

# Congress Steps Up on Climate

Last week our nation took an important first step toward the urgent task of combating climate change: The U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act.

This legislation still needs to clear substantial hurdles. But its passage by the House is a very encouraging development, bringing the country closer to having a comprehensive carbon emissions reduction law.

The House's "yes" should be cheered by everyone who wants our nation to address climate change, starting now. It shows that our leaders understand the relationship between environmental protection, economic growth and consumer protection.

The legislation enhances energy security, protects the planet and promotes a path of sustainable development. Under the bill, the nation's greenhouse gas emissions are to be cut 17 percent by the year 2020 and 83 percent by 2050. Moreover, the bill has a cap-and-trade mechanism to help achieve this goal. It places limits on emissions that get lower over time, while allowing emitters to trade allowances to give them flexibility in reducing pollution.

Putting a price on carbon emissions will change energy forever, and for the better. It will drive investment in energy efficient technologies, renewables and other clean energy solutions.

Energy prices will rise from putting a price on carbon, at least until new clean technologies ramp up and become more cost competitive. Recognizing this, the House bill will enable rate relief for consumers to help shield house-

holds from the impact of higher energy prices. In addition, consumers can reap potential cost savings from energy efficiency improvements.

But that is not all: Americans will benefit from more jobs ushered in by a new green economy. The House bill provides business leaders with a level of certainty that will allow them to plan and expand to create jobs. These are not pie-in-the-sky positions: Busi-

nesses generated more than 25,000 such energy-related jobs by the year 2007 in New Jersey.

Add to this the value of a level playing field. New Jersey already has tough environmental regulations and a global warming law. New Jersey businesses and consumers will benefit by playing under the same rules as those in other states.

No piece of legislation is perfect, but the House bill gets the big things right and

that's worth applauding.

**We thank and acknowledge the leadership of the members of the New Jersey delegation who voted in favor of this bill: Reps. John Adler, Rob Andrews, Rush Holt, Leonard Lance, Frank LoBiondo, Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell, Donald Payne, Steve Rothman, Albio Sires and Chris Smith.**

It is vital that the Senate take similar action. Our nation has no time to lose on a long journey to energy independence and a cleaner, better environment.

*What's your view? Please let us know at [Opinion@PSEG.com](mailto:Opinion@PSEG.com).*



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