

**Nov. 10, 2009**

**Statement of Frances Beinecke as prepared for delivery**

Good morning and thank you for being here.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee made history on Thursday when it passed the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act, clearing the way for full Senate action on clean energy and climate legislation.

This action comes just as President Obama makes his first trip to Asia this week, where climate change tops the agenda for his talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

And in just a few weeks, as you know, representatives from nearly two hundred nations will gather in Copenhagen to craft the policies that will shape our energy future - and our planet's future health.

I have spent thirty-five years on the front lines of environmental advocacy. Never before in my lifetime have the stakes on this issue been higher. Never before has there been more momentum for change.

That is why I decided this is the moment to speak directly to the American people about the most urgent environmental issue of our time. This, I believe, is the moment to act.

That's why I wrote a book with the help of my talented NRDC colleague, Bob Deans. I want *Clean Energy Common Sense* to be a part of the climate conversation now, when it matters most.

We have before us an opportunity without precedent.

Clean energy and climate legislation will put Americans back to work, reduce our reliance on foreign oil and create a healthier future – for ourselves and our children.

In this little book, I call on every American of conscience to stand up, speak out and be heard. Tell your Senators what you believe. Urge them to support this good bill.

I want the book to reach beyond the typical ideological divides. This is not a political treatise. It is not a partisan screed. It is an invitation to solve this crisis together, as Americans, in a cause we can all rally around.

While drafting this book, I kept a certain audience in mind: the people who have heard a lot about climate change from both sides but are not sure what to believe.

I talk with these people all the time. They approach me after I give a speech or at gatherings when they find out what I do. And they ask me solid, probing questions.

They might be skeptical of my answers at first, but they are willing to listen.

I wanted this book to be worthy of that attentiveness. I am not asking readers to take my word for it that we must confront climate change. I ask them to listen to the most authoritative experts in the field.

When I write about the alarming rate at which summer sea ice is melting in the Arctic, I reference scientists from NASA.

When I say that climate change poses a serious threat to national security, I quote retired Marine Corps four-star General Anthony Zinni, retired U.S. Navy Admiral Lee Gunn, and CIA Director Leon Panetta.

And when I explain that creating a clean energy future is affordable, I cite research from the Congressional Budget Office, the Department of Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agency. These places are home to the best energy economists in the world. They are not in the service of any one but the public's interest. And they agree that fighting climate change will cost American families less than 44 cents a day.

Most of all, I want the book to be accessible.

When Bob and I were first discussing the book, we were inspired by essayist Thomas Paine who, with his 47-page pamphlet *Common Sense* managed to frame the debate for the American colony's break from British rule in 1776.

Like Paine's piece, our book is a quick read. **It costs \$9.95, fits in your pocket, can be read over a couple of lunch breaks then passed along to a friend.** We want to get this book into people's hands when it matters most: now, while the Senate prepared to debate the single most important vote of our generation.

In the book, I present the three main ideas.

First, climate change is already causing harm. Ice caps are already melting. Deserts are already widening. And millions of the world's poorest people are already suffering as a result.

Second, failing to act threatens our national security. As I mentioned before, America's military and intelligence community agrees that the money we spend on foreign oil props up oppressive regimes and that climate change is generating civil unrest in volatile regions. Who do you think will get the 911 call when things really disintegrate?

But we don't have to wait until it gets that bad. And this is the third and most important message of my book.

We have what it takes to turn this around. We know what the solutions are.

We know that expanding renewable power and building energy efficient homes and cars will dramatically reduce global warming pollution.

But those solutions will also something else. They will put millions of Americans to work. Green jobs are growing two and half times as fast as traditional ones, and that number will soar if we put clean energy policies in place.

This is the part of the global warming story that doesn't always get told: the opportunity part. Solving climate change gives America a chance to revitalize our industrial heartland and become energy innovators.

There is an enormous sense of possibility bubbling up around the country right now. Wherever I go, I meet people who want to design, invest in, or build the next generation of clean energy technology.

They want to figure out how to make hybrid car batteries run longer or how to manufacture more affordable solar panels.

These people are doing what America has always done well: leveraged our ingenuity to become technological leaders.

But there is no guarantee we will retain our leadership in this new global market.

I just returned from a trip to China. I spoke with ministers at the highest level of government, and I was surprised by how committed they are to improving energy efficiency and expanding renewables.

While I was in Shanghai, I attended a clean tech conference. It was co-sponsored by the local American Chamber of Commerce, so about two-thirds of the participants were Westerners, and the rest were Chinese. At the end, someone asked me, "Did you notice that the Chinese business people were here at the beginning of the conference, but they didn't stay? They are more focused on action than on talking."

That is what we should be focusing on in America. We need to take swift action in order to unleash energy innovation here at home.

### **Calling on Citizens to Act**

And we have to do it soon.

This is a moment of urgency and hope. In Washington, around the country, and around the world, people are ready to do what it takes to confront climate change once and for all.

The House passed historic clean energy legislation last summer - the first time ever for lawmakers to agree on the need to limit the pollution that's warming our planet.

Now the Senate is working on a companion bill.

Our Senators need to hear from all of us.

We need to raise our voices and say we can pass clean energy legislation. We can help put Americans back to work. We can make our country more secure. And we can create a healthier future for ourselves and our children.

Ultimately, that is why I wrote this book.

People often ask if I am optimistic about the future, and always answer that I am. I work with people every day--in business, in science, in government--who are deeply committed to solving this crisis.

I hope this book will inspire more Americans to join those hopeful ranks. And that they will be stirred to action. Now, when it matters most.

Thank you and I am happy to answer questions.