



## **Obama sets targets & will attend Copenhagen climate summit**

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Washington, Nov. 25 – Along with at least 75 other world leaders, President Obama will attend the international climate change negotiations which start Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> in Copenhagen. As well as attending, Obama will take with him a commitment to pursue “a U.S. emissions reduction target in the range of 17% below 2005 levels in 2020 and ultimately in line with final U.S. energy and climate legislation.” The White House made it clear that this commitment will be “put on the table” if the Copenhagen talks secure “robust mitigation contributions from China and the other emerging economies.”

The White House has confirmed that this presidential commitment includes the subsequent targets of reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 30% by 2025, 42% by 2030 and 83% by 2050. These targets match the levels set in the House-passed Waxman-Markey climate bill. The comparable bill passed by the Senate Environment Committee sets a more ambitious 20% goal for 2020 but that is likely to be pared back as Senate horse trading continues.

By speaking at the Copenhagen meeting Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, the day before receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway – and particularly by setting percentage targets for emissions reductions – Obama is taking a gamble that his spotlighting the climate issue will spur the Senate to act on its stalled cap & trade climate bill. There’s a risk that Obama’s actions instead could trigger greater congressional resistance. That’s clearly the hope of climate bill critics such as Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK). He responded to Obama’s commitment to targets by commenting that “The U.S. Senate has made clear on numerous occasions that unilateral action by the United States is unacceptable, because it will harm our economy and have virtually no effect on climate change.”

The deciding factor could turn out to be what happens near the end of the climate summit which runs through Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>. If, as White House officials hope, other countries – including China and India in particular – match Obama’s stated targets with similar targets, then Obama might make a second appearance at the Copenhagen meeting. The plan, apparently, is to have Obama’s Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> speech provide the leadership needed to encourage other countries to step forward. Then, if there is sufficient movement among over 190 nations expected to take part in the talks, a triumphant Obama could appear with other world leaders at the conclusion of a successful summit.

Another signal of the Obama administration's strong commitment to success in Copenhagen is that the entire "Green Cabinet" will travel to Copenhagen to participate in the talks. The current schedule includes presentations in Copenhagen by:

- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on "Clean Energy Investments: creating opportunities for rural economies"
- Energy Secretary Steven Chu on "Leading in Energy Efficiency and Renewables"
- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar on "New Energy Future: the role of public lands in clean energy production and carbon capture"
- Commerce Secretary Gary Locke on "Clean Energy Jobs in a Global Marketplace"
- EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson on "Taking Action at Home"
- CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley and Assistant to the President Carol Browner on "Backing Up International Agreement with Domestic Action"

Along with announcing Obama's emissions targets and his travel plans, the White House has issued a list of what it claims to be "impressive" administration accomplishments on climate change over the past ten months, including:

- ✓ Investing more than \$80 billion in clean energy through the Recovery Act
- ✓ Efficiency standard for automobiles
- ✓ Advancing comprehensive energy legislation
- ✓ Appliance efficiency standards
- ✓ Offshore energy development.
- ✓ Emissions inventory rule
- ✓ The Major Economies Forum (MEF), creating a new dialogue among developed and emerging economies to combat climate change and promote clean energy
- ✓ The agreement at the Pittsburgh G20 summit for all G20 nations to phase out their fossil fuel subsidies
- ✓ Accelerating U.S. collaboration with China, India, Mexico, Canada and other key international partners to combat climate change, coordinate clean energy research and development, and support the international climate talks
- ✓ Energy and Climate Partnership for the Americas
- ✓ Phasing down HFCs (Hydrofluorocarbons)

To read more reaction to the President's climate change plans, go to:  
[www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091125H2.pdf](http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091125H2.pdf).