

Text Version | En Español | Newsletter Signup | Home



March 17, 2010

Newsroom

01/27/2010

Kerry: Climate Goals Have Not Changed

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 27, 2010
CONTACT: DC Press Office, (202) 224-4159

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.), Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and lead author of the Senate’s comprehensive climate change legislation, addressed the *2010 Clean Energy, Jobs, and Security Forum* this morning to discuss the urgent need for legislative action to combat the climate crisis.

“We are not scaling back our efforts. We have not changed our goals one bit,” Kerry said in response to reports that Senator Kerry’s climate efforts with Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) have slowed.

Full statement as delivered is below:

Let me give you a quick sense of where this is and summary of where we’re heading here. There is a story today in the New York Times--I don’t know if any of you saw it--that suggests that we’re somehow scaling back our efforts and caving in to some new reality that’s been defined by the election in Massachusetts. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We are not scaling back our efforts. We have not changed our goals one bit. We are simply trying to figure out what the magic formula is to be able to get 60 votes but our goal remains exactly what it was before: to price carbon and to create a target for the reduction of emissions that is real. That’s the goal.

Now, whether it’s the House approach or another approach or some other way of doing it; there are any number of ways of skinning this cat. And we’re not stuck on one idea. So that’s what they’re misinterpreting. And we’re looking around for a way to come at this that will get the job done. But the job remains the same: a realistic, real addressing to the problem of global warming.

Now the urgency of this grows, it doesn’t diminish. And I want to emphasize that to you. The science keeps growing not diminishing. Even Republicans who have been resisting this for special interest reasons, and in some cases just for sheer unwillingness to face facts... The Republicans are moving now to where they know they can’t fight the science. So they’re going to fight the methodology of how we change something. But the science is just unalterable.

Today there is a huge story about an Alaskan village which is increasingly exposed which may cost \$400M to move because of the exposure that they have and they’re suing in the courts --which increasingly are going to become a battle venue for this issue.

But look at every single poll, the Benenson Strategy Group just came back with a 16 state ... battleground states ... poll on this issue. They did a poll, an in-depth focus group poll, which you can go look at the questions they ask, etc. and 58% of the people said that they believe there ought to be a cap and trade and energy jobs climate

Newsroom

[Press Releases](#)
[Floor Statements](#)
[Speeches](#)
[Op-Eds](#)
[Multimedia](#)
[Photo Gallery](#)
[Media Outlets](#)

Search Site:

bill. And that they would look more favorably on a candidate for public office who votes for it than a candidate who votes against it, by a significant majority.

Now, I have to tell you. That issue grows in its urgency. President Clinton was here about a month or so ago and he was telling me, "I've got to come in and talk to your colleagues, because they really don't see what I see as I travel around the world." And he travels, as you know, a great deal. And he sees so many countries grappling with this issue and we're not.

China, despite the not completely helpful role it played in Copenhagen, is playing a duplicitous game here--but China nevertheless signed up and agreed to exchange information in an open way with us so we can measure what they're doing. We will not let them quote, "take us to the cleaners in December." We're going to have an exchange of info.

We know, through technical means and other means, where every power plant in the country is. There are no secrets. We know where they're emitting and where they're not and we'll be able to see what they're doing and what they're not.

The fact is that the major emitting countries of the world signed on to reduce emissions. That did come out of Copenhagen. We didn't get a final treaty, but we got a political agreement that will help everybody reduce they're emissions.

Now, let me just say, China has decided it's going to be the world's number one electric car producer. China is already the number one wind producer, the number one solar manufacturer. We invented these technologies here in the United States. Other countries are taking them from lab to shelf. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves. This is absolutely shocking what is going on. As the United States continues on a trajectory that is taking us toward lesser global status, lesser economic power, while other countries are targeting these technologies and these market opportunities and going after them with a vengeance. And we're sitting around not even putting our finger in the dike pretending that it's not leaking. This is the most bizarre thing I've ever seen in the context of leadership.

Germany used to have the most vaunted automobile industry in the world -- and may even still have it given what happened with Toyota today. But the fact is, that Germany's top employment base today is not the automobile industry which it has been for all of the last 25-30-40 years. 280,000 new jobs have been created in the alternative and renewable energy. Germany is moving. Other European countries are moving. And we need to recognize that the next single biggest stimulus package in the United States of American is the energy and climate change legislation.

