



ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

**Information Resource Center
Embassy of the United States Madrid**

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Conservation Reserve Program – wetland
with sedges
Coleraine Township Ross Country, Ohio



El Dorado Beach Preserve, Black Pond
Wildlife Management Area
Lake Ontario Eastern Basin

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

President Obama Agenda on Energy and Environment

The White House

The energy challenges our country faces are severe and have gone unaddressed for far too long. Our addiction to foreign oil doesn't just undermine our national security and wreak havoc on our environment -- it cripples our economy and strains the budgets of working families all across America. President Obama and Vice President Biden have a comprehensive plan to invest in alternative and renewable energy, end our addiction to foreign oil, address the global climate crisis and create millions of new jobs.

The Obama-Biden comprehensive New Energy for America plan will:

- Help create five million new jobs by strategically investing \$150 billion over the next ten years to catalyze private efforts to build a clean energy future.
- Within 10 years save more oil than we currently import from the Middle East and Venezuela combined.
- Put 1 million Plug-In Hybrid cars -- cars that can get up to 150 miles per gallon -- on the road by 2015, cars that we will work to make sure are built here in America.
- Ensure 10 percent of our electricity comes from renewable sources by 2012, and 25 percent by 2025.
- Implement an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.

Energy Plan Overview

- Provide Short-term Relief to American Families

- Crack Down on Excessive Energy Speculation.
- Swap Oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to Cut Prices.

- Eliminate Our Current Imports from the Middle East and Venezuela within 10 Years

- Increase Fuel Economy Standards.
- Get 1 Million Plug-In Hybrid Cars on the Road by 2015.
- Create a New \$7,000 Tax Credit for Purchasing Advanced Vehicles.
- Establish a National Low Carbon Fuel Standard.
- A “Use it or Lose It” Approach to Existing Oil and Gas Leases.
- Promote the Responsible Domestic Production of Oil and Natural Gas.

- Create Millions of New Green Jobs

- Ensure 10 percent of Our Electricity Comes from Renewable Sources by 2012, and 25 percent by 2025.
- Deploy the Cheapest, Cleanest, Fastest Energy Source – Energy Efficiency.
- Weatherize One Million Homes Annually.
- Develop and Deploy Clean Coal Technology.
- Prioritize the Construction of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline.

- Reduce our Greenhouse Gas Emissions 80 Percent by 2050

- Implement an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.
- Make the U.S. a Leader on Climate Change.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/energy_and_environment/

Remarks by the President on Jobs, Energy Independence, and Climate Change

The White House
January 26, 2009

It will be the policy of my administration to reverse our dependence on foreign oil, while building a new energy economy that will create millions of jobs. We hold no illusion about the task that lies ahead. I cannot promise a quick fix; no single technology or set of regulations will get the job done. But we will commit ourselves to steady, focused, pragmatic pursuit of an America that is free from our energy dependence and empowered by a new energy economy that puts millions of our citizens to work.

Today, I'm announcing the first steps on our journey toward energy independence, as we develop new energy, set new fuel efficiency standards, and address greenhouse gas emissions. Each step begins to move us in a new direction, while giving us the tools that we need to change.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog_post/Fromperiltoprogress/

For more information on California case mention by President Obama click here <http://gov.ca.gov/fact-sheet/11422> California's Road To Reducing Vehicle Emissions

Secretary Clinton Announces Appointment of Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern

US Department of State
January 26, 2008

Secretary Clinton words: "As should be evident by now, the President and I believe that American leadership is essential to meeting the challenges of the 21st century. And chief among those is the complex, urgent, and global threat of climate change. From rapidly rising temperatures to melting arctic icecaps, from lower crop yields to dying forests, from unforgiving hurricanes to unrelenting droughts, we have no shortage of evidence that our world is facing a climate crisis."

<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/January/20090126163647eaifas0.8665125.html&distid=ucs>

Todd Stern biography -

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1874152,00.html>

Obama Announces Science and Technology Team

America.gov
December 23, 2008

Drawing on the power of science to “meet our challenges across the globe,” President-elect Obama announced key members of his science and technology team.

