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Senate Gets Cracking on Clean Energy and Climate

Will they stand up to the fossil fuel lobby and deliver real solutions?

After months of tough deliberations, today Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT) released a discussion draft of their major climate and clean-energy legislation. Along with the CLEAR Act introduced by Senators Cantwell (D-WA) and Collins (R-ME), this proposal sets the stage for comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation this year. We applaud Senators Kerry and Lieberman for their hard work and courage in putting forth a bill to limit carbon emissions.

The oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico highlights the unbearably high costs of fossil fuel dependence. Even after the gusher is capped, the environmental, economic, and security disaster of oil and coal addiction will worsen until Congress stands up and delivers a serious national commitment to a clean energy revolution.

Today, Oregon business leaders urge Congress and the President to move swiftly and decisively to enact comprehensive national climate and energy policy. A good policy will drive our transition to a clean energy economy -- creating millions of new jobs, reducing dependence on fossil fuels, and restoring American leadership in the global economy.

Below are three statements commenting on the release of the discussion draft today:

KC Golden, Policy Director for Climate Solutions (206-963-1953; kcgolden@climatesolutions.org):

“After the Gulf oil disaster, there’s no place to hide, and there can be no further excuses for delay. And with comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation now before Congress, America finally has a serious chance to take control of our energy future. To get it done, the Senate will need to strengthen these proposals and resist the powerful interests favoring fossil-fuel-dependence-as usual. The cures for this dependence – clean energy, transportation choices, and greater efficiency – are gaining economic traction. America needs jobs, and the clean energy future is hiring.

Our economy is losing over \$1 billion per day just to import oil. The strongest possible driver for good new American jobs is to take these energy dollars back and reinvest them in our communities. It’s not just about creating a thriving new green sector; it’s about reclaiming a giant, perpetual dividend for the whole economy – every home, business, and factory that uses energy.

Chronic addiction to fossil fuels is the driver behind both the Gulf oil disaster and the rapid disruption of the climate. Despite a relentless campaign of deception, the actual data – temperatures, emissions, impacts – show unequivocally that climate disruption is here, harder and hotter than scientists projected. Only a full-bore clean energy revolution can stop it short of epic catastrophe. This is a generational call – the test of our determination to leave our kids a healthy future. We need to ace it.”

Clark Brockman, AIA, LEED® AP BD&C; Director of Sustainability Resources for SERA Architects, Portland, Oregon:

*“It is critically important that our legislators in Washington D.C. hear from all Americans regarding the great importance of the ‘Clean Energy Jobs & American Power Act’ being advanced by Senators Kerry(D) and Lieberman(I). This bill promotes energy efficiency on a national scale, **understanding that the cleanest and cheapest kilowatt of energy is the one never used** – these “negawatts” (a term coined by Amory Lovins) will be delivered through the rapidly rising numbers of clean, green jobs within a broad array of service and labor industries, both in super-efficient, high-performance new buildings, and in energy retrofits of existing buildings across the country. **Buildings currently account for 48% of America’s total energy usage** – what better way to*

focus our energies, than on making all buildings as efficient as possible, while putting more Americans to work in living wage jobs?"

Sandra Walden, President & Founding Partner, Real Energy Solutions, Portland, Oregon:

"The viability of renewable energy project deployment, as well as the industry and jobs created, are key economic drivers for the nation at a time that putting people to work is a primary goal of Federal Government. In order to honestly compare the cost of locally available renewable energy with coal there MUST be consideration of the carbon in the equation. Climate and energy policies that place a price on carbon is essentially. Additionally, incentives available for renewables need to be approved in longer cycles to acknowledge development cycles as we currently provide incentives to the oil industry."

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Also:

Join us this Thursday morning, May 13 at 10:00 am Pacific, for a teleconference with fishing industry representatives from Alaska, Oregon and Washington, an Alaska-based ocean toxicologist, and former fisher calling in from the Gulf Coast. Speakers will discuss the very real potential for a disastrous oil-related catastrophe here -- in the Pacific Ocean and coastal waterways off the Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Alaska coasts. The long term solution -- that will benefit our national security and create jobs -- is to shift way from fossil fuel dependency and towards a clean energy economy, starting with passage of a meaningful climate and clean energy bill through Congress.

What: Phone teleconference with Northwest fishing industry representatives, and former Louisiana shrimper calling in from the Gulf Coast.

Call-In Information: Dial: (866) 661-9590 **Conference code: 3233007291**