

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**\*\*\*Statement on American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009\*\*\***

Knoxville, Tenn. (May 22) — Yesterday, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 gained initial approval from the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Dr. Stephen A. Smith, executive director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, issued the following statement about last night's vote:

"We commend Chairmen Waxman and Markey for ushering the first comprehensive energy and climate bill ever to be considered by the U.S. House of Representatives through the Energy and Commerce Committee. The American Clean Energy and Security Act lays out an urgently needed framework for bringing change to the American economy, and we applaud Reps. Butterfield (N.C.), Castor (Fla.) and Gordon's (Tenn.) votes to mark such a historic occasion.

"The Committee's diligence and the framework's proposed limits on U.S. global warming pollution is an achievement, but the bill still leaves many of our energy policies unchanged and is not yet fully consistent with building a new energy economy.

"In particular, this bill gives utilities hundreds of billions of dollars in pollution permits, enabling them to continue operating highly-polluting power plants while further enhancing their earnings with these windfall profits. In contrast, low and moderate-income families will receive significantly less funding to assist them in coping with rising energy costs. We hope that as the bill makes its way through the full House that it can be strengthened to increase the amount of auctioned permits to ensure we have the resources necessary to protect families and small businesses from higher energy prices and invest in clean energy development.

"We applaud the efforts of Congresswoman Castor (Fla.) to strengthen the renewable energy provisions in the bill as an overly-modest standard may require little more renewable energy development than is projected to occur from policies already in place. Although many utilities continue to overlook the Southeast's abundant biomass, solar, wind and hydro-energy potential, we are hopeful that a national standard coupled with economic recovery funds will result in expanded renewable energy development and green job creation throughout our region.

"We are concerned that language in the bill may discourage gains in energy efficiency by setting the Alternative Compliance Payment rate lower than the cost of otherwise cost-effective energy efficiency measures. Strengthening policies to require energy efficiency investments, known to be the most effective cost-control energy policy tool, will benefit energy consumers in the Southeast.

"The American Clean Energy and Security Act is a step forward in our nation's quest to revive our economy, create well-paying green jobs and protect our consumers while addressing climate change, and we are glad to see this issue gaining momentum. We look forward to working with other Committees who take up the legislation this year to strengthen it in order to maximize benefits to families and small businesses while ushering in a clean energy economy and solving the climate crisis."

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**Southern Alliance for Clean Energy** is a nonprofit organization that promotes responsible energy choices that create global warming solutions and ensure clean, safe, and healthy communities throughout the Southeast.

For more information, go to: [www.cleanenergy.org](http://www.cleanenergy.org)