<http://www.america.gov/st/usg-english/2008/December/20081223193810adkcilerog0.7504694.html&distid=ucs>

National Coastal Condition Report III

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
January 2, 2009

The report assesses America’s coastal conditions using five indicators of condition: water quality, sediment quality, benthic community condition, the health of the water’s bottom-dwelling invertebrate species, coastal habitat loss as indicated by changes in wetland area, and fish tissue contaminants. The overall condition of America’s coasts is rated as “fair,” based on these five indicators.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/nccr3/pdf/nccr3_entire.pdf

Atmospheric Aerosol Properties And Climate Impacts

U.S. Climate Change Science Program
January 2009

Scientists need a more detailed understanding of how human-produced atmospheric particles, called aerosols, affect climate in order to produce better predictions of the Earth’s future climate, according to the report. “The influence of aerosols on climate is not yet adequately taken into account in our computer predictions of climate,” said Mian Chin, report coordinating lead author.

<http://downloads.climate-science.gov/sap/sap2-3/sap2-3-final-report-all.pdf>

Source Book: Green Stimulus Proposals

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
December 20, 2008

‘Green’ Stimulus Proposals is a compilation of green jobs ideas for the next economic recovery bill. The proposals come from a range of sources, including statements by witnesses testifying at our Dec. 10 full committee hearing regarding investments in clean energy and natural resources projects/programs to create green jobs and to stimulate the economy.

http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=IssueItems.View&IssueItem_ID=ce27babd-d579-40ce-91e9-7b41510d97d3

Annual Energy Outlook 2009: Early Release

Energy Information Administration
December 17, 2008

The early release report presents updated projections for U.S. energy consumption and production through 2030. For the first time in more than 20

years, the new reference case projects virtually no growth in U.S. oil consumption, reflecting the combined effect of recently enacted CAFE standards, requirements for increased use of renewable fuels, and an assumed rebound in oil prices as the world economy recovers.

http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/pdf/aeo2009_presentation.pdf

Abrupt Climate Change. U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research

December 19, 2008

The United States faces the potential for abrupt climate change in the 21st century that could pose clear risks to society in terms of our ability to adapt. “Abrupt” changes can occur over decades or less, persist for decades more, and cause substantial disruptions to human and natural systems. The report, based on an assessment of published science literature, makes conclusions about the potential for abrupt climate changes from global warming during this century.

<http://downloads.climate-science.gov/sap/sap3-4/sap3-4-final-report-all.pdf>

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Perspectives On The Top 20 Emitters And Developed Versus Developing Nations

Congressional Research Service

November 28, 2009

Using the World Resources Institute (WRI) database on greenhouse gas emissions and related data, the report examines two issues. The first issue is the separate treatment of developed and developing nations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. The second issue is the continuing difficulty of the current approach designed to address climate change through limiting greenhouse gas emissions to a specified percentage of baseline emissions. The United States led by emitting 19% of the world total, followed by China with 14%; no other country reached 6%; the top seven emitters accounted for 52% of the 185 nations’ emissions. Given the wide range of situations illustrated by the data, a flexible strategy that allows each country to play to its strengths may be appropriate if diverse countries like the United States and China are ever to reach agreement

<http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/RL32721.pdf>

Global Climate Change: Three Policy Perspectives

Congressional Research Service. Larry Parker and John Blodgett.

November 26, 2009

The 1992 U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change requires that signatories, including the United States, establish policies for constraining future emission levels of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂). The George H. W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush Administrations each drafted action plans in response to requirements of the convention. These plans have

raised significant controversy and debate. The purpose of the report is to articulate the implications of the differing perspectives in order to clarify terms of debate among diverse policy communities.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/98-738.pdf>

THINK TANKS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

How Energy Efficiency Can Ensure the Green Recovery Will Leave No One Behind

Brookings Institution

January 16, 2009

Thirty two years ago this past October, Amory Lovins, in his Foreign Affairs article “Soft Energy Paths: The Road Not Taken,” alerted the world to how energy efficiency and conservation can transform the way the global economy wastes energy through over-reliance on centralized facilities requiring the movement of energy over long distances from where it is produced to where it is consumed. The potential of energy efficiency and conservation is demonstrated by the fact that since 1980, California has kept energy consumption flat – even as the state’s population doubled. Similarly, while the United States has dawdled in its promotion of energy efficiency, Europe has made its economy nearly twice as energy efficient as ours.

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0116_energy_ebinger.aspx

Toward A Just And Sustainable Solar Energy Industry

Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition

January 14, 2009

The report documents and analyzes the environmental and health hazards of solar panel systems in a supposed “win-win” solution to global warming. It covers the health and safety concerns as well as recommendations for building a just and sustainable solar energy industry.

http://www.etoxics.org/site/DocServer/Silicon_Valley_Toxics_Coalition_-_Toward_a_Just_and_Sust.pdf?docID=821

The New Politics Of Climate Change

Green Alliance. Stephen Hale

January 10, 2009

The pamphlet outlines a new approach to persuading politicians to act on climate change. It contends that only governments have the power to avert catastrophic climate change. However, despite initiatives and commitments from government, the progress is slow. It is crucial to mobilize the broad range of organizations that make up the other sector. Commitment and action across the sector, from the

local to the international level, is critical to securing the political action that is needed to tackle climate change.

