



# Progress in the U.S. Congress on Climate Policy

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## Overview

- Congressional action to date
- US Public Opinion
- Crystal Ball

Please keep in mind:

- Congress is coequal with President
- Congress often different party from President
- Congress is conservative by design
- Usually takes years to pass major laws

## Clinton and Kyoto Protocol

- Action:
  - Clinton supported Berlin Mandate
  - Clinton supported Kyoto Protocol
- Reaction:
  - Senate passed Byrd-Hagel resolution
  - Congress restricted spending on climate
  - No movement on climate under Clinton

## Bush and Kyoto, power plant CO<sub>2</sub> pledge

- Action:
  - Bush opposed Kyoto
  - Bush dropped power plant CO<sub>2</sub> pledge
- Reaction:
  - Senate proposed, passed climate measures
  - House proposed climate measures

Senate climate debate has accelerated each year since 2001 (except 2004)

- Budget for climate measures, passed in 2001
- National climate strategy, passed in 2002
- GHG reporting, passed in 2002
- McCain-Lieberman cap-and-trade, debut in 2003
- Nothing in 2004, due to Presidential race
- Many votes in 2005

## Senate debate on Energy Policy Act, June 2005:

- Mc-Lieb lost votes because of nuclear subsidy
- Bingaman (D) proposed bill with \$7/ton-CO<sub>2</sub> cap
- Interest, but no vote on Bingaman bill
- Hagel (R) climate-friendly tech subsidies passed
- Initial Hagel bill: credit for early GHG reduction
- Narrow defeat of Kerry (D) resolution

## Senate debate on Energy Policy Act (continued):

- Bingaman resolution passed 53 – 44
- Called for national mandatory, market-based program to slow, stop, and reverse growth of GHG emissions
- Bingaman resolution non-binding, but so was 1997 Byrd-Hagel resolution

## Senate, after energy debate

- Sen. Domenici (R), chair of Energy Committee, held good hearings
- Energy Policy Act called climate-friendly by supporters
  - Biofuels use requirements
  - Appliance efficiency standards
  - Production tax credits for renewable energy

## International climate policy:

- Lugar (R), chair Senate Foreign Relations Cmte
- Biden (D), top Democrat on SFR Committee
- Lugar-Biden resolution introduced, urging:
  - US participation in inter'l climate negotiations
  - mitigation commitments by major emitters
  - common, but differentiated
- No vote yet

## House of Representatives lags Senate in climate debate

- Unlike Senate, House majority party controls which measures are voted on
- Current House leadership has avoided extensive debates and votes on climate measures, up to now

## House on Energy Policy Act of 2005:

- House accepted Hagel subsidies for climate-friendly technologies
- Republican House leaders spoke positively of Hagel subsidies

Lugar at UN Security Council (Feb) and committee hearing (March):

- US oil dependence is a national security threat
- Climate impacts due to oil use contribute to security threat
- Pew Center's Pocantico recommendations are a road map

President Bush in State of Union speech:

- US is "addicted" to oil

## Domenici-Bingaman Energy Committee hearing (April)

- First legislative hearing on mandatory climate policy
- Industry witnesses on key panel mostly willing to discuss details of cap-and-trade policy

## House Appropriations Committee passes Dicks (D) resolution (last week)

- Same as 2005 Bingaman “mandatory” resolution
- First major House committee to pass positive statement on mandatory domestic climate policy
- Challenge expected on House floor this week

## Hurricane Katrina

- Increased public debate over climate science
- Some claimed no link between hurricanes and climate change
- Climate science debate active, but not resolved in US public or Congress

Do you believe you will see the effects of global climate change in your lifetime?

Yes 61%

No 31

Don't know/refused 8

ORCAS/Harris Interactive Poll (9/23-26/2005)

In what time frame do you think you will see the effects of global climate change?

**Already seeing the effects      72**

30 years from today      5%

20 years from today      9

10 years from today      12

Don't know/refused      3

ORCAS/Harris Interactive Poll (9/23-26/2005)

If nothing is done to reduce global warming in the future, how serious a problem will it be for the U.S./world?

Very serious	49%/57%
Somewhat serious	34/28
Not so serious	10/8
Not at all	6/5
No opinion	2/2

ABC NEWS/STANFORD UNIVERSITY/TIME (3/2006)

Which would you rather see the federal government do: require companies and individuals to do things to reduce global warming, offer tax cuts to encourage these things, or do nothing to influence these things?

Require	52%
Encourage	38
Do nothing	8
No opinion	2

ABC NEWS/STANFORD UNIVERSITY/TIME (3/2006)

Big events of past year dwarf previous events:

- US public begins to understand climate science
- “Mandatory” resolution passes Senate
- “Mandatory” resolution passes House committee
- Domenici-Bingaman hold cap-and-trade hearing
- Lugar-Biden introduce international resolution

## Great uncertainty in US politics today

- Congressional “midterm” elections in November
- President Bush very low in polls
- Congressional Republicans low in polls
- Republican initiatives stalling in Congress
- Oil prices big concern with US public
- Media, public begin to hear climate science
- Uncertainty creates opportunity for action

Watch especially:

- New bills (Feinstein, Carper, Udall)
- Action by Domenici and Bingaman
- Response to oil prices, including increased vehicle efficiency

Likelihood of climate policy by 2008 dependent on:

- Who will be Republican nominee?
  - E.g., McCain, Romney, Hagel, Pataki
- Will Democrats take House or Senate in 2006?
- Will Sen. Warner (R-Virginia) take chair of Senate Environment and Public Works Committee?
- Will US public sustain anger over oil prices?
- Climate events and public understanding of climate science

## Predictions:

- For 2006, continued progress likely, but not enactment of cap-and-trade
- Plausible scenarios for enactment of US climate policy by 2008
- More plausible scenarios for enactment by 2010

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