

[Today's Date], 2007

The Honorable [First and Last Name]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip]

Dear [title] [last name]:

As a constituent, I am writing to request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss [your issue] and a related piece of legislation that concerns me greatly – [Enter bill name and number].

During the meeting, I will be asking that [Representative/Senator Last Name] support positive U.S. global engagement by supporting [bill number]. As a member of Citizens for Global Solutions and a voter in [State (for Senator) or District (for Representative)], I believe that we have a responsibility to make the world a safe, just and equitable place. This will require teamwork and a common set of rules we can all live by. No one country can solve global problems alone, and the U.S. should be a leader in this collective effort.

I am available during the next congressional recess in August, but can work around your schedule. I will contact your office in a few days to be sure that you have received this request and to discuss the best time for a meeting. If helpful, I will gladly submit a list of names of others involved in the visit to you before the meeting. Thank you, in advance, for your time and willingness to communicate with your constituents.

Sincerely,

Name
Address
Phone

Backgrounder: Curbing Climate Change

Current Bills: *Senate Resolution 30* (shortened: *S.Res.30*)

***House Concurrent Resolution 104* (shortened: *H.Con.Res.104*)**

Achieving a sustainable energy future is one of the greatest challenges facing the United States and the world today. Our current energy system is destroying the environment, hindering development and undermining security. From climate change to conflict in the Middle East, the consequences of the world's fossil fuel dependence are increasingly evident.

In the U.S., skyrocketing oil prices, conflict in the Middle East, and growing concern over global warming have boosted energy to the top of the political agenda. The result is a rare moment of opportunity to shape U.S. energy policy. We must use this moment to build a better energy future.

There is still time to prevent the devastating effects of climate change, but only if we act now and act internationally. Here is one bill (with a house and senate version) that provides a good start:

S.Res.30 & H.Con.Res.104 - A Critical First Step to Solving Climate Change:

The Senate version of this bill was introduced by Senator Biden, on January 16, 2007 and originally co-sponsored by Senators Lugar, Bingaman, Boxer, Feingold, Lieberman and Snowe. The resolution calls for U.S. participation in negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), leading to agreements that will commit all nations – developed and developing – that are major emitters of greenhouse gases to achieve significant long-term reductions in those emissions. The resolution, which also calls for a bipartisan Senate observer group to monitor these negotiations, was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee without objection on March 29, 2007.

Why We Can't Go It Alone:

Policymakers on both sides of the aisle have been promoting energy independence as the solution to all our energy ills. Global warming, conflict in the Middle East, a crippled foreign policy, and rising oil prices – all will be healed by turning to domestic sources of energy from coal to corn to the untapped oil reserves in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

Unfortunately, it's not that simple. The U.S. is part of a global energy system, in which the energy policies and activities of each nation affect all nations. If the U.S. stopped importing oil tomorrow, we would still face a host of problems as a result of the rest of the world's continued dependence on oil and natural gas:

- Climate change would continue unabated
- A volatile global oil market would still inflict damage on both the U.S. and the global economies
- Competition over energy would play a destructive role in international relations, contributing to global instability and making the world less safe
- Other nations' fossil fuel dependence would undermine the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy

If we are to overcome the shared energy challenges we face, we must work together with other nations.

Linked Challenges, Linked Solutions:

Just as we cannot solve global challenges by isolating ourselves from other nations, we cannot solve the linked challenges to environment, development and security posed by our energy choices without understanding how they are connected. Poverty and underdevelopment undermine lead to instability and environmental degradation. A healthy environment is the key to ending poverty and achieving sustainable development. Climate change threatens both development and security as it wreaks havoc on the world's environment. Only by working to develop comprehensive solutions that are good for development, good for the environment and good for security will we build a future in which all the world's citizens have access to affordable, clean, and sustainable sources of energy.



S.Res.30 and H.Con.Res.104: Critical First Steps to Solving Climate Change

Summary

S.Res.30 and its House companion bill, H.Con.Res.104, call for U.S. participation in negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), leading to agreements that will commit all nations that are major emitters of greenhouse gases to significant long-term reductions in those emissions. The resolutions also call for bipartisan House and Senate observer groups to monitor these negotiations.

