



The Phone Is Ringing Now: Who Will Answer It?

On the campaign trail, the presidential candidates have been debating who is best qualified to answer the White House "red phone" in the middle of the night. The debate presumes that the next crisis will be another armed attack on the United States.

But the phone is ringing now. The next crisis is already here. Only it is not an armed attack by violent extremists. It is a much bigger threat, one not just to the United States, but to all of humanity — a menace far bigger than the ones posed by al Qaeda, Iran, and North Korea combined. Dangerous climate change, if unchecked now, will make today's security challenges seem small compared to what humanity will likely face by midcentury and beyond.

Climate change is threatening human security today. All but one of the 13 disaster emergencies handled by the UN Office of Humanitarian Affairs in 2007 were weather-related: extreme floods, droughts, and storms. Relief officials believe climate change is driving the increase in weather-related disasters. The UN Development Program estimates that developing countries will soon need about \$86 billion annually — in addition to development aid — to address the harmful effects of climate change.

Recent earth observations — such as the collapse of a large chunk of the Wilkins Ice Sheet in Antarctica in late March — indicate that the ice in the Arctic Ocean, Greenland, and portions of Antarctica may be melting much faster than previously thought. This may cause the climate to warm and sea levels to rise even faster than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated last year.

In the decades ahead, tens of millions of people living near sea level may be forced from their homes

by rising seas and increasingly intense storms. New Orleans is still struggling to recover from the effects of such a storm more than two years ago.

Hundreds of millions of people depend on the annual melting of snowpacks and mountain glaciers for their water and food. The snowpacks are now melting earlier each year, and the glaciers are disappearing rapidly. A recent study, "Human-Induced Changes in the Hydrology of the Western United States," warns of "water shortages, lack of storage capability to meet seasonally changing river flow, transfers of water from agriculture to urban uses, and other critical impacts" in the near future due to climate change (*Science*, 2/22/08).



The ecological fabric of life on Earth is being eroded by a potent, human-made brew of greenhouse gases that is warming the atmosphere and acidifying the oceans. Will the White House and Congress act in time to prevent the worst?

The president and Congress can mobilize the nation in response to a crisis. After September 11, 2001, they mobilized millions of people, redirected the missions of federal agencies, moved armies around the world, and spent hundreds of billions of dollars in pursuit of national security.

Where are they now on climate change — a far more profound threat? What will the next Congress and president do? When will they answer the phone? The Earth is calling. ■

**Live Better. Use Less.
Save the Planet.**

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Editors: Jim Cason, Alicia McBride
Copyeditor: Alex Martin
Author: Ned Stowe

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Friends Committee on National Legislation

245 Second Street, NE
 Washington, DC 20002-5795
 Phone: 202-547-6000
 800-630-1330
 Fax: 202-547-6019
 Legislative Action Message:
 202-547-4343
 email: fcnl@fcnl.org
 website: www.fcnl.org



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Projecting Greenhouse Emissions

The chart on the facing page shows projections of future greenhouse gas emissions. Here's a key to understanding the data behind the graphic.

Business as usual: The solid black line represents actual U.S. emissions through 2005 and projected future growth in emissions if no action is taken. *Source: World Resources Institute, 2007.*

Lieberman-Warner: The black dashed line represents the most optimistic scenario of emissions reductions which may result from implementing the Lieberman-Warner legislation (S. 2191). *Source: World Resources Institute, 2007.*

IPCC minimum recommendations: The blue dashed line shows the reductions needed to reduce emissions 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, according to recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

In a survey of research on various ways to reduce global emissions so as to prevent global CO₂ levels from exceeding 450 ppm, the IPCC found "the range of difference between emissions in 1990 and emission allowances in 2020/2050 for various [greenhouse gas] concentration levels" for industrialized, rich countries to be -25 percent to -40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and -80 percent to -95 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. *Sources: IPCC, Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, "Mitigation of Climate Change," 2007; the graph is based on FCNL analysis using emissions data provided by the World Resources Institute.*

“America’s Climate Security Act” Needs Strengthening

The United States has all the resources, creativity, and know-how it needs to help lead the world toward a safe, livable climate. However, in order to fully develop these capacities and opportunities, Congress must first enact strong, comprehensive legislation to quickly and deeply reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and redirect the U.S. economy toward a sustainable future.

