition to a clean energy economy. (CCAN continues to believe a “cap and dividend” approach would be far superior in this regard than the “cap and trade” approach passed by the House). Over the summer over 1,000 hand-written letters were sent to Maryland Senator Ben Cardin urging him to include strong protections for consumers. CCAN looks forward to Cardin’s continued leadership on this issue as the bill is marked up in committee.

“While the targets are stronger, the Senate bill falls short of what scientists say is necessary to avert catastrophic climate impacts: a 25-40% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2020. And allowing for 2 billion tons of ‘offsets’ each year (equal to 27% of the U.S.’s total annual emissions) could mean that there will be very little actual reductions of emissions by polluting plants in the U.S. for a decade and a half.

“The Senate bill also differs from the House version in that it subsidizes expensive and unsafe nuclear energy. The Chesapeake Bay region has abundant renewable energy sources, including a huge potential for offshore wind. Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency is a safer, faster and less expensive alternative to nukes.

“Finally, the Senate bill allows for new coal plants to be built from now until 2025 without any need to sequester carbon until as late as 2027.

“As we did for the House bill, CCAN will work actively to oppose efforts to weaken this bill and will support efforts to strengthen it.”