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Clean Energy Jobs Plan Clears House in Historic Vote

Sierra Club Cheers House, Looks Ahead to Senate Action

Washington, D.C.—The House of Representatives today passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454/2998, also known as Waxman-Markey). The Sierra Club offered the following comments in response.

Statement of Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director

"With today's historic vote, Congress has taken the first step toward unleashing a true clean energy revolution. President Obama and tens of millions of environmentalists, union members, veterans, people of faith, small businesspeople, corporate leaders, sportsmen, and concerned citizens have been calling on Congress to get America running on clean energy. Congress has finally answered that call.

"Speaker Pelosi, Chairmen Waxman and Markey, and many others deserve hearty congratulations for shepherding a comprehensive clean energy and climate plan to passage. For decades, they have been the strongest champions for our environment. Without their extraordinary leadership, today's vote would not have been possible.

"This bill sets the stage for the dawn of the clean energy future. While imperfect, it sets forth a set of goals America must achieve -- and exceed. Its most important achievement is setting the United States on a path to reduce carbon emissions some 80 percent by 2050. It also makes strides in halting international deforestation, requires new buildings to dramatically slash energy waste, will speed the development of made-in-America electric vehicles, and provides important protections for workers, consumers, and others who may be affected by our transition to a clean energy future.

"We urged the House to pass this bill so that we could work to strengthen it before it reaches President Obama's desk. It is now of the utmost importance that the Senate improve several of its provisions. In particular, a mechanism for cleaning up the oldest and dirtiest coal plants must be included in a final bill. It's also vital that we ramp up the bill's investments in energy efficiency, hasten our transition toward clean energy sources like wind and solar, and steer more of the bill's investments toward the public benefit—not polluters.

"An unprecedented coalition of environmental, faith, community, labor, veterans, business, and other groups mounted one of the most vigorous grassroots campaigns in decades to move this crucial legislation through the House. We will now redouble our efforts to move an even stronger bill through the Senate and on to the president's desk as soon as possible."

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