Several bills to curb U.S. emissions have been introduced in the 110th Congress, but only one has been scheduled for floor debate this year — S. 2191, “America’s Climate Security Act.” This bipartisan bill was introduced last year by Sens. Joseph Lieberman (CT) and John Warner (VA) and passed out of the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee on December 5. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV) has agreed to schedule floor debate for sometime in June.

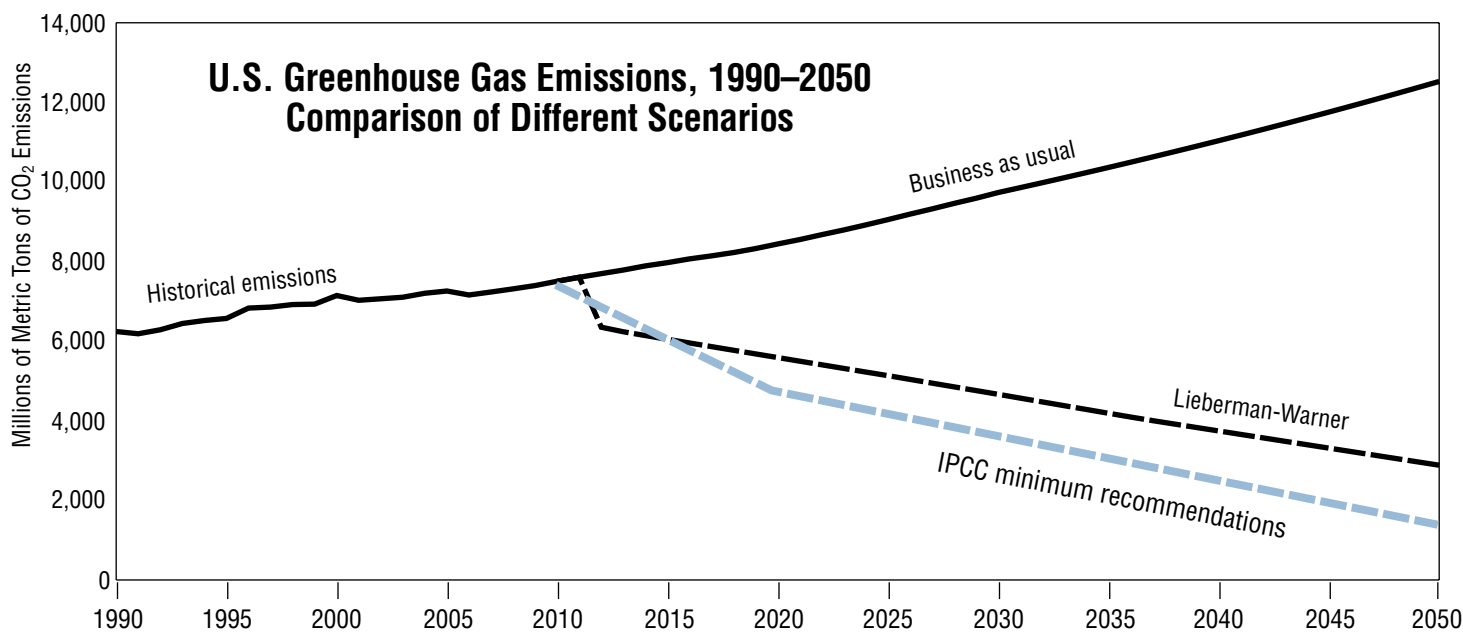
Until then, senators (and hundreds of industry, labor, and environmental lobbyists) will be negotiating behind the scenes to build support for (or opposition to) the bill and the dozens of amendments that will likely be offered. Proponents need to find 60 votes to override an expected filibuster by opponents.

ACT NOW: Please contact your senators. Urge them to strengthen the Lieberman-Warner bill (S. 2191) by reducing emissions faster and deeper; auctioning all pollution allowances to polluters, not giving them away; increasing and better focusing assistance for low-income households; and increasing international climate-change adaptation assistance.

