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Kerry-Lieberman Climate Proposal a Disaster for Climate

WASHINGTON— In the midst of what appears to be the worst offshore oil disaster in American history, U.S. Senators John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.) will today put forth a [draft climate bill](#) that will not solve the problems of global warming and continues pandering to the fossil fuel industry – including expanded offshore oil drilling – that created the problems in the first place.

The proposal, leaked one day before its official release, reflects months of back-room negotiations between the senators, major polluters, and other Washington insiders, and would:

- provide only a fraction of the greenhouse gas pollution reductions scientists have said are necessary to avoid catastrophic climate disruption;
- ban successful Clean Air Act programs from reducing greenhouse pollution;
- ban existing state and local efforts to tackle climate change;
- catalyze increased oil and gas drilling – including offshore drilling; and
- subsidize dangerous and costly nuclear energy.

In response, Center for Biological Diversity Executive Director Kierán Suckling urged rejection of the proposal unless these problems are addressed. He issued the following statement:

“The climate proposal put forth today by Senators Kerry and Lieberman represents a disaster for our climate and planet. This proposal moves us one baby step forward and at least three giant steps back in any rational effort to address the climate crisis.

“The senators’ proposal would entrench our addiction to fossil fuels by offering incentives for increased oil and gas drilling just days after what appears to be the worst offshore oil disaster in American history. Large domes, small domes, golf balls, garbage, chemical dispersants, fire – none have succeeded in stopping the enormous flow of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. Clearly, there are no ‘safeguards’ Senators Lieberman and Kerry could put into this bill to make offshore oil safe.

“This proposal echoes greenhouse pollution reduction targets that scientists recently called ‘paltry’ and inadequate to prevent the worst impacts of climate change. Scientists have determined that reducing carbon pollution to 350 parts per million is necessary to preserve life as we know it. 350 ppm must be the bottom line for all climate and energy policies. The senators’ weak targets will not reduce carbon pollution to below 350 ppm from its current level of 391 ppm.

“In his recent Earth Day proclamation, President Barack Obama specifically celebrated the gains of the Clean Air Act; nonetheless, this proposal appeases polluters by gutting the Act, which has protected the air we breathe for 40 years, reaping economic benefits more than 40 times its cost. The Clean Air Act already provides a mechanism to establish science-based pollution caps for greenhouse pollutants, yet the Kerry-Lieberman proposal would ban proven successful Clean Air Act programs from cutting greenhouse emissions.

“The Kerry-Lieberman proposal is not the answer because it asks the wrong questions. A successful climate bill must build upon, and not roll back, our existing foundation of environmental protections, and it must achieve the greenhouse pollution reductions necessary to avert dangerous climate disruption.”

[Full text of bill.](#)

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