S.Res.30, introduced by Senator Biden and originally co-sponsored by Senators Lugar, Bingaman, Boxer, Feingold, Lieberman and Snowe, was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March 2007. H.Con.Res.104, introduced by Rep. Carnahan and originally co-sponsored by Rep. Kirk, has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Content of the Resolutions:

Critical first steps towards an effective international response to global climate change:

- The perceived opposition of the U.S. Congress to U.S. participation in international climate agreements has become an obstacle to the negotiating process.
- These resolutions remove this obstacle by calling for U.S. participation in negotiations under the UNFCCC, and the exercise of U.S. leadership in other venues in order to “secure[e] United States participation in *binding*¹ agreements that:
 - “Advance and protect the economic and national security interests of the United States
 - Establish mitigation commitments by all countries that are major emitters of greenhouse gases, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities
 - Establish flexible international mechanisms to minimize the cost of efforts by participating countries
 - Achieve a significant long-term reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions”
- The resolutions protect the ability of Congress - and particularly the Senate - to exercise its oversight responsibilities in climate negotiations by establishing bipartisan House and Senate observer groups to:
 - Monitor any international negotiations on climate change
 - Ensure that the advice and consent function of the Senate is exercised in a manner to facilitate timely consideration of any applicable treaty submitted to the Senate” [Bill Text]
- “An effective global effort to address climate change must provide for commitments and action by all countries that are major emitters of greenhouse gases, developed and developing alike.” [Bill Text]

Why These Resolutions, Why Now?

Climate Change poses a real and growing risk to the national and economic security of the United States:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, representing international scientific consensus, recently concluded that global warming is “unequivocal,” and that there is an overwhelming (>90%) likelihood that human activities are responsible for the temperature increase. [IPCC Fourth Assessment]
- Without action, earth’s temperature will rise between 2.5 and 4°Celsius over the next century, dwarfing the 0.5°C rise during the 20th century. [IPCC Fourth Assesment]
- This could “create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity... on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the 20th century.” [Sir Nicholas Stern]

¹ Only the Senate version calls for binding agreements. The House resolution omits the word binding.

FACT SHEET

The time for solutions has arrived: “There was a time when we could plead ignorance. That day is past. The science is now clear. There was a time when we might have claimed the cost of changing our ways was too great. That day is past. We now know the costs of inaction are unacceptably high.”[Senator Biden]

There is no time to waste:

- Avoiding a rise in global average temperature larger than 2°C is critical in order to avoid crossing a climate “tipping point” that could lead to uncontrolled warming.
- The window of opportunity in which to curb global greenhouse emissions and avoid the most devastating effects of climate change is rapidly closing.
- “There is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we act now and act internationally. But the task is urgent. Delaying action, even by a decade or two, will take us into dangerous territory.” [Sir Nicholas Stern]

The only effective solutions are international solutions: Effective action to prevent climate change requires the participation of all major greenhouse gas emitters, including developing countries. Developing countries’ emissions are growing rapidly, and China is set to pass the U.S. as the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases in 2009 [International Energy Agency].

The U.S. should exercise its leadership in marshalling an effective international response to this historic challenge:

- Climate change cannot be overcome by any one nation alone, and without the U.S. it may not be overcome at all. Without U.S. participation, the effectiveness of international climate change agreements will remain limited.
- U.S. leadership can bring developing country emitters to the table. Without U.S. involvement, these countries are unlikely to agree to limit their emissions.
- “We must take responsibility for influencing climate change, and our nation must take the lead on an issue that has been woefully neglected.” [Representative Carnahan]
- “It is now clear that our inaction reduces the effectiveness of international efforts to address climate change, and provides an excuse for China, India, Mexico, Brazil, and other leading emitters of the future to stay with us on the sidelines.” [Senator Biden]
- “It is critical that the international dialogue on climate change and American participation in those discussions move beyond the disputes over the Kyoto Protocols. We need to include India, China and other developing nations in a dynamic dialogue, and recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach is not workable.” [Senator Lugar]
- Active participation in climate negotiations is the best way to ensure that the costs and benefits of stopping global warming are shared equitably

It’s time for the U.S. to get back in the game: This is a critical time for climate negotiations. The current international agreement governing greenhouse gas emissions - the Kyoto Protocol - expires in 2012. Negotiations are underway that will determine the shape of future international climate agreements. The U.S. needs to be strongly engaged in these negotiations, but the Senate’s perceived opposition hampers its ability to negotiate successfully. By sending a positive signal to the international community that the U.S. is ready to participate in binding agreements, S.Res.30 strengthens the United States’ ability to negotiate fair and effective agreements.

For more information on this paper, contact Rebecca Brown at rbrown@globalsolutions.org, or 202-546-3950 ext. 105, or Scott Paul at spaul@globalsolutions.org or 202-546-3950 ext. 116.

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Last updated May 11, 2007