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## **Earth Day: Obama touts clean energy, GOP Congressmen object**

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President Barack Obama marked Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup> with a quick trip to Iowa where he said “The choice we face is not between saving our environment and saving our economy. It’s a choice between prosperity and decline. The nation that leads the world in creating new sources of clean energy will be the nation that leads the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.” In Newton, Iowa to tour an abandoned Maytag plant where Trinity Structural Towers now builds wind turbine towers for green electricity, Obama announced a new program to generate electricity from the wind, waves, and ocean currents of the Outer Continental Shelf. He told the former Maytag workers now building turbine towers in Iowa, “you are helping to lead the next energy revolution.”

Obama said his administration plans to invest “\$15 billion each year for ten years to develop clean energy including wind power, solar power, geothermal energy, and clean coal technology.” He said the Interior Department will begin “the leasing of federal waters for projects to generate electricity from wind as well as from ocean currents and other renewable sources. This will open the door to major investments in offshore clean energy.”

Just outside of Washington in Landover, Maryland, Vice President Joe Biden marked Earth Day by announcing another \$300 million in federal money to help states, local governments and transit agencies buy fuel-efficient vehicles.

What made Earth Day a day of sharp contrasts, however, was that while the President and Vice President talked up the benefits of transitioning the U.S. economy from fossil fuels to clean energy, a string of Republican House members voiced a very different view in a second day of House Energy & Commerce Committee hearings on climate change legislation.

Committee Chair Henry Waxman (D-CA) opened Wednesday’s hearing on his American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 by saying that his bill “will create millions of jobs, revive our economy, and secure our energy independence. It will also protect our environment.” He added that “Some have said that true energy reform will undermine our economy. They argue that there is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and

clean energy. That is a false choice. Our economic future and clean energy are inextricably intertwined. The economy that will grow the fastest in this century will be the one that makes the greatest investments in new energy technologies.”

Waxman’s and Obama’s view that clean energy will create jobs and prosperity was echoed in testimony by Energy Secretary Steven Chu, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood – and also in testimony from industry CEOs. Those CEOs from DuPont, ConocoPhillips, Duke Energy, Alcoa, and NRG have joined with environmental leaders in creating the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) which supports climate change legislation to include a mandatory cap-and-trade program for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Chad Holliday, Chairman of E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company and a USCAP member, testified that he welcomes the proposed climate change legislation and that “It provides a sound basis for moving the U.S. forward on this important issue and it reflects thought, deliberation and real leadership.” Echoing other CEOs, Holliday told the committee that DuPont has already found that “reducing our environmental footprint” has both improved company profits and created additional jobs. He added that “voluntary efforts alone will not solve the climate problem. We need sound policy that takes broad, coordinated, economically sustainable action across the entire economy. We need clear, strong and workable emission reduction goals that will show us the pathway to a low-carbon economy. And we need a cap-and-trade program that will allow a carbon market to emerge and focus our efforts on the emission reduction opportunities that offer the most environmental benefit for the lowest cost.”

The witnesses’ support for climate change legislation and a cap-and-trade program was not what some committee members wanted to hear. A visibly upset Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) opened his questioning of witnesses by saying that “This is the largest assault on democracy and freedom in this country that I have ever experienced. I have lived through some tough times in Congress, impeachment, two wars, terrorist attacks. I fear this more than all the above activities that have happened.” Shimkus noted that “wetlands is the largest emitter of methane gas,” not livestock; charged that the lack of detail in the proposed legislation “is an intentional move to deceive us so that we’re not allowed to do the cost/benefit analysis;” and, waving a lump of coal, warned that climate change legislation will eliminate coal miner jobs just as the Clean Air Act did.

Pointing out that “I represent the San Joaquin Valley in California, a lot of farming,” Rep. George Radanovich (R-CA) prefaced his questions by saying that “there’s a lot more my constituents are worrying about than global warming. . . I honestly think that my state is suffering more from environmental alarmism than it is global warming. Added to that, this concept of cap-and-trade, to me just seems to make the problem worse. . . My concern for my constituents is that if you adopt something like a cap-and-trade system . . the math doesn’t work. . . you’re going to see the state’s largest industry, \$90 billion, the main supplier of fruits and vegetables to the nation, farm out. If you don’t like the fact that 70% of your energy comes from foreign countries, how would you like to have 70% of your food supply leave the country? Because that’s what’s happening in my neck of the woods. . . How on earth do you think you can pull this off without breaking the back of the back of the government and of the consumer?”

Radanovich concluded that “Environmental alarmism in the form of the Endangered Species Act that is a runaway locomotive, and the cost of this cap-and-trade system, will kill agriculture long before global warming does.”

To read the written testimony from 16 witnesses or watch videos of the April 22 hearing on climate change legislation, [click here](http://energycommerce.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1587&catid=128&Itemid=84):  
[http://energycommerce.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1587&catid=128&Itemid=84](http://energycommerce.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1587&catid=128&Itemid=84)

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