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SUBJECT:: Update on Senate climate title--so far, so good

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TEXT:

So far, so good. The Senate Energy and Commerce Committee continued its mark-up on the energy bill this morning. No climate title or provisions were offered, debated, or included.

Chairman Domenici said that in circulating his discussion draft he had discovered that there is no consensus on what to include on climate change. Therefore, he was not going to offer any climate title. Members were free to offer amendments, but he would oppose every one. He recognized Senator Bingaman's desire to deal with climate in the energy bill. He was willing to have his staff work with members' offices over the recess to see if something could be worked out, and even if those efforts fail he pledged to work constructively to deal with the issue on the Senate floor.

Senator Bingaman said that a comprehensive energy bill needs to deal with climate. He had two possible amendments, which he would not offer today, but will circulate to members for discussion over the recess. He hopes to offer these amendments in mark-up sessions after the recess. The first is a re-write of the Byrd-Stevens bill, which the Senate approved last year, but was lost in conference with the House. The second was an amendment to improve greenhouse gas monitoring and reporting.

Senator Wyden said that he thought it was so important that we include a climate title in the energy bill, including the Wyden-Craig bill to reward forest owners for carbon sequestration. He thought we could get a long way down the road on a bi-partisan basis. He hoped that the committee would take up climate amendments at its first mark-up after the recess (30th April?).

Senator Thomas said that before doing anything more on climate we should first look at all the things the Congress had already done and all the things that the executive branch had underway.

Then the committee marked up the nuclear title, which was done by first voting to agree to the title and then by taking up amendments. At the end of the hearing, Senator Criag made some additional comments. He added three documents for the record: a compilation of administration activities on climate; a list of federal and state policies and programs; and a letter from CEQ Chairman James Connaughton. Craig said that climate should not be all about politics, but rather all about science. What we decide to do about a climate title could have large consequences many years into the future.

So we will need to stay on top of this over the recess. I will be talking more to more staff members. I will send updates as needed. If you hear

of anything happening, please let me know. And if you want to get more heavily involved in working on this, again please let me know. Again, thanks for everyone's help so far.

Also, by voice vote the Senate Foreign Relations Committee adopted, as part of the State Department authorization bill, a Sense of the Congress resolution from last year's bill (that died thanks to Rep. Tom DeLay as I recall). The section accepts global warming alarmism, heavily qualifies the Byrd-Hagel resolution passed unanimously in 1997, urges the U. S. to negotiate another, bigger global warming treaty, and urges lots of domestic actions in the meantime. The text is below.

Approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by voice vote, 9th April:

SENSE OF CONGRESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

(a) FINDINGS- The Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Evidence continues to build that increases in atmospheric concentrations of man-made greenhouse gases are contributing to global climate change.
- (2) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that 'there is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities' and that the Earth's average temperature can be expected to rise between 2.5 and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit in this century.
- (3) The National Academy of Sciences confirmed the findings of the IPCC, stating that 'the IPCC's conclusion that most of the observed warming of the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase of greenhouse gas concentrations accurately reflects the current thinking of the scientific community on this issue' and that 'there is general agreement that the observed warming is real and particularly strong within the past twenty years'. The National Academy of Sciences also noted that 'because there is considerable uncertainty in current understanding of how the climate system varies naturally and reacts to emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols, current estimates of the magnitude of future warming should be regarded as tentative and subject to future adjustments upward or downward'.
- (4) The IPCC has stated that in the last 40 years, the global average sea level has risen, ocean heat content has increased, and snow cover and ice extent have decreased, which threatens to inundate low-lying island nations and coastal regions throughout the world.
- (5) In October 2000, a United States Government report found that global climate change may harm the United States by altering crop yields, accelerating sea-level rise, and increasing the spread of tropical infectious diseases.
- (6) In 1992, the United States ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the ultimate objective of which is the 'stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner'.
- (7) The UNFCCC stated in part that the Parties to the Convention are to implement policies 'with the aim of returning . . . to their 1990 levels anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases' under the principle that 'policies and measures . . . should be appropriate for the specific conditions of each Party and should be integrated with national development programmes, taking into account that

economic development is essential for adopting measures to address climate change'.

(8) There is a shared international responsibility to address this problem, as industrial nations are the largest historic and current emitters of greenhouse gases and developing nations' emissions will significantly increase in the future.

(9) The UNFCCC further stated that 'developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof', as these nations are the largest historic and current emitters of greenhouse gases.

The UNFCCC also stated that 'steps required to understand and address climate change will be environmentally, socially and economically most effective if they are based on relevant scientific, technical and economic considerations and continually re-evaluated in the light of new findings in these areas'.

(10) Senate Resolution 98 of the One Hundred Fifth Congress, which expressed that developing nations must also be included in any future, binding climate change treaty and such a treaty must not result in serious harm to the United States economy, should not cause the United States to abandon its shared responsibility to help reduce the risks of climate change and its impacts.

Future international efforts in this regard should focus on recognizing the equitable responsibilities for addressing climate change by all nations, including commitments by the largest developing country emitters in a future, binding climate change treaty.

(11) While the US has elected against becoming a party to the Kyoto Protocol at this time, it is the position of the United States that it will not interfere with the plans of any nation that chooses to ratify and implement the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC.

(12) American businesses need to know how governments worldwide will address the risks of climate change.

(13) The United States benefits from investments in the research, development and deployment of a range of clean energy and efficiency technologies that can reduce the risks of climate change and its impacts and that can make the United States economy more productive, bolster energy security, create jobs, and protect the environment.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS- It is the sense of the United States Congress that the United States should demonstrate international leadership and responsibility in reducing the health, environmental, and economic risks posed by climate change by--

- (1) taking responsible action to ensure significant and meaningful reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases from all sectors;
- (2) creating flexible international and domestic mechanisms, including joint implementation, technology deployment, tradable credits for emissions reductions and carbon sequestration projects that will reduce, avoid, and sequester greenhouse gas emissions; and
- (3) participating in international negotiations, including putting forth a proposal to the Conference of the Parties, with the objective of securing United States participation in a future binding climate change Treaty in a manner that is consistent with the environmental objectives of the UNFCCC, that protects the economic interests of the United States, and recognizes the shared international responsibility for addressing climate change, including developing country participation.