

Meehan Urges Bush to Address Global Warming in State of the Union

January 18, 2007

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WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Marty Meehan (D-MA) today sent a letter to President George W. Bush urging him to address the threat of global warming in his State of the Union address by announcing support for a federal cap on greenhouse gas emissions.

"The threat of global warming is an urgent and serious problem that calls for an equally serious response," said Meehan. "The United States cannot afford to take any options off the table that would slow climate change. I hope that the President will resist the urge to rule out a federal cap-and-trade system. This nation must lead by example and show the world that we are serious about addressing the threat that global warming poses to our health, our children's health, and the environment.

"The states have already been doing their part to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Just today Massachusetts announced that it would be joining nine other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cooperative cap-and-trade program that aims to cut carbon dioxide emissions from power plants in the region. Similar initiatives have been developed among the West Coast, Southwest, and Midwest states. However, a federal cap-and-trade program is necessary if we are going to achieve lasting change.

"I strongly urge the President to use his State of the Union address to announce his support for a federal emissions cap-and-trade system. We cannot let environmental catastrophe be our legacy to future generations."

Meehan recently held a town meeting at the University of Massachusetts Lowell on climate change with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and panelist of national experts. More than 1,200 people attended the meeting, expressing their concern over the devastating effects that climate change is having on the environment.

Full text of the letter appears below:

January 18, 2007

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing following recent media reports announcing your intentions to outline a policy on global warming in your State of the Union Address next week. I believe that climate change is having catastrophic effects on our environment and strongly urge you to develop a policy that adequately addresses this crisis.

I call on you to respect the serious threat that climate change poses to the United States and the World in your State of the Union address, by supporting a federal cap on greenhouse gas emissions. We can not afford to keep any option off the table that could lead to slowing Global Warming.

According to a report in January 17th's *Washington Times*, you "will argue that global warming can be better addressed through technology and greater use of renewable energy sources than through caps imposed on businesses and industries." This is a false choice. The United States can continue to invest in innovative new technologies and make greater use of renewable energy sources while also imposing emission standards through a federal cap-and-trade system.

Global Warming is a crisis and the evidence is clear and overwhelming. Last year was the warmest year on record for the continental United States with temperatures over 2 degrees higher than the mean temperature for the 20th century. Your own Interior Department proposed adding polar bears to the list of endangered species because their habitat in the Arctic is literally melting away. More troubling is the growing number of children who are falling victim to the effects of this crisis, whether it is from high asthma rates in urban areas throughout the country, or malaria in Kenya and Tanzania.

While these examples show the devastating effects that climate change is having on our environment and on our well-being, there is still time to act. This time, however, is shrinking; action on this issue must be swift and prompt. Our nation needs a federal policy that aims to reduce carbon emissions, creates incentives for renewable energy, and increases basic research so that our scientists can discover the links between pollution and diseases like autism and breast cancer.

The United States, with only 5% of the world's population, produces roughly one-quarter of all global greenhouse gas emissions. This is unacceptable. We must make it a priority to reduce our emissions.

A federal cap-and-trade system has the potential to cut carbon emissions in the United States by 80% by 2050. However, the benefits will go beyond cleaner air and slowed global warming. A federal cap-and-trade program will create new opportunities for businesses and research facilities, specifically those who focus on areas of environment-friendly materials and alternative energy development.

This week, Congress has taken the first step to putting America on a path to energy independence by repealing billions of subsidies given to big oil and investing in renewable energy technologies and improving energy efficiency. I strongly urge you to add to this effort by announcing in your State of the Union Address that you will support a cap on emissions from the country's largest polluters, that you will join with countries from around the world to develop a global agreement on climate change, and that you will increase federal investments in renewable energy and basic research that investigates the links between pollution and life-threatening diseases.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to address this issue which we all agree is having a devastating effect on our environment and our welfare. As the most advanced nation in the world, it is essential that America lead the fight to slow and eventually end global warming.

Sincerely,

Marty Meehan
Member of Congress

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