



Solving Global Warming: Your Guide to Legislation

It's too late for half measures. Scientists say that we need to turn the corner on global warming soon or we'll reach a tipping point when it will be too late to prevent the worst effects of global warming pollution. We can't just dip our toe in the water because the longer emissions continue to grow, the steeper and more disruptive the cuts required later will be. We can't wait any longer. We must take bold legislative action today.

The 110th Congress will be pivotal in setting global warming policy for years, and perhaps decades, to come.

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To protect our planet, it is essential that the United States adopt mandatory limits on heat-trapping pollution that begin reductions now and cut emissions at least 15 to 20 percent below current levels by 2020, and by as much as 80 percent by mid-century.

To shift energy investments in the right direction and on the necessary scale, NRDC believes the following elements will be critical:

1. **A long-term declining cap** on emissions that creates a clear path for long-term energy investments.
2. **Market-based flexibility** for meeting emission reduction targets cost effectively, while maintaining the overall integrity of the declining cap.
3. **Performance standards and targeted incentives** to speed the use of efficiency, renewable energy, and key low-carbon technologies in the power, vehicle, and building sectors.
4. **Protection for consumers, workers, and communities** using revenues from the sale of pollution allowances.

Congress is finally seriously debating legislation to reduce the heat-trapping pollution driving global warming. A host of bills have been introduced in this Congress that create "cap-and-trade" systems like the successful program

enacted in 1990 to curb acid rain. State and local action, court rulings, business plans, and consumer decisions are all pointing the United States in the direction of taking serious action.¹

On December 5, 2007, the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act (S. 2191) was approved 11-8 by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. This is the first comprehensive global warming bill to make it through any committee in Congress and reflects the growing momentum to cut America's global warming pollution.

Policy-makers are now focusing on the specific provisions needed to produce effective legislation that can achieve broad support in the current Congress. Most climate scientists now warn that there is a very short window of time to begin serious emission reductions if we are to avoid dangerous climate impacts.² Delay makes the job much harder and more expensive because the longer we allow emissions to grow, the steeper and faster we will have to cut them later.

One of the biggest developments in the past year is the virtual consensus that Congress needs to enact long-term, scientifically-based emission reduction targets, starting with modest yet meaningful early reductions and continuing at a predictable rate over the first half of this century. Bills that would only slow or stop emissions growth, putting off decisions on true reductions for future Congresses, are not acceptable.



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Congress must now pass legislation mandating the deep reductions needed while providing the right balance of clean energy incentives and consumer and worker protections.

A new global warming solutions map from McKinsey & Company³ shows that we know how to solve global warming while growing our economy. Considering only already demonstrated technologies, McKinsey has shown that with adequate policy support, we can cut

emissions 30 percent from current levels by 2030—establishing a clear path toward the up to 80 percent reductions by 2050 needed for the United States to do its share to contain global warming. The study offers a credible roadmap to unlocking global warming solutions at little or no cost to the economy, once the positive net benefits of investments in efficiency are factored in. But to seize the opportunities described in the McKinsey study, we must act now.

A Comparison of Select Multi-sector Federal Global Warming Bills of the 110th Congress

The Bill	Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act	Safe Climate Act	Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act	Climate Stewardship Act	Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act	Low Carbon Economy Act
Sponsor(s)	Sanders-Boxer (S. 309)	Waxman (H.R. 1590)	Lieberman-Warner (S. 2191)	Olver-Gilchrest (H.R. 620)	Lieberman-McCain (S. 280)	Bingaman-Specter (S. 1766)
Percent of U.S. emissions covered⁴	100%	100%	86%	74%	74%	86%
Emission Targets⁴ (reductions in total U.S. emissions compared to 2005 levels)	2010-2050 Declining cap: emissions decrease 14% by 2020, 83% by 2050	2010-2050 Declining cap: emissions decrease 14% by 2020, 83% by 2050	2012-2050 Declining cap: emissions decrease 18 to 25% by 2020, 62 to 66% by 2050	2012-2050 Declining cap: emissions decrease 11% by 2020, 56% by 2050	2012-2050 Declining cap: emissions decrease 13% by 2020, 50% by 2050	2012-2030 Cap: 6% <i>above</i> ⁵ to 4% below by 2020, 11% <i>above</i> ⁵ to 20% below by 2030
Rating Declining pollution cap	●	●	●	○	○	●
Sound market design	● PROGRAM STRUCTURE UNDETERMINED	● PROGRAM STRUCTURE UNDETERMINED	● 15% LIMIT ON OFFSETS FROM OUTSIDE THE CAP	● 15% LIMIT ON OFFSETS FROM OUTSIDE THE CAP	○ 30% LIMIT ON OFFSETS FROM OUTSIDE THE CAP	● SAFETY VALVE PRICE CAP
Promotes clean energy	● PROGRAM STRUCTURE UNDETERMINED	● PROGRAM STRUCTURE UNDETERMINED	● INCENTIVES START TOO SMALL	○ INCENTIVES START TOO SMALL, NO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	● INCENTIVES START TOO SMALL, NO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, WINDFALL FOR NUCLEAR	○ INCENTIVES TOO SMALL, NO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
Consumer and labor protections	● PROGRAM STRUCTURE UNDETERMINED	● PROGRAM STRUCTURE UNDETERMINED	● TRANSITION TO AUCTION TOO SLOW	○ SHARE OF INCENTIVES UNCERTAIN	○ SHARE OF INCENTIVES UNCERTAIN	○ TRANSITION TO AUCTION TOO SLOW

NRDC criteria: ● = Excellent ● = Good ○ = Fair ● = Poor ● = Unacceptable

¹ U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP), *A Call for Action*, January 2007, <http://www.us-cap.org>.

² Hansen, J., et al., "Global Temperature Change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 103, No. 39, pp. 14,288-14,293, September 2006.

³ McKinsey and Company, *Reducing U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How Much at What Cost?*, November 2007, <http://www.mckinsey.com/client-service/ccsi/greenhousegas.asp>.

⁴ NRDC and WRI, "Greenhouse Emission Reductions under the Lieberman-Warner Bill (S. 2191)", December 2007, http://docs.nrdc.org/globalwarming/glo_07120401A.pdf; World Resources Institute (WRI), "Global Warming Legislation in the 110th Congress", December 2007, http://pdf.wri.org/usclimatetargets_071207.pdf.

⁵ Safety valve is triggered.