The Lieberman-Warner bill would set a steadily declining cap on total emissions, auction or grant “pollution allowances” to major polluters or other stakeholders, and establish a market for trading pollution allowances. The price on emissions would be set competitively as companies that pollute more would have to buy allowances from companies that pollute less.

The price of releasing polluting emissions would gradually increase as the cap on total allowable emissions declines. Through this market-based approach, the Lieberman-Warner legislation would create a cost penalty for companies that pollute more and a cost benefit for companies that reduce their emissions. In effect, polluting more would

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Please see explanation of chart on page 2.

Sources: World Resources Institute 2007 and FCNL calculations

Climate Security Act (continued from page 3)

raise the cost of production, while polluting less would lower the cost and increase profits for private-sector companies.

Sens. Lieberman and Warner (and the EPW Committee) are to be commended for undertaking the politically difficult but urgent task of drafting bipartisan legislation to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Although the Lieberman-Warner bill may be pushing the limits of what is possible politically in the 110th Congress, its provisions do not adequately confront the immense scope, magnitude, and rapid advance of dangerous climate change. Congress must enact a stronger bill, and soon.

Addressing Climate Change: What Is Required?

Preventing the most dangerous, extreme climate change will require that the Earth's nations prevent the average global temperature from increasing more than two degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. The authoritative, science-based UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that this will require keeping average global greenhouse gas concentrations below 450 parts per million CO₂ equivalent (ppm CO₂e).

With global emissions continuing to grow, the Earth is fast approaching that point already. To stabilize the climate at 450 ppm CO₂e, scientists estimate that the United States and other developed countries must reduce their emissions by 25–40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80–95 percent by 2050.

Adding to this challenge, significant global equity issues are at stake. Many of the people who are suffering the most today from the effects of climate change, and who are likely to suffer the most in the future, are the least responsible for the problem. They tend to be the poorest people in the poorest nations. The countries that contributed the most to the problem – the United States and other wealthy developed countries – are suffering the least so far and have the greatest capacity to adapt.

And, while most people in the wealthy countries could dramatically reduce their fossil fuel use over

time with little if any harm to their quality of life, more than two billion people in developing countries still do not have enough energy to advance basic human development. So, while countries like the United States need to dramatically reduce and shift their energy consumption toward renewable sources, many developing countries need to **increase** and shift their use of energy.

We at FCNL commend the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee for dedicating significant resources in the Lieberman-Warner bill (S. 2191) to international forest protection, domestic agriculture and forestry, worker training, low-income energy assistance, natural resources adaptation, and international climate-change adaptation, and for strengthening energy-efficiency standards for buildings and appliances. Urge your senators to keep these good provisions in the bill.

Strengthen Lieberman-Warner

However, in many other respects, S. 2191 falls far short of what is needed. Senators should be urged to strengthen the bill so that it will

- **Reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions faster and deeper.** The pace of emissions reductions in S. 2191 lags well behind the pace that scientists estimate will be necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that S. 2191 would reduce emissions only 18–25 percent below 2005 levels (which were about 16 percent higher than 1990 levels) by 2020, and by 62–66 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. Senators should be urged to support emission reductions of at least 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and to support reductions of at least 80 percent by 2050.
- **Auction pollution allowances to polluters, not give them away.** Initially S. 2191 would give away about 38 percent of the pollution allowances to polluting industries. This percentage would decline to zero by 2030. However, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) concludes that “giving allowances away to companies that supply fossil fuels or that use large quantities of fossil fuels in their production processes could create “wind-fall” profits for those firms.... The resulting price

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Climate Security Act (continued from page 4)

increases would disproportionately affect people at the lower end of the income scale" ("CBO Testimony: Approaches to Reducing Carbon Emissions," 11/01/07). Senators should be urged to make polluters pay for pollution allowances.

- **Increase and better focus assistance for people with low incomes.** A policy to reduce emissions by 15 percent could cost households in the poorest fifth of the U.S. population \$750–\$950 per year, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. S. 2191 provides some energy assistance for low-income households, but the funding should be increased, and the assistance programs need to be focused to reach more of the people who will need assistance; to cover the effect of rising energy costs on the price of food, transportation, and consumer goods (not just on utility bills); to provide aid on a per-person basis, rather than by household (larger families have higher costs); and to use existing state

programs to distribute the aid (instead of utility companies). Senators should be urged to amend the bill accordingly.

