

For Immediate Release

May 21, 2009

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HISTORIC HOUSE CLIMATE BILL PASSES FIRST TEST, DISTANCE REMAINS TO SECURE GLOBAL DEAL AND HELP THOSE HARDEST HIT

Washington, DC – International development organization Oxfam America praised members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee for passing the American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454), but urged for the international provisions of the bill to be strengthened in order to enable President Obama to lead negotiations for a global climate deal in Copenhagen this December.

The bill is historic as it commits to curbing global warming pollution, puts our nation and others on a clean energy development pathway, and addresses and finances the needs of vulnerable communities both at home and abroad who are on the front lines of climate change.

“Getting the Waxman-Markey bill out of the Energy and Commerce Committee is a history-making effort in enacting US climate and clean energy legislation,” said Jim Lyons, vice-president of Oxfam America. “But while this bill is a giant leap in US climate change legislation, it is too small of a step towards what’s needed for a global climate deal in Copenhagen this December.”

Last minute attempts to eliminate important international provisions in the bill were rejected. If passed, these amendments would have seriously undermined the United States’ leadership role in the international climate negotiations and would have shortchanged significant business opportunities abroad for America companies.

“Poor countries didn’t create the problem, but they have to deal with the consequences. It’s in America’s best interest to help the most vulnerable adapt to global warming’s consequences and cooperate with them to pursue clean energy pathways,” said Lyons.

“Developing countries have made it crystal clear that without real cooperation and resources, there won’t be a global climate deal,” said Lyons. “A substantial increase in resources for the most vulnerable countries will be essential for the President to strike a global climate deal.”

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NOTES: OXFAM AMERICA ASSESSMENT OF KEY INTERNATIONAL PROVISIONS IN H.R. 2454

International Adaptation — The bill establishes an important program for international climate adaptation in the most vulnerable developing countries, but the bill allocates only 1% of the value from the bill (about \$750 million a year) for the program. This is an important start but far short of the significant need in developing countries already facing serious climate-related impacts and the amount that will be necessary to achieve a global agreement.

International Clean Energy Technology — The bill establishes an International Clean Technology Fund for developing countries overseen by an interagency group chaired by the Secretary of State and allocates 1% of the value from the bill to the clean technology program (approximately \$750 million/year). This is an important start, but the amount required to achieve a global agreement is far greater.

International Reduced Deforestation — The bill sets aside 5% of all allowances to promote reduced emissions from deforestation in developing countries. Providing support through this set-aside for reduced deforestation efforts, especially for effective governance and capacity building, is essential.

Emissions Reductions — The long-term targets for US global warming emissions are strong and put the US on the right course. But the short-term targets fall significantly short. For capped sectors, the cap requires the reduction of global warming emissions by 17% below 2005 levels by the year 2020. Translated to 1990 levels, the short-term 2020 cap reduces US emissions by 3%. This compares to the position of many developing countries in negotiations that developed countries should reduce emissions 40% as a group. The bill also includes complementary energy policies that can reduce emissions further, and the 5% of value in the bill for international programs to reduce deforestation is intended to reduce emissions 10% further below 2005 levels.

International Offsets — The total quantity of international offsets allowances permitted in any year is 1 billion tons (including reduced deforestation offsets as described below), increasing to up to 1.5 billion if domestic offset limits are not fully used. While offsets can play a helpful role, the 1 billion tons worth of international offsets are equivalent to roughly 80% of the emissions reductions required below 2005 levels by 2020, potentially reducing the level of reductions in the US itself. Also, the social safeguards language, though improved, is still too weak to protect the rights of forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples.