

November 16, 2009

State Regulation of Public Utilities Review Committee
PO Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on the crucial issue of energy policy. As you may know Conservation Voters of South Carolina has placed energy as a top priority on our Conservation Common Agenda and has dedicated considerable resources to cultivating awareness and advocating for action on climate change and clean energy, both statewide and nationally.

To revitalize our faltering economy and meet the immense challenges of global warming, we must transform the ways America and the rest of the world produce and use energy. At the cornerstone of any economic recovery strategy should be three closely-related goals: cutting the pollution that causes global warming, repowering America with clean energy, and ending our dependence on oil. Investments in the energy efficiency and clean energy technology needed to meet these goals, and investments in protecting our health, our vulnerable communities and our natural resources from climate impacts, will rebuild our economy, create millions of clean energy, American jobs, and make a more just society.

We must start cutting global warming pollution now. There is broad scientific agreement that keeping global average temperatures from increasing more than another 2° Fahrenheit from today's levels is necessary if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. According to the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we have a reasonable chance of meeting this objective if developed countries as a whole cut their emissions 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050. To be within this range in 2020, the U.S. would have to reduce its emissions by 35% from current levels.

To meet these goals, we should:

1. Work to pass legislation in 2009 that revitalizes our economy and delivers energy and climate security –
 - Set mandatory limits that reduce US global warming pollution consistent with keeping further warming below 2° F, including ambitious domestic reductions targets for 2020 and 2050, a cap and auction program and other policies to make additional reductions at home and abroad, and a prompt science-based review to accelerate reductions if necessary.
 - Auction the carbon permits and use the revenue for investing in a massive clean energy transition, creating green jobs, protecting vulnerable communities and natural resources, and providing consumer relief, especially to those most in need.

- Move America towards a 100% clean electricity future by maximizing energy efficiency, modernizing the grid, and greatly expanding power generation from renewable energy resources.
- Get America moving by investing in clean transportation infrastructure that cuts global warming pollution.

2. Strengthen laws that reduce carbon emissions

- Use the Clean Air Act to declare that global warming pollution endangers public health and welfare and to set standards for power plants, vehicles, and fuels.
- Use our energy laws to strengthen fuel economy and appliance efficiency standards.
- Develop a coordinated, interagency natural resources adaptation strategy.

3. Demonstrate American leadership on global warming –

- Set mandatory limits on our own global warming pollution through new legislation and implementation of existing laws.
- Work with other states to coordinate natural resource allocation such as water withdrawal allocation, forest conservation, wetland preservation and other efforts to mitigate the effects of climate impacts.
- Work with other nations to reach a new climate treaty that keeps further warming below 2° F at the Copenhagen climate summit at the end of 2009.
- Lead a worldwide effort to finance clean energy deployment, forest conservation, and adaptation to unavoidable climate impacts.

Currently president-elect Obama has reiterated his intention of making clean energy a primary focus of his administration and intends to act early rather than later in a speech he gave to governors this week. In addition Representative Waxman has taken over the chairmanship of the committee that will likely introduce climate legislation and he is known to be a very strong, aggressive proponent of climate legislation. In addition, Boxer has said she intends to introduce legislation in January in the senate.

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