



**THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING**
The Honorable Edward J. Markey

“Youth Climate: Green Jobs, Clean Future”
Opening Statement by Chairman Edward J. Markey
Monday, March 2, 2009

This briefing is called to order.

Since its inception, the Select Committee has held over 60 hearings on the impact of climate change and quest for energy independence. We have heard from top scientists, governors, foreign heads of state, and energy industry CEOs. Today, Congress will hear from perhaps the biggest stakeholders in the climate challenge - students and youth leaders who represent the future of our economy, our nation and our planet.

The lessons of history show the power of activism. When young women were denied the right to vote, they formed the suffragette movement and changed the voting law. It was a group of students who sat-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina that galvanized the civil rights movement. Young people rose up to end the war in Vietnam; young people took a sledge hammer to the Berlin Wall.

Today, this generation faces some of the deepest, most complex challenges our nation has ever confronted -- an economy in peril, a broken energy system, a climate in crisis. Since this recession began, our economy has shed a staggering 3.6 million jobs. But the science shouts out a bigger threat: unless we reduce green house gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, we will face dire consequences.

These problems require creative solutions. This weekend, over twelve thousand young people from campuses across the country gathered in Washington, D.C. to take part in the largest student conference ever focused on climate and energy. They came by buses and trains, many sleeping on sofas and floors. They are choosing to spend their spring breaks in sessions focused on global warming's impact on the economy, human health, national security, culture and faith.

For students and the younger generation, the transition to a clean energy economy offers hope and opportunity. Investing in green jobs can provide a pathway out of poverty, and lead to the creation of breakthrough technologies. The economic recovery package allocated up to \$60 billion for clean energy projects that will increase wind turbines manufacturing and solar panels installation.

That legislation, along with the Green Jobs Act and the Energy Bill of 2007, was a good first step. But to truly launch a renewable revolution, Congress must pass climate legislation that will cap pollution and invest in the technology of tomorrow. It is a moral obligation that we owe to the children of the generation testifying today.

President Kennedy started the Peace Corps. President Clinton called citizens to serve through Americorps. Now is the time for the next generation to be part of a Clean Energy Corps -- to build a new energy backbone for this country that harnesses the power of smart technology, puts people to work and protects our planet. The Clean Energy Corps can produce green ambassadors, working internationally with developing nations like India, China and Brazil to collectively solve these global challenges. Together, this generation can help protect our oceans and rain forests and ensure that the snows of Kilimanjaro remain to inspire the next generation of Hemingways.