

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

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Bill Provides Real Chance to Effectively Combat Climate Change; Senate Cannot Let This Opportunity Pass

Washington, DC – The Nature Conservancy released the following statement from its Director of US Climate Policy, Eric Haxthausen.

“The bill introduced today by Sens. Barbara Boxer and John Kerry fires the starting gun on the Senate debate on comprehensive climate legislation, and not a moment too soon.

While we are still analyzing the details, we are pleased that the bill appears to build upon the progress made by the House last June when it passed its American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES). Like ACES, the Senate bill includes provisions to protect forests at home and abroad in order to lower the world’s carbon dioxide emissions. The Senate bill also calls for the protection of the country’s natural resources, so they can survive the impacts of climate change and continue to provide our communities with the food, water, shelter and income they rely upon.

But the Senate bill takes an important step further to tighten emission reduction targets in the coming years – a 20 percent reduction from 2005 carbon dioxide levels by 2020, compared to the 17 percent reduction target included in the House bill.

The science is clear: If we are to succeed in protecting our country's lands, waters, economy and way of life, the U.S. and other nations need to commit to the strongest possible emission reductions over the next decade. Fortunately, the emission reductions in this bill build on other recent actions that will enable the economy to grow while directing investment toward low-carbon opportunities.

By committing to strong emissions reductions, Senators also will send a strong message to the world that America is a leader in the global fight against climate change. With just two months before the US and international leaders meet in Copenhagen to hammer out a new climate change agreement, strong action by the Senate can serve as a catalyst to bring developed and developing countries together toward an effective climate deal.

We are at a unique time in history. We can choose to act and lead in combating one of the biggest challenges of our lifetime. Or we can choose inaction and an uncertain future. Time is running out, but with strong and thoughtful leadership today, we can seize the moment and act.

We are grateful for the work that Senators Boxer and Kerry have done in developing this bill, and we encourage other Senators to join them in offering a constructive legislative approach to address the very real threats of climate change. With efforts by Senators from both parties, the U.S. can provide global leadership in protecting our natural world for future generations.”

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