

**Clean Water Action • Defenders of Wildlife • Earthjustice • Greenpeace
League of Conservation Voters
National Audubon Society • National Environmental Trust
National Tribal Environmental Council • National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Oceana • Physicians for Social Responsibility • The Sierra Club
Union of Concerned Scientists • U.S. Public Interest Research Group
The Wilderness Society**

September 14, 2007

Dear Senator,

This fall, as the Congress completes its work on the energy bill and turns its attention toward enacting legislation to tackle global warming, there are some fundamental principles that we urge you to embrace. An approach that combines capping and cutting carbon emissions to science-based levels, market flexibility for cost-effective reductions, using carbon permits for public benefit, and reforming the energy sector is the key to meeting the challenge of global warming, improving our economy and enhancing fairness and justice. Our organizations will judge any climate legislation on how well it reflects these principles:

Preventing dangerous global warming is paramount. Science tells us we have little time left to take action. To prevent dangerous temperature increases and drastic climate impacts, it is essential to adopt mandatory and enforceable limits that start cutting global warming pollution by 2012, with mandated annual reductions in global warming emissions reaching at least 15 to 20 percent below current levels by 2020 and on the order of 80 percent by mid-century.

Permits to emit carbon must be used for public benefit, not private windfalls. Pollution allowances are a public trust. All allowances should be auctioned or otherwise used to benefit the public, not to generate windfall profits for polluting industries. Free allocations, if any, must be limited to a short transition period.

Promoting a clean energy future. Allowances should be used to accelerate deployment of clean technologies we have today and to develop the ones we need for tomorrow. Energy efficiency – more efficient vehicles, appliances, homes, and factories – is the fastest and cheapest way to cut emissions. Investing in efficiency and renewables creates new industries and good jobs here at home. We could be selling clean technology to the world instead of sending our dollars abroad for oil.

Ensuring a just transition. Allowances should be used to help finance a just transition, protecting low- and moderate-income citizens and creating new jobs and ensuring fair treatment for affected workers and their communities. We must also take care of communities that suffer the impacts of global warming we were too late to avoid.

Assisting adaptation to an altered climate. Allowances should be used to help facilitate adaptation of distressed and impoverished people, communities and regions at home and abroad. Allowances should also be used to help fish, wildlife and ecosystems adapt in the face of global warming's complex threats.

Managing costs without breaking the cap. Banking, limited borrowing, and other tools exist to help industry keep costs predictable and manageable. “Safety valves” and other devices that break the cap on emissions must not be allowed. Any offsets must be real, surplus, verifiable, permanent, and enforceable. Use of offsets must be limited in quantity to ensure the transformative investments in low-carbon technology needed to achieve the long-term emission reduction goals.

Energy policy reform is an essential companion of any cap. An economy-wide carbon cap, while essential, is not a sufficient strategy to combat global warming. Our national energy policies need to be restructured to encourage efficiency, innovation, competition and fairness. A comprehensive set of policies to fight global warming needs to include measures like the CAFE standards increase that has been included in the Senate energy bill and the renewable electricity standard included in its House counterpart.

We must act quickly. Carbon dioxide remains in the atmosphere for generations; the longer we wait, the more aggressive our actions will have to be. Delay will commit us either to making emission reductions on a much more costly crash basis later or to inflicting truly dangerous global warming impacts on our children and grandchildren.

Many existing technologies can be deployed now to achieve these goals, and the right policies will increase our national security, revitalize our industrial jobs base, and enhance our global competitiveness. These solutions will create jobs and improve our standard of living as we tackle this dangerous problem. We look forward to working with you to help design and enact global warming legislation that accelerates economic growth and creates new jobs while achieving the steady reductions in global warming pollution that are needed.

Sincerely,

Frances Beinecke, President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Carl Pope, Executive Director
Sierra Club

Larry Schweiger, President
National Wildlife Federation

Kevin Knobloch, President
Union of Concerned Scientists

Gene Karpinski, President
League of Conservation Voters

Philip E. Clapp, President
National Environmental Trust

Margie Alt, Executive Director
U.S. Public Interest Research Group

John Flicker, President
National Audubon Society

Rodger Schlickeisen, President
Defenders of Wildlife

Andrew Sharpless, Chief Executive Officer
Oceana

William H. Meadows, President
The Wilderness Society

Jerry Pardilla, Executive Director
National Tribal Environmental Council

Vawter Parker, Executive Director
Earthjustice

Michael McCally, MD, Executive Director
Physicians for Social Responsibility

David Zwick, President
Clean Water Action

John Passacantando, Executive Director
Greenpeace