Why is it important to price carbon? Because if you don't price carbon you don't send the message to the whole marketplace about changing behavior and investment patterns. If you price carbon, all the businesses in the country begin to say, "Okay, this is the cost of business. This is the way you do business today." Then they begin to invest and purchase products and engage in business practices that recognize the cost of carbon. And when you have done that you unleash a torrent of private investment. All of the private sector venture capital and other investment that's all stop gapped, plugged up right now because there is no certainty in the marketplace there is no definition of cost. So the money isn't moved there because there is no certainty, you create that certainty and anyone on Wall Street and anyone in venture capital marketplace will tell you all of a sudden it unleashes a torrent of investment and you begin to change the patterns of the United States of America.

What is this really all about, folks? We're talking about reducing pollution. For years we've lived in this country with the notion that the polluter pays. We're actually engaging in a process here through cap and trade that helps relieve the polluter of some of the burden of paying. Think about that. And people are resisting it.

For years, until George W. Bush, we had a notion in America that the polluter pays for their pollution. And that pollution doesn't just cost money, it costs lives. People die because of that pollution. Fisheries are dying. Agriculture is affected. Coral reefs are disappearing as a consequence of the increase in acidification of the ocean. Increased mercury coming from coal-fired power plants and so forth. Mercury levels in swordfish and tuna and mackerel and other fish is stunning. I went and got measured the other day for my personal body mercury content and it was four or five times what

the EPA says is the allowable level. I bet you yours is too if you go do that.

So this is a big deal. We're talking about setting a target for the reduction of pollution, which is why we don't call it cap and trade anymore. It's a pollution reduction target with a private investment incentive for companies to be able to invest in deciding how they want to meet the pollution reduction target. There's no tax dollars in it. There's no new taxes. Does it require a company to lay out some money for new technology? You're damn right it does, but isn't that what we should be doing to reduce pollution and clean up the air? The largest single cause of children's hospitalization in the summer in the United States of America is environmentally induced asthma. Think about that. And we're talking about how to bring down the cost of health care. Here's another way to do it.

So I want you to go out there and start knocking on doors and talking to people and telling people "this has to happen!" You know, if tea party folks go out there and get angry because they think their taxes are too high, for God sakes, a lot of citizens ought to be angry about the fact that they're being killed and our planet is being injured by what is happening on a daily basis by the way we provide our power and our fuel and by the old practices we have. That's something worth getting angry about. And I think it's time for people to do that.

Now, our national security is deeply involved in this. Because the other thing we're talking about is not just health and pollution reduction, it's jobs and energy independence. Is there anyone here who thinks it is smart policy to be sending almost 400 billion dollars a year to Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Iraq, other countries in the mid-east instead of sending it to Texas or Louisiana or to New England or Oklahoma or somewhere?

Put it in our universities. Put it into our farms and grow bio fuels. Put it into our wind mills and put it into our solar energy and put it into our national grid, so we can actually grow alternative and renewable energy in Minnesota and sell it in the southern part of the country. You can't do that today because we have a grid in Texas and a grid on the west coast and a grid on the east coast and a grid out there near Chicago and the northwest and a great big gaping hole in the center of our country, and you can't take energy from one part of our to the other, that's inexcusable, inexcusable in modern times.

So we've got to be talking to people about how we're going to put our country together in a securer way. And every time we send that money abroad, we're not only disinvesting in America, but we're empowering people who don't like us very much. Some of that money goes to Al Qaeda, goes to Hezbollah, goes to Hamas, finds its way into their charities, supports things that don't help us one bit and allows those countries a great big bye on responsibility. I will tell you that the Defense Review of the United States Pentagon next week is going to come out and list climate change, for the first time, as an instability factor that affects our troops and may, in fact, end up costing us lives down the road because of what happens to our readiness and to our posterity.

We already have millions of people who are what you call "climate refugees," and the prospect is that we could have 200 million or more climate refugees who are wandering the world in instability, contributing to failed stateism and obviously contributing to the instability of our world.

So folks, for economic reasons, health reasons, energy independence reasons, security reasons, this is a win-win-win. And we've got to get out there and persuade a few of the folks around here who just are scared or who like the status quo or who haven't thought about it. You all can make that happen this week. We need you more than ever. And I promise you, Lindsey Graham, Joe Lieberman and I and others, we are staying at this until we get the job done.

Thank You. God bless.

Offices Locations

Washington D.C.
218 Russell Bldg.

Boston
One Bowdoin Square

Springfield
Springfield Federal Building

Fall River
222 Milliken Place

Second Floor
Washington D.C. 20510
(202) 224-2742

Tenth Floor
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-8519

1550 Main Street
Suite 304
Springfield, MA 01101
(413) 785-4610

Suite 312
Fall River, Ma 02721
(508) 677-0522

[At Work In Congress](#) | [Working For MA](#) | [How Can I Help You?](#) | [About John](#) | [MA Resources](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Contact](#)
[Sitemap](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [TBA](#)