- **Increase international climate-change adaptation assistance.** In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (1/24/08), James Lyons of Oxfam America observed:

We have come to see climate change as one of the greatest challenges to our efforts to promote sustainable development and reduce global poverty.... By mid-century, more than a billion people will face water shortages and hunger, including 600 million in Africa alone. Weather extremes, food and water scarcity, and climate-related public health threats are projected to displace between 150 million and one billion people as climate change unfolds.

S. 2191 provides modest international adaptation assistance, but senators should be urged to increase this assistance in the bill. ■

Elect Climate Friendly Legislators This Fall

Challenge every candidate for elected office to support comprehensive, strong, bold, fair, climate protection legislation. Make copies of FCNL's new flyer "The Most Powerful CFL Is the One You Put in Congress" on page 6 or download it at www.fcnl.org/energy.

Climate Friendly Legislators (CFLs) should

- Reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and at least 80 percent by 2050. These are the minimum reductions that scientists estimate developed countries will need to make in order to avoid the much more harmful effects of extreme climate change.
- Place a moratorium on building new, polluting, coal-burning power plants. Coal burning is one of the biggest contributors to harmful climate change. Dozens of new coal-fired power plants are now being planned. These should not be built unless they can capture and store their emissions safely and permanently.
- Require electric utilities to generate at least 20 percent of their electricity from the wind, sun, oceans, biomass, geothermal, and other clean, renewable sources by 2020. Utilities should invest in clean, renewable sources of energy instead of coal. This would be good for jobs, consumers, the environment, and the climate.
- Help poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad advance toward the climate-friendly economy of the future. First, Congress needs to help people adapt to the harmful effects of climate change that are already being experienced by millions of people around the world today. Second, Congress needs to help people reduce their carbon footprint and prepare for employment opportunities in the new economy. And third, Congress must assure that people living on low or fixed incomes are not made poorer as the cost of using fossil fuels rises.

Elect Climate Friendly Legislators this fall.

The most powerful CFL is the one you put in Congress.

Elect **C**limate **F**riendly **L**egislators this fall. Enlighten the dim bulbs in Congress or change them.

Climate Friendly Legislators support . . .

- Reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.
- A moratorium on new, polluting, coal-burning power plants.
- Requiring electric utilities to generate at least 20% of their electricity from the wind, sun, oceans, and other renewable sources by 2020.
- Helping poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad advance in the climate-friendly economy of the future.

Will your next legislators be enlightened CFL's? Ask them.

Let's put America to work for a clean, energy-efficient, renewable energy future. Let's leave the planet a better place for our grandchildren.

Live Better. Use Less. Save Our Planet.

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Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb



Climate Change (continued from page 8)

effectively prevent any future increases in U.S. emissions – even as the population and economy continue to grow.

In addition, switching to renewable energy could reduce U.S. emissions by another 1.2 gigatons by 2030 (ASES, “Tackling Climate Change in the U.S.: Potential Carbon Emissions Reductions from Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy by 2030,” 1/07).

What Does This Mean for the Economy?

First, consumers and businesses could save a lot of money if the right policies were put in place to encourage energy-efficiency improvements. And, since it costs less on average to improve energy efficiency than it does to produce more energy, utilities (and their ratepayers) could save money by not having to build more power plants. They could even shut some down.

Second, the sustainable energy economy will create more good jobs. Pursuing a national goal of just 20 percent renewable electricity by 2020 would create 185,000 direct new jobs in the industry, according to an estimate from the Union of Concerned Scientists (www.ucsusa.org).

The ASES estimates that, in 2006, even with a relatively weak national commitment, the renewable energy industry in the United States provided direct employment for 196,000 workers, while the energy-efficiency industry provided 3.5 million direct jobs. With a concerted, national mobilization for energy efficiency and renewable energy production, more than 40 million jobs (direct and indirect) could be created by 2030, contributing more than \$4.5 trillion to the national economy (“Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: Economic Drivers for the 21st Century,” 2007).

How Can Congress Move the United States toward Sustainability?

