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## NEW SENATE CLIMATE AND ENERGY BILL CRUCIAL STEP FORWARD, BUT SENATORS MUST HOLD THE LINE ON IMPORTANT PROVISIONS, SCIENCE GROUP SAYS

WASHINGTON (May 12, 2010) – The American Power Act, which was released today as a “discussion draft” by Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), is a critical step toward curbing the heat-trapping emissions that drive climate change, reducing U.S. dependence on oil, and creating new clean energy jobs, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

“Scientists first warned Congress about the dangers of climate change decades ago,” said UCS President Kevin Knobloch. “The House of Representatives finally took action last year. And now, Senators Kerry and Lieberman have started the final leg of this long marathon to finally address the problem. But to cross the finish line, we need the leadership of President Obama and Majority Leader Reid. They need to push the Senate to finish this race and protect us from the worst effects of climate change. The environmental and economic disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico is just the latest reminder of why we need to curb our dangerous dependence on fossil fuels.”

UCS praised several key provisions in the discussion draft that would help protect the climate. Senators, the organization stressed, must defend these provisions as the bill moves forward. They include:

- Science-based targets for reducing heat-trapping emissions 17 percent by 2020 and 83 percent by 2050.
- Protection of states’ ability to set heat-trapping emissions standards for cars and trucks, an authority that led to [ambitious clean car standards](#) that will dramatically lower U.S. oil consumption.
- Preservation of the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to reduce global warming pollution from the oldest, dirtiest power plants.
- A down payment on more efficient transportation infrastructure and vehicle manufacturing and electrification.

However, the group also noted that the discussion draft still needs improvement in several key areas. UCS urges senators to strengthen the bill by:

- Including funding for reducing tropical deforestation, an important step for securing an international climate deal and one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce emissions.
- Ensuring that a periodic review of climate science and technological advancements is enforceable and will lead to changes in policies aimed at reducing emissions if necessary.
- Reducing the reliance on offsets, which would let polluters avoid cleaning up their own emissions for years.
- Adding a provision to establish a national oil savings plan to reduce U.S. dependence on oil and other petroleum products by 3 million barrels per day by 2020 and 7 million barrels per day by 2030, which is more than four times what the United States imports daily from the Persian Gulf.
- Including safeguards to ensure that wood, plants and agricultural residues from private lands are harvested sustainably and reduce overall carbon emissions.
- Limiting the excessive subsidies for nuclear power, rejecting provisions for expedited plant approval, and removing constraints on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s ability to ensure that new plants are safe to operate.

- Increasing funding for states to invest in clean, home-grown renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

Finally, the bill does not as yet include a federal renewable electricity standard. Senators may attempt to integrate the American Power Act with a weak energy bill that was passed in the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee in June 2009. As the draft bill moves forward, UCS said, it is critical that it include a strong standard that would spur development of clean renewable electricity sources, generate new jobs, and reduce consumers' energy bills.

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