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Sierra Club Applauds Historic House Vote on Comprehensive Clean Energy Plan

*Bill Moves Us One Step Closer to Clean Energy Future;
Key Elements Must Be Strengthened As Plan Moves Forward*

Washington, D.C.-- The House Energy & Commerce Committee tonight passed a comprehensive clean energy and climate plan, the American Clean Energy & Security Act (Waxman-Markey). Several other committees, notably Ways & Means, may seek an opportunity to weigh in on the bill before it comes to the House floor later this summer. The Sierra Club offered the following comments in response to today's vote.

Statement of Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director

"Moving a comprehensive clean energy jobs plan through a committee historically dominated by those with ties to the oil, coal, and other polluting industries is a laudable victory and truly historic accomplishment. Chairmen Waxman and Markey have led the way and it is certain that this feat never could have happened without their extraordinary leadership. They have long been champions for the environmental movement and we congratulate them on achieving this critically important milestone. This bill puts the U.S. on the path to slash the carbon emissions that cause global warming 80 percent by 2050, a signal accomplishment necessary to preserve the planet for future generations.

"While the plan approved by the committee establishes a sound framework for achieving its vital goals, Big Oil, Big Coal, and dirty power companies like Southern Company extracted a steep price at the expense of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other provisions critical to protecting both the planet and the public interest. As this piece of legislation moves forward we will work with our allies to mount a vigorous effort to strengthen this bill in a few fundamental areas:

- Drive a shift to in U.S. energy production toward cleaner, cheaper sources like wind and solar much more quickly than business as usual in order to ensure strong growth in the clean energy industries and clean energy jobs that are key to solving both our environmental and economic crises
- Prioritize significant investments in slashing energy waste in order to quickly, cheaply,

and effectively cut emissions, rather than focusing on other unproven and expensive technologies

- Retain Environmental Protection Agency authority as an essential backstop for ensuring that science-driven emissions reductions are achieved in time to prevent the worst effects of global warming
- Make polluters pay for their carbon pollution in order to fund investments in clean energy; protect consumers wildlife, and vulnerable communities; and promote clean energy jobs rather than rewarding Big Oil, Big Coal, and other polluters for bad business decisions and past pollution with billions in giveaways and bailouts

"We once again thank the Chairmen for their heroic work. Their tireless efforts have moved us one step closer to the clean energy future."

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