



## NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®

Office of Congressional and Federal Affairs  
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November 2, 2007

Dear Board Members, Staff, and Supporters:

Today marks an important and hopeful milestone in our work together to confront the urgent threat of global warming. On November 1, 2007, a seemingly small but I believe profound turning point happened in the United States Senate.

When I returned to National Wildlife Federation three years ago, we were all alarmed by what was happening around us. The conservation movement was mired in scores of defensive battles to prevent rollback of the bedrock laws that have protected our wildlife and our environment. As we were fighting those important battles, the greatest single threat to wildlife and our children's future was being ignored and neglected by politicians everywhere. That issue is global warming. Scientists' warnings - and the warning signs we began to witness in the natural world - were being ignored by politicians and the media. Global warming still had the baggage of multi-million dollar misinformation campaigns from oil companies and other polluters that were casting this as a partisan issue.

When did the simple concept of leaving the planet a better place for our kids become a partisan issue for Americans? Polluters ran well-organized, cynical efforts to keep America divided on this issue, and they were getting away with it.

Thanks to the energy and commitment that you - our affiliates, volunteers, supporters, members, board, staff and allies - have committed to this fight, we are witnessing a change. Global warming has become a local issue. Hundreds of cities and many states have stepped forward to act as this movement has swept the country from the ground up. What was once seen as a partisan issue is now recognized as a moral issue. We have built diverse coalitions with all types of wildlife and conservation groups, with leaders from vulnerable and under-represented communities, with Native American tribes, with campus youth across the country, and with leaders in the religious community. We are united by the clear moral conviction that America must be a world leader in solving global warming.

And our efforts are finally making a difference in Washington.

The bipartisan "America's Climate Security Act of 2007" co-sponsored by Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and John Warner (R-VA) successfully passed a key Senate subcommittee today after being strengthened by committee members. If approved by the full committee, the bill will head to the Senate floor to force an historic vote in the coming months.

The bill is cosponsored by Democrats Casey (PA), Harkin (IA), Cardin (MD) and Klobuchar (MN), and by Republicans Coleman (MN), Dole (NC), and Collins (ME). Democratic Senator Max Baucus (MT) and Frank Lautenberg (NJ) also supported the bill today in subcommittee. In all, four Senators who are supporting the new bill have voted against us on more modest measures in past years. Their changing

November 2, 2007

Page 2

views reflect both their willingness to approach issues with an open mind, and our collective efforts to elevate global warming to a national priority. In this effort, I see for the first time a winning coalition that can overcome the efforts of our opponents to filibuster and delay.

These opponents have not disappeared. Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) has led the opposition to climate action for years in his leadership position on the Environment and Public Works committee. Now, the committee is poised to approve a bipartisan bill that he opposes. He told the press this week, "I have assumed and still believe there are enough votes to get it out of the committee. I cannot imagine there are not. The floor is where we do battle."

Friends, we must be ready for that battle. We have a focus and determination not seen on any conservation issue I can remember. We must rise to the occasion.

There are some who will question our support of the Lieberman-Warner bill until we get all the changes we would want to make it a perfect bill. I welcome the questioning because it means that the dialogue about global warming has risen to a new level. People are angry that we have gone so long without acting. They should be. I am angry too.

However, we also need to listen carefully to what scientists are telling us about solving this problem. We are facing a planetary crisis with a firm deadline and there is no time for delay. Every day we wait, the risks grow and action becomes more difficult. Why? Our emissions are going up when they need to be going down. According to the Bush Administration, our emissions of greenhouse gases in the United States will actually increase by one-third by the year 2030 if we don't turn things around fast.

Scientists are warning us that we must act within the next few years to cut our emissions by two percent every year. We need to hit that pivot point - the time when our emissions go down instead of up, as soon as possible. We need strong legislation that reduces global warming pollution and we need it now.

That's why I am optimistic about America's Climate Security Act. Unlike past votes in Congress for measures that would have merely stopped emissions from growing, this bill actually puts us quickly on the downward trajectory of cutting emissions from large emitters by two percent per year from current levels. And, it is the first bill to include all large emitters, not just power plants.

