

## UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

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### ENERGY AND CLIMATE BILL MOVES FORWARD IN THE SENATE; DEMONSTRATES U.S. WILLINGNESS TO ACT IN RUN-UP TO COPENHAGEN TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

WASHINGTON (November 5, 2009) – The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee passed the “Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act” this morning, setting the stage for the rest of the Senate to move forward with legislation. The fact that EPW finalized a bill shows that the United States is serious about addressing climate change, which should help pave the way for an international climate treaty, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

“Senator Boxer and her colleagues moved forward, despite needless rancor in their committee, to finally put an energy and climate bill on the books,” said Lexi Shultz, a climate policy analyst in UCS’s Climate and Energy Program. “Now other committees and other senators need to weigh in as quickly as possible so the full Senate can vote on a final bill. Senators Kerry, Graham and Lieberman have said they are to going to use this bill as a framework as they build support for action in the full Senate.”

Shultz said the bill’s passage has important implications for December’s climate treaty meeting in Copenhagen. “We’re stretching other countries’ patience as we get closer and closer to Copenhagen,” she said. “Fortunately, this is yet more evidence that the United States has the political will to reduce emissions and work with the rest of the world.”

Shultz said that the bill’s provisions providing funds to preserve tropical forests and help developing countries cut their emissions “show a willingness by the United States to engage constructively and help

advance the international climate treaty negotiations. But we should offer additional funding to help developing countries shift to clean energy and help their citizens cope with climate change.”

UCS scientists and policy analysts say the bill itself offers a strong framework for action and should be improved as it moves forward.

According to UCS, the most important aspect of the bill is that it sets a strong short-term target of reducing emissions 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. These pollution reduction targets must not be weakened as the bill moves forward. Climate science [sends a clear and urgent message](#) that all nations must take strong action without further delay.

Like the House-passed bill, this Senate bill includes a provision that requires periodic scientific assessments to ensure the program is operating effectively. It also contains new language regarding advisory panels that would require fuller disclosure and accountability, strengthening [the scientific integrity of the legislation](#).

Unlike the House measure, the bill would retain the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) authority to require emission reductions from the oldest and dirtiest power plants.

Experts at UCS recommend reducing the “overly generous” subsidies for some industries, especially the coal industry. Provisions that would fund carbon capture and sequestration deployment, in particular, are too generous for a yet-to-be-proven technology, they said.

While the Senate bill offers slightly more renewable energy funding than the House-passed bill it still falls short of what is necessary, according to UCS. While the limit on carbon emissions would help move the nation toward clean energy, direct funding for renewables is critical to accelerate the transformation. In addition, study after study has shown that promoting renewable energy would generate new jobs and reduce the cost of a climate bill.

Finally, this bill would protect consumers from rising energy costs. A recent EPA economic analysis concluded that the legislation would have little impact on household energy bills. The Senate bill – if adopted into law – would reduce air pollution, protect Americans from the worst effects of climate change, and greatly expand economic opportunities.

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Now celebrating its 40th anniversary, the Union of Concerned Scientists is the leading U.S. science-based nonprofit organization working for a healthy environment and a safer world. UCS is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and also has offices in Berkeley, Chicago and Washington, D.C. For more information, go to [www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org).