

Climate action group releases policy recommendations

Jan. 16 -- The U.S. Climate Action Partnership, a group of businesses and environmental groups, has released comprehensive and detailed policy recommendations for developing climate protection legislation.

"A Blueprint for Legislative Action" calls for an 80% decrease in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and 14% to 20% decrease from 2005 levels by 2020. The targets are consistent with the schedule proposed by President-elect Barack Obama, according to USCAP. It recommends an economy-wide cap-and-trade system to reach those goals. Offsets should be used to help companies to comply, but need to be measurable, verifiable, enforceable and environmentally additional.

"In the past, the U.S. has proven that we have the will, the capabilities and the courage to invest in innovation, even in difficult times," said Jeff Immelt, chairman and CEO of General Electric Co.

A summary of the blueprint and the full text are available at www.us-cap.org.

However, some claim the recommendations fall short of what's needed to prevent catastrophic global warming. It represents a "plea bargain" from industry, and Congress and the Obama administration should view it as the low-bar for carbon dioxide cuts, said Steven Biel, Greenpeace USA global warming campaign director. The proposal does show a positive shift in global warming discussions, he said.

"But while Greenpeace welcomes the change represented in this agreement, it should be viewed for what it is, a political document from polluters hoping to cut a favorable deal for themselves," Biel said.

Biel cited Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change findings that conclude developed nations need to reduce carbon emissions 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-95% by 2050 to even have a 50% chance of preventing the worst effects of global warming.

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