



# Remarks by John McCain on Energy Security and Safeguarding Our Environment

June 24, 2008

ARLINGTON, VA -- U.S. Senator John McCain will deliver the following remarks as prepared for delivery at an environmental and energy briefing in Santa Barbara, CA, today at 9:00 a.m. PDT (12:00 p.m. EDT):

Thank you all very much. I appreciate the hospitality of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and the warm welcome to California. I'm here to listen about energy issues as well as to talk. So let me just start things off with a few ideas.

We're in the middle of a great debate in this presidential campaign about the energy security of the United States. For my part, in these days I've been laying out a clear agenda to protect our economy from runaway energy costs, and to break America's dependence on foreign oil. This is going to require the best efforts and ideas of our country, and I am confident we are up to the task. At a time when a gallon of gas is running at more than four dollars, our government needs to shake off years of partisan paralysis that have prevented America from achieving energy security. Nothing is more urgent right now than regaining our energy security -- we need to get it done and get it right.

The immediate problems of high gasoline prices and of our strategic dependence on foreign oil are upon us. And on recent days I've been setting forth a plan of action. When people are hurting, and struggling to afford gasoline, food, and other necessities, common sense requires that we draw upon America's own vast reserves of oil and natural gas. When nations across Europe and Asia are building nuclear power plants to meet their electricity needs, America, too, must make more use of this clean, efficient, and proven source of power. And we must turn all the brilliance and ingenuity of America loose in the search for alternative energy sources -- from cleaner coal and wind power to biofuels and solar.

But even as we address our present economic and strategic troubles, we face a long-term danger we hardly even understood back when America first learned to associate the word "energy" with "crisis." We now know that fossil fuel emissions, by retaining heat within the atmosphere, threaten disastrous changes in climate. No challenge of energy is to be taken lightly, and least of all the need to avoid the consequences of global warming.

Among the compelling evidence of this danger, satellite images reveal shrinking glaciers, Antarctic ice shelves and polar ice sheets. Our scientists have also seen and measured reduced snowpack, with earlier runoffs in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere. We have seen sustained drought in the Southwest, and across the world average temperatures that seem to reach new records every few years. In the frozen wilds of Alaska, the Arctic, Antarctic, and elsewhere, wildlife biologists have noted sudden changes in animal migration patterns, a loss of their habitat, a rise in sea levels. The facts of global warming demand our urgent attention, especially in Washington. Good stewardship, prudence, and simple commonsense demand that we act to meet the challenge, and act quickly.

To dramatically reduce carbon emissions, I have proposed a new system of cap-and-trade that over time will change the dynamic of our energy economy. We will cap emissions according to specific goals, measuring progress by reference to past carbon emissions. By the year 2012, we will seek a return to 2005 levels of emission, by 2020, a return to 1990 levels, and so on until we have achieved at least a reduction of sixty percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050. In this way, we will transition into a low carbon energy future while staying on a course of economic growth. The purpose of this plan is to give American businesses new incentives and rewards to seek, instead of just giving new taxes to pay and new orders to follow. My strategy gives people



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time to adapt, instead of causing a jolt to your electricity bill and widespread shutdowns of tradition coal-fired plants.

For the market to do more, government must do more by opening new paths of invention and ingenuity. So I have proposed a permanent research and development tax credit, to open the door to a new generation of environmental entrepreneurs. I am committed to investing two billion dollars every year for the next 15 years on clean coal technologies -- to unlock the potential of America's oldest and most abundant resource. And we will issue a Clean Car Challenge to automakers, in the form of a tax credit to the American people: For every automaker who can sell a zero-emissions or very close to zero-emissions car, we will commit up to a 5,000 dollar tax credit to each and every customer who buys that car. In the quest for alternatives to oil, our government has thrown around enough money subsidizing special interests and excusing failure. From now on, we will encourage heroic efforts in engineering, and we will reward the greatest success.

This is why I further propose we inspire the ingenuity and resolve of the American people by offering a \$300 million prize for the development of a battery package that has the size, capacity, cost and power to leapfrog the commercially available plug-in hybrids or electric cars. This is one dollar for every man, woman and child in the U.S. -- a small price to pay for helping to break the back of our oil dependency -- and should deliver a power source at 30 percent of the current costs.

Energy efficiency is no longer just a moral luxury or a personal virtue. A smarter use of energy is part of a critical national effort to regain control of our own energy future. And in this effort, practical ideas are worth a lot more than uplifting lectures. It's not always a matter of making due with less energy. It's a matter of using energy in smarter ways. Business owners who invest in green buildings can cut their energy costs by as much as a third. Homeowners can save hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year with better light bulbs, appliances, windows, and insulation. Many Californians have understood the benefits of green technology for a while now and your governor sure understands them. Now we need to bring that smart ethic of environmental care to Washington.

Our federal government is never shy about instructing the American people in good environmental practice. But energy efficiency, like charity, should begin at home. So I propose to put the purchasing power of the United States government on the side of green technology. Every year the federal government buys upwards of 60,000 cars and other vehicles, not including military or law-enforcement vehicles. From now on, we're going to make those civilian vehicles flex-fuel capable, plug-in hybrid, or cars fueled by clean natural gas. If our great goal is to move American transportation toward lower carbon emissions, then it should start with the federal fleet.

Across our country and abroad, there are 3.3 billion square feet of federal office space, all but roughly ten percent of it owned by the public. Add it all up and that makes the federal government the single largest consumer of electricity in the world. This presents another enormous opportunity that my administration will take. By retrofitting where possible, and by applying a higher efficiency standard to new buildings leased or purchased, we can save taxpayers billions of dollars in energy costs, and move the market in the direction of green technology.

We must also redesign our national electric grid in a smarter, more efficient way. In some cases, our national power transmission system has not been built to match supply and demand. And the result is an excess of power where it's not needed, and a shortage of power where it is needed. In the long term, this will require a serious investment to upgrade our national grid to meet the demands of the 21st century -- which will include a capacity to charge the electric cars that will one day fill the roads and highways of America. And to save both money and electrical power for our people and businesses, we will also need to deploy SmartMeter technologies. These new meters give customers a more precise picture of their overall energy consumption, and over time will encourage a more cost-efficient use of power.

In these and other ways, we can meet the challenge of global warming with all the resources of human ingenuity at our disposal. Like other environmental challenges -- only more so -- climate change presents a test of foresight, of political courage, and of the unselfish concern that one generation owes to the next. We Americans like to say that there is no problem we can't solve, however complicated, and no obstacle we cannot overcome if we meet it together. I believe this about our country. I know this about our country. And now it is time for us to show those qualities once again. I thank you all for the kind attention, and now let me turn you over to my friends on the panel.

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