

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER

Consideration of the American Clean Energy and Security Act

June 26, 2009

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support of the bill and urge its approval by the House.

It achieves broad reductions in greenhouse gases, enhances America's energy security, and by placing a price on carbon dioxide emissions will unleash investments in clean energy technologies that will create millions of new jobs.

These energy technologies will evolve from America's laboratories. They will be deployed at home. They will be exported around the world.

They will be the foundation for our next technology revolution. And it all starts here, with passage today of the Clean Energy Security Act.

Approximately 80 percent of the electricity in my district is coal generated, and coal production is one of our region's major industries and major employers.

Not surprisingly, my focus in the shaping of the bill in the Energy and Commerce Committee was to keep electricity rates affordable and to enable utilities to continue using coal which accounts for 51 percent of electricity generation nationwide.

Both of these goals have been achieved.

Electricity rates will only be modestly affected.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office says that by 2020 the cost of the entire program for the typical family is \$175 per year.

The EPA projects that the nearer term cost for the typical family is between \$80 and \$110 annually.

The claims by the opponents that the bill will impose enormous electricity price increases are simply wrong.

And, the EPA projects that by 2020 coal usage will grow. As transportation electrifies, the demand for electricity increases, and coal, our most abundant fuel, will still be the fuel of choice to meet that rising demand.

The claims of opponents that the CO₂ controls under the bill will force utilities to surrender coal use causing an overreliance on natural gas with attendant broad economic harm to the nation are also simply wrong.

This is a responsible measure. It is carefully balanced.

It reduces greenhouse gases by 83 percent by 2050 as compared to 2005 levels.

It keeps electricity rates affordable.

It enables coal usage to grow as the demand for electricity increases.

And it opens the door to a more secure energy future and the creation of millions of new jobs innovating, deploying and exporting to the world the new low CO₂ emitting

technologies that will power our energy future.

These are sound reasons to approve the bill, but for those who still harbor doubts, let me offer a more practical argument to vote for passage.

In March of 2007 the Supreme Court held that CO₂ is a pollutant. Under that ruling and the terms of the existing Clean Air Act, the EPA is now effectively required to regulate CO₂ emissions.

And so federal regulation of greenhouse gases is now inevitable.

It is not a question of whether we will have regulation.

The only question is whether the regulation will be our carefully balanced economically sustainable regulation as contained in the bill before us or EPA's regulation under the blunt

instrument of the Clean Air Act where economic considerations cannot be fully weighed.

Given the choice and the path this bill charts for affordable electricity, increased coal use and new job creation, I would urge Members to make the reasonable decision to approve today the Clean Energy Security Act.

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