

UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

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SENATE ENERGY AND CLIMATE BILL COULD PAVE WAY FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL TREATY IN COPENHAGEN, SCIENCE GROUP SAYS

WASHINGTON (September 30, 2009) - Climate and energy legislation expected to be introduced today by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) could help pave the way for a new international climate treaty, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists. The United Nations is sponsoring an international summit in December in Copenhagen to negotiate a new treaty.

The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act aims to reduce emissions 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. By contrast, the Waxman-Markey climate and energy bill, which the House passed in June, would reduce emissions 17 percent by that same year.

"A stronger short-term target makes scientific sense," said Melanie Fitzpatrick, a climate scientist at UCS. "U.S. emissions levels are now lower than expected, so we're already well on our way to meeting these goals. Additionally, more of the carbon dioxide we're emitting today is staying in the atmosphere because the ocean is absorbing less carbon from the air. That means early cuts in emissions are even more critical to keep temperatures down and prevent the worst consequences of climate change."

Liz Perera, a federal policy analyst in UCS's Climate Program, said the Senate bill mirrors the House version. "The House bill's framework is a groundbreaking approach to moving America toward a clean energy economy. Sticking with the House framework will make it easier to move forward, especially in conference committee."

Alden Meyer, UCS's director of strategy and policy, attended last week's climate summit at the United Nations, where numerous heads of state emphasized the need to make substantial progress at the December climate treaty negotiations. Meyer says the Copenhagen summit provides a concrete deadline for the Senate to act.

"Without strong domestic action by the United States, an ambitious climate deal in Copenhagen isn't in the cards," Meyer said. "The House has done its part. Now this new bill gives the Senate a solid basis for moving forward. Time is short, but with the support of President Obama and Senate leaders, the Senate can show that it's serious about cutting emissions and send a message to the

rest of the world before Copenhagen."

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