<http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/uploadedFiles/Publications/reports/The%20new%20Politics%20of%20climate%20change%202008.pdf>

Repower America With Green Education, Green Jobs, Green Schools

National Wildlife Federation

January 8, 2009

Economic and education experts join National Wildlife Federation to push for green stimulus investments that would re-power America with green education, green jobs and green schools. Investments in education generate 23.1 jobs per \$1 million in spending, nearly five times more jobs created than oil and natural gas sector spending, according to Robert Pollin, Department of Economics and Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

http://www.nwf.org/nwfwebadmin/binaryVault/Education_Fact_Sheet2.pdf

Statements of Eileen Claussen, President of Pew Center on Global Climate Change on President Obama & Climate Change

Secretary Clinton's appointment of America's first special envoy on climate change is another clear and early signal that the Obama administration is determined to address this issue head on. This new position can help ensure strong and focused engagement at the highest levels as the United States works with other countries to forge a new international climate agreement. As special envoy, Todd Stern brings the expertise, insight and judgment needed to represent renewed U.S. leadership in the global effort against climate change.

<http://www.pewclimate.org/obama-transition>

Importing Pollution: Coals's Threat To Climate Policy In The U.S. Northeast

Union of Concerned Scientists

December 2008

The Northeast's cap-and-trade system for global warming pollution will be compromised unless utilities are prevented from importing additional coal-fired electricity, according to the report. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which applies to power plants in 10 Northeastern states, does not preclude the utilities that supply electricity to Northeast homes and businesses from buying more electricity from coal-fired power plants outside the region. That could increase the carbon dioxide emissions from those plants outside the region, offsetting emissions reductions under RGGI.

http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/clean_energy/importing-pollution_report.pdf

Low-Carbon Energy: A Roadmap

Worldwatch Institute
December 2008

Technologies available today, and those expected to become competitive over the next decade, will permit a rapid decarbonization of the global energy economy. New renewable energy technologies, combined with a broad suite of energy-efficiency advances, will allow global energy needs to be met without fossil fuels and by adding only minimally to the cost of energy services
<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5945>

The Oil Market: It's All About Demand....For Now

Center for Strategic & International Studies by Frank Verrastro
December 23, 2008

Less than six months ago, as oil price futures approached the \$150 per barrel mark, many analysts (including the energy team at CSIS) publicly commented that the then-current trends were unsustainable and that eventually the persistence of high prices would lead to demand destruction, mandates for improved fuel efficiency, and the development of additional supplies—both conventional and alternatives. We also predicted that 2009 was likely to see an increase in surplus productive capacity around the world and ultimately lower oil prices.
http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/081223_verrastro_oilmarket.pdf

Rethinking “Energy Independency”

Brookings Institution
December 29, 2008

Some of us are old enough to remember Richard M. Nixon proclaiming that “our national goal” should be “to meet our own energy needs without depending on any foreign sources.” All of us, old and young, ought to be startled that, thirty-five years later, it remains hard to find a leading American politician that does not champion more or less the same strange notion as Nixon’s. Regrettably, that included two of the nation’s most sensible political leaders, President-elect Barack Obama and Senator John McCain. Both of their campaigns repeatedly lamented the nation’s “dependency” on foreign oil.
http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/1230_energy_nivola.aspx

ARTICLES

Obama’s Green Team by Kenneth P. Green,

The American Magazine, American Enterprise Institute
January 16, 2009

What do President-elect Barack Obama’s leadership picks tell us about the kinds of energy and environmental policies we can expect in the next four to eight

years? On balance, they suggest we are in for a radical shift away from George W. Bush's pro-market policies and back to the aggressive regulatory approach favored by the Clinton administration. Let's take a look at Obama's prospective appointees. Lisa P. Jackson

<http://www.american.com/archive/2009/obama2019s-green-team>

Indiana University Leads in Public and Environmental Affairs

America.gov

January 13, 2009

Today, Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) has a message on its Web site for students considering seeking admission to its internationally recognized programs: "This is the place for fearless problem solvers. You care about your community, your country, your world. You want to make a difference at the leadership level and you want a career that fulfills your passion for improving the planet."

<http://www.america.gov/st/educ-english/2009/January/200901131554261CJsamohT0.9361231.html&distid=ucs>

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