

July 21, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe, Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

We, the undersigned presidents of colleges and universities from across the nation, write to urge you to recognize the vital role of education, at all levels, in preparing the American people to participate fully in a clean energy economy. Specifically, we urge you to dedicate in the Senate climate bill at least 1% of the proceeds of emissions allowances for a range of educational activities, similar to the amendment Senators Murray and Snowe introduced to the Climate Security Act last year.

Climate change is the defining challenge of our century, a challenge that will directly impact every sector of society. In all likelihood, the pace of change will rival or exceed the past quarter century's information technology revolution. How the American people respond to the climate challenge will determine the United States' standing in the world for decades to come.

Last month, the House of Representatives took an historic step in passing climate legislation, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (H.R. 2454). In passing this bill, the House formally acknowledged the gravity of climate change and, for the first time ever, approved comprehensive steps to cap carbon emissions and shift to renewable energy.

The House-passed bill funds research in new technologies, worker training for green jobs, and many other urgent priorities, which we fully support. However, the House bill overlooks the broader role of education in helping Americans understand the connection between energy and our economy in order to make well-informed decisions as consumers, workers, business owners, investors and voters. Successfully navigating the transition to a clean energy economy and coping with the effects of unavoidable climate change will require a broad base of environmentally literate and competent citizens: architects, engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, managers, financial experts, lawyers, and political leaders – in addition to well-informed consumers and a workforce trained in green jobs.

To produce such a literate workforce and citizenry, America needs to invest in education at every level:

- **retool our nation's universities and colleges** to become centers of education, workforce training, and research in alternative energy, energy efficiency, and new technologies;
- **revitalize K-12 education** by strengthening environmental education, social studies, and "STEM Education for a Sustainable Future" to provide all students with a basic understanding of the relationships among environmental, economic and social systems;

- **bolster existing career pathways programs** to provide more green educational and training opportunities for youth and young adults;
- **retrain practicing professionals** to contribute to a clean energy economy; and
- **mount major public education programs** to inform the public and educate consumers.

As presidents of colleges and universities across the nation, we stand ready to provide leadership in the nation's transition to a clean energy economy. In fact, higher education currently leads all other sectors in confronting the challenges of climate change and finding practical solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Each year, our education system sends three million graduates into the workforce, who need the skills and knowledge to contribute to and participate fully in a clean energy economy.

We appreciate your consideration of the opportunity at hand. In our view, dedicating "1% for Education" of the proceeds of emissions allowances is a strategic investment in the American people that will pay rich dividends. For additional information about higher education's leadership in sustainability or for contact information for the signatories to this letter, please contact Don Ryan at Second Nature at 703-508-0035 or dryan@secondnature.org.

Sincerely,

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