What's more, this is the first legislation with specific measures to address impacts on consumers, particularly low- and middle-income families. The bill devotes an estimated \$350 billion through the year 2030 from polluter payments to help consumers reduce their energy consumption through efficiency. We need to make sure legislation does not put the burden on those least able to carry it. And we need to make sure that everyone has access to the economic opportunity created by this clean energy revolution.

The bill also includes essential provisions for protecting America's fish and wildlife, great waters, and other natural resources from the climate changes that can no longer be avoided. Healthy wetlands and other habitat are critical for wildlife and serve to protect our communities from the impacts of storms, droughts and other climate extremes brought on by global warming. A rapidly changing climate is adding additional pressures to ecosystems already stressed by development, pollution and invasive species. The

November 2, 2007

Page 3

Lieberman-Warner bill requires polluters to pay into a fund that devotes more than \$160 billion through the year 2030 to protecting wildlife and America's great waters.

Despite the many benefits of this bill, National Wildlife Federation has been seeking improvements. Some we have achieved, such as stronger goals in the coming fifteen years for reducing pollution. We must get moving quickly, and not postpone the heavy lifting decades into the future.

Another area where we sought improvements has to do with how companies obtain pollution permits (referred to in legislation as "allowances"). We believe that after a short transition period, all polluters should pay for any pollution they generate, with the revenues used by the government for public purposes related to global warming. On this issue, we were able with our allies to secure major changes. Unlike earlier versions, the bill now requires polluters to pay for 100% of emission allowances after a transition period, with the money used for consumers, technology, wildlife and other purposes. That's the good news. The bad news is that the transition period takes too long. We believe it is important to build political support around the principle that this bill captures, even as we negotiate timeframes and seek further improvements.

National Wildlife Federation will also seek improvements in other areas. We will ask for a stronger National Academy of Science assessment provision that can guide the updating of goals for the new administration in 2009. The summer's acceleration of Arctic melting that alarmed scientists and the increased pace of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere suggests that we are speeding up our collision with the climatic tipping point, not slowing it down.

And we will work with our partners in the faith community and other allies to strengthen provisions that help the poor deal with the impacts of the climate changes that are already underway. We have a moral responsibility to help those least responsible for global warming and most vulnerable to its impacts.

No one is suggesting that Lieberman-Warner is perfect, but it is a strong, bipartisan bill that would act fast to start reducing pollution and put us on the pathway toward our goals. The very nature of the legislative process means things will change as the process unfolds.

National Wildlife Federation has fought hard for many of the strongest pieces of the bill and worked with the sponsors to improve this bill at each stage of the process. And we have done it by building support and encouraging leaders like Senators Lieberman and Warner to step forward.

I am convinced that we will not meet the urgency of the climate crisis if we allow criticism to block progress. We must focus on what unites us and not on what divides us. By acting now we can re-adjust our aim as we go forward. It is easier to turn the wheel of a car that is rolling than one that is sitting still. Movement begets movement.

Additionally, getting a Senate vote on a substantive global warming bill will help raise the profile of the issue nationally as voters turn their attention to what candidates are saying about global warming. As long as there is no action on global warming, it is very difficult to tell where candidates stand on this issue. The climate crisis must become one of the top tier issues for Americans in this presidential campaign.

November 2, 2007

Page 4

We also need to look beyond our borders. At the December international negotiations on climate change in Bali, Indonesia, we must demonstrate to world leaders that America is moving beyond the current inhabitants in the White House and taking action to curb global warming pollution. Without a strong signal from America, international leaders may not be emboldened to move. We will lose another critical year to act as a world community. We need to signal to the world that the American public is forcing change, and that the United States has the will to move from a global laggard to a global leader in the fight to reduce global warming pollution.

I applaud this bipartisan leadership to break the logjam in Congress and force action on global warming. The clock is ticking on the single greatest threat to the future of wildlife, and too many members of Congress have been asleep at the wheel. We cannot continue to play politics with our children's future.

A more comprehensive assessment of the bill is available at [www.nwf.org/news](http://www.nwf.org/news). If you have any specific questions on the legislation, please feel free to call Katrina Managan, our Global Warming National Policy Coordinator, at 202-797-6620.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Schweiger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Larry Schweiger

NWF's mission is to inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

Larry Schweiger - President & CEO

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