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CLEAN ENERGY COMMON SENSE

by FRANCES BEINECKE
with Bob Deans

Foreword by Robert Redford

As Congress, President Barack Obama and the United Nations focus on global climate change in the weeks ahead, a spirited and authoritative voice explains why the time has come to act. Seizing this momentum can make our economy stronger, our country more secure and our future healthier. Natural Resources Defense Council President Frances Beinecke writes in her first book, *CLEAN ENERGY COMMON SENSE: An American Call to Action on Global Climate Change* (Rowman & Littlefield; Nov. 9, 2009).

“Global climate change is the single greatest environmental challenge of our generation,” Beinecke writes. “It is, though, far more than that. It is a humanitarian challenge. It is an economic challenge. It is a national security challenge. And it is a moral challenge, the great moral challenge of our time. We must rise to meet it, we must turn it around, or we will fail our forebears and our children.”

Understanding this challenge can be tough, but the stakes are so high for the nation --and the world --that Beinecke felt for the first time in her 35 year career with NRDC and advocating for clean air, pure water and the preservation of the Earth, it is time for a new line of tactics and thought.

In her book, Beinecke goes beyond stale argument and rigid dogma to make clear why this matters to us all. In a tightly-woven, 112-page appeal to conscience, Beinecke writes in the tradition of Thomas Paine, whose 1776 essay, *Common Sense*, helped light the fire of the American Revolution.

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Like Paine and his fellow patriots, Beinecke speaks directly to the American people, in an easy to understand, pocket-sized paperback, designed to be read on a couple of lunch breaks and then passed along to a friend.

“This book is a call to action, one citizen’s honest appeal,” Beinecke writes in her introduction. “It is not a political treatise. It is not a partisan screed. Maybe that’s because my politics on this are simple. I believe Democrats and Republicans alike have a real chance here to lead, to look to the future and show us the way to a brighter tomorrow.”

This book rings with the urgency of now, driven by the most current and authoritative information available anywhere. In it, you will learn:

- The Central Intelligence Agency launched its Center on Climate Change and National Security in September. The reason: widening desertification, rising sea levels, population shifts and increasing competition for food, fresh water and arable farmland have already begun to spark conflict and feed political instability around the world.
- The Global Humanitarian Forum estimates that the results of climate change kill more than 300,000 people each year. The reason: hundreds of millions of low income people on the front lines of environmental devastation are already feeling the brunt of this widening scourge.
- Refugees International established a new Center for the Study of Climate Displacement in August. The reason: the group believes tens of millions of people could be put to flight in the decades ahead by the ecological ravages of climate change.
- Two German merchant ships made maritime history in September, passing through Arctic ice that had kept commercial shipping at bay since the dawn of ocean travel. The reason: we’ve lost one-third of the world’s Arctic sea ice in just 30 years, a reduction equal in size to the entire third of the United States east of the Mississippi River.

“This is the world as we find it,” Beinecke writes. “It must not be the world that we leave.”

Passing clean energy legislation, she writes, can help put Americans back to work, reduce our reliance on foreign oil and create a healthier planet. That’s because green technology can generate 1.9 million jobs; energy efficiency, conservation and renewable fuels can cut U.S. oil consumption by more than 5 million barrels a day; and reducing the pollution that is warming our planet will help roll back climate change.

“We have what it takes to do better,” she tells us. “We have what it takes to lead. A miracle lies within our reach. The moment has come to grasp it.”

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From the Foreword by NRDC Trustee Robert Redford

“There are people of good will who hear claims on both sides of the climate change debate and aren’t sure what to believe. If that feels familiar, this little book is for you. There are those who want what’s best for future generations, for our environment and for our country, yet worry that our politicians might not get this right. If you’re nodding your head, this book is for you. And there are people who care deeply about our common future and just don’t see climate change as a priority. If that resonates, this book is for you too, perhaps especially for you.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Frances Beinecke is the president of NRDC. Under Frances’s leadership, the organization sharply focuses on curbing global warming, developing a clean energy future, reviving the world’s oceans, saving endangered wild places, stemming the tide of toxic chemicals and accelerating the greening of China. Frances has worked with NRDC for 35 years. Prior to becoming the president in 2006, Frances was the executive director for eight years, during which time NRDC’s membership doubled and the staff grew to 300. Frances serves on the board of the World Resources Institute, the Energy Future Coalition and Conservation International’s Center for Environmental Leadership in Business and is on the steering committee of the U.S. Climate Action Partnership. She is also the co-chair of the Leadership Council for the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, a member of the Yale School of Management’s Advisory Board and a former member of the Yale Corporation. Frances received her bachelor’s degree from Yale College and a master’s degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She has received several awards, most recently the Rachel Carson Award from the National Audubon Society.

TITLE: *Clean Energy Common Sense: An American Call to Action on Global Climate Change*

AUTHOR: Frances Beinecke with Bob Deans

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