Phasing in carbon taxes, with offsets to protect low- and middle-income households, would be the most powerful, effective, and just way to reduce emissions and encourage energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy production. See the September 2007 *Washington Newsletter* for more on

carbon taxes. Implementing an economy-wide cap and trade program would be another way (see article on page 3). The key is to begin putting a steadily rising price on carbon emissions. It may be a while, however, before Congress and the White House are ready to enact either of these policies.

In the interim, Congress should enact legislation to extend and expand existing tax credits for energy efficiency and renewable energy production, which are due to expire at the end of this year. This would ensure that the recent rapid growth in investment and jobs in these vital industries continues.

In February the House passed its version, the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act (H.R. 5351). This bill would extend and expand existing tax credits for the production of renewable energy; extend tax credits for energy-efficient improvements to existing homes and commercial buildings; provide additional credits for the production of renewable fuels from biomass; expand tax credits for plug-in hybrid vehicles; end the business tax loophole that encouraged businesses to purchase SUVs; and end certain tax benefits for large oil companies.

In April, the Senate passed an energy tax credit bill as an amendment to a bill (H.R. 3221) to prevent home foreclosures. The Senate provisions are much more modest and short-term than those in the House bill and do not include any offsets to pay for promoting renewable energy and conservation (e.g., ending tax preferences for oil companies).

The House and the Senate will now meet in a conference committee to reconcile their two very different bills. The House is likely to insist on paying for the tax credits by ending tax preferences for big oil companies, but oil-state senators are likely to block any attempt in their chamber to end these tax preferences. President George Bush has promised to veto any bill that contains such provisions.

Contact your legislators now. Tell them to finish the job quickly. Extend tax credits for energy efficiency and renewable energy now.

Keep up to date with the latest developments on this legislation by subscribing to FCNL’s Climate, Energy, and Human Security e-mail list. Just visit our website at www.fcnl.org/email. ■



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INSIDE: SENATE TO CONSIDER CLIMATE BILL

No. 727, May 2008

Climate Change: Seizing the Opportunities

Conserving energy, improving energy efficiency, increasing renewable energy production, and good land stewardship are the safest, cleanest ways to reduce greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The good news is that the United States has all the know-how and resources needed to get started now, and doing so can also be good for the economy.

A recent study by McKinsey and Company, the business consultancy, reports that “*the United States could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by 3.0 to 4.5 gigatons of CO₂e [billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent] using tested approaches and high-potential emerging technologies*” (“Reducing U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How Much at What Cost?” 12/07).

Without strong government intervention, U.S. emissions will rise from about 7.2 gigatons CO₂e in 2005 to about 9.7 gigatons in 2030. Thus, reducing emissions by 4.5 gigatons per year by 2030 would be a huge step in the right direction, cutting emissions about 28 percent below 2005 levels.

More important, the study finds that almost 40 percent of the emissions reductions – mostly through energy-efficiency improvements and changes in land stewardship – will “generate **positive** economic returns over their lifecycle” (emphasis added).

The greatest gains could be made in five key sectors of the economy, according to the report. Improving energy efficiency in buildings and appliances could reduce emissions by 870 megatons (million tons) by

2030 if the nation is fully mobilized and strong policies are enacted now.

Increasing fuel efficiency in vehicles and reducing the carbon intensity of transportation fuels (e.g., switching to battery power, fuel cells, hydrogen, or renewable liquid fuels) could cut another 660 megatons.

Improving energy efficiency in the industrial sector could cut 770 megatons. Expanding and enhancing carbon sinks (e.g., reforesting marginal crop and pasture lands and practicing no-till agriculture) could soak up 590 megatons of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Reducing the carbon intensity of electric power production (e.g., making power plants more efficient, switching to renewables, capturing and storing emissions, expanding nuclear power, etc.) would cut up to 1,570 megatons. (FCNL does not support expanding nuclear power.)

All Of This Can Be Done with Today's Technologies

Research compiled by the American Solar Energy Society (ASES) goes further, suggesting that “*energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies have the potential to provide most, if not all, of the U.S. carbon emissions reductions that will be needed to help limit the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide to 450 to 500 [parts per million].*”

Just by improving the energy efficiency of buildings, transportation, and industry, the United States could

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