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Sens. Murkowski & Lincoln speak out against cap & trade bill

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The day before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee holds a hearing on the cost of controversial cap-and-trade proposals, the Committee's Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) charged that "the administration knew all along how much their cap and trade program would cost, yet they continue to claim it will cost no more than a postage stamp a day." Murkowski points to an internal U.S. Treasury Department estimate showing that cap-and-trade costs could reach \$200 billion per year, or up to \$1,761 a year per household.

Murkowski explained that "I believe we need to do something about climate change, but I'm equally concerned about the health of the economy. We must focus on legislation that will effectively limit costs, establish a realistic compliance curve, and encourage the rest of the world to join the effort." Statements this week by the Senate Agriculture Committee's new Chair, Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) who also sits on the Senate Energy Committee, make it clear that Senator Murkowski will have an ally in Senator Lincoln as their committee tackles climate change issues.

Speaking to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Tuesday, Lincoln explained that "As a Member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, I am proud of the bipartisan energy bill that will promote greater energy efficiency, grow the use of cleaner, renewable energy sources, and encourage the use of domestic oil and gas resources that will create jobs, and cut our dependence on foreign oil." Then she added that "I am opposed to the House passed cap-and-trade legislation, which in my view, picks winners and losers and places a disproportionate share of the economic burden on families and businesses in Arkansas. It is a deeply flawed bill, and I will not support similar legislation in the Senate." She warned specifically that "crops like cotton and rice and our livestock industries could face higher energy costs without the added benefit of being able to sequester significant amounts of carbon."

In a point she's likely to repeat in the climate change hearing Thursday, Murkowski said that "Some have dismissed the costs of climate legislation as minimal, or surmountable, but we lawmakers must remember that we will be affected far less than many others. Those who will really feel its effects are trying to find jobs right now. They are trying to

find a way to pay their bills and mortgages. We shouldn't pass legislation that makes it harder for Americans to get back on their feet.”

Addressing the same cap-and-trade issues this week, National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson dismissed concerns that a cap-and-trade system would benefit Midwest grain farmers while leaving cotton, rice, and livestock producers without opportunities to sell carbon credits to offset higher input costs. Johnson predicted that the incentives created by cap-and-trade legislation will led to research which improves carbon-credit opportunities for all farmers and ranchers. As an example, he said new fertilizer and feed management practices already offer cotton, rice and livestock producers the ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly – reductions which would generate income under a cap-and-trade program.

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