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SUBJECT:: Talking points and action items on Senate draft climate title

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Subject: Talking points and action items on Senate draft climate title

TO: COOLER HEADS COALITION and CONSERVATIVE ALLIES

FROM: MYRON EBELL, CEI, (202) 331-2256, mebell@cei.org

SUBJECT: TALKING POINTS and ACTION ITEMS ON THE CLIMATE TITLE IN SENATE
COMMITTEE STAFF'S DRAFT ENERGY BILL

DATE: 31st MARCH 2003

Talking Points on Draft Climate Title

1. Pre-emptive capitulation is a losing strategy. Title XI, the climate title in the draft energy bill put together by the majority staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is a mish-mash of bad bills and amendments left over from the 107th Congress. Although conservative opponents of Kyoto-style policies wrote and supported some of this junk, they were trying to keep out or replace even worse stuff thrown into the anti-energy bill by Daschle, Kerry, Lieberman, and Jeffords. There is no reason for Republicans now in the majority to begin the global warming debate in the 108th Congress with their desperate last-ditch compromise efforts from last year. The more climate junk the Senate puts in its energy bill, the harder the House will have to work to take it out, which will make them appear anti-environmental in an even-numbered year.

2. As policy, the climate title will give global warming alarmists the legal, bureaucratic, and lobbying weapons needed to force energy rationing on American consumers and producers.

3. Politically, the climate title looks like a Kerry or Lieberman campaign document.

4. The Bush Administration opposes the three terrible key provisions. President Bush's climate plan does include: improving the voluntary emissions registry and allowing companies to register emissions reductions, which DOE is working on now; developing climate and technology research strategies, which NOAA and DOE are working on now; and an

inter-agency task force, which has been in operation since 2001.

5. Specifically, here's what's wrong with Title XI: 1) it creates a new Climate Czar and Office of Climate Policy in the White House; 2) it requires a new national strategy to cut greenhouse gas emissions plus annual progress reports to Congress; and 3) it sets up a government program to award early action credits for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

A. A White House Climate Czar and Office will institutionalize global warming as a major problem, which means that it will never go away. Single-mission agencies are captured by their clients, become lobbyists for their issue, cannot objectively evaluate the costs of their policies, and are never abolished. If there had been a Little Ice Age Czar in the 1810s, he would probably still be urging immediate action.

B. A national strategy for cutting emissions concedes the global warming debate and puts the U. S. on a dead-end path to future energy rationing. The annual scare reports will be used to foment alarmism and beat up the administration for not doing enough. If the draft's strategic objectives were actually implemented, the costs would be enormous and the benefits nil. The scientific case for alarmism has been collapsing; therefore, policy should not be based on alarmism. But the goals specified in the national strategy require that the alarmist agenda--less energy and higher prices--be implemented, yet without achieving any measurable reduction in global greenhouse gas levels.

C. Awarding early action credits for making "voluntary" emissions reductions now will create a powerful big business cartel to lobby for caps on emissions. No one will buy credits unless they are forced to do so. Thus early action credits will only have value if there is a cap on carbon dioxide emissions. Awarding credits for early action gives holders of those credits a strong incentive to lobby to make "voluntary" targets mandatory. Even when Kyoto collapses and global warming alarmism disappears, this lobby will still benefit from an energy-starved economy and demand to be rewarded. Senator Lieberman has been introducing legislation to award early action credits since 1992. In the 108th Congress, the McCain-Lieberman bill skips the initial voluntary phase and would create a mandatory cap-and-trade program.

Action Items

1. The draft bill was produced by the committee's majority staff and is not yet the Chairman's bill. There will be a revised Chairman's mark for mark-up. Therefore, the climate title can be re-written before it is marked up in full committee, probably in late April.

2. Non-profit groups should sign the joint letter (which will soon follow) to Chairman Domenici and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee urging that the three objectionable provisions be removed.

3. Contact Members of the Committee and urge them to remove the climate title's three objectionable provisions. [Senators Domenici, Nickles, Craig, Campbell, Thomas, Alexander, Murkowski, Talent, Burns, Smith, Bunning, Kyl, Bingaman, Akaka, Dorgan, Graham, Wyden, Johnson, Landrieu, Bayh, Feinstein, Schumer, Cantwell]

4. We are setting up meetings with Senate staff members. Please let me know if you can join us at these meetings.

5. Send action alerts to your members and contacts urging that they contact their Senators. Write op-eds and press releases on what's wrong

with the climate title.