



Obama's Copenhagen plans get positive & negative reviews

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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Washington, Nov. 25 – President Obama's decisions to travel to Copenhagen to take part in the Dec. 7-18 international climate change negotiations and to set targets for U.S. emissions reductions have brought widespread praise from congressional Democrats and from environmental groups – and criticism from climate change skeptics. (For details on the decisions, go to: www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/20091125H1.pdf.)

Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK), Ranking Member of the Senate Environment Committee, famously dismisses the notion of human-caused climate change and plans to be in Copenhagen to present his views to an international audience in person. Responding to Obama's plan to participate in the Copenhagen talks, Inhofe said that "I suspect President Obama is making the trip to Copenhagen in order to 'save' the climate conference. Yet no amount of lofty rhetoric or promises of future commitments can save it. This is due in large part to the fact cap-and-trade legislation in the Senate is dying on the vine, and, as important, recent revelations of leading climate scientists who appear to have manufactured the climate 'consensus' – revelations that cast doubt over the entire global warming enterprise."

Inhofe charges that "it's clear that China, India and the developing world, which will soon be responsible for the vast bulk of greenhouse gas emissions, will not accept mandatory cuts in emissions – despite entreaties from President Obama."

In contrast, positive reaction included these comments:

Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT):

"Obama's announcement of an emissions goal has laid the groundwork for productive negotiations in Copenhagen, including a significant commitment by China to reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions."

Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA):

"By putting a serious number for U.S. emission reductions on the table, the President just called the world's bet and then raised it for our negotiating partners. The President's attendance in Copenhagen demonstrates his personal commitment to getting a deal that is good for the U.S. and good for our clean energy future. It's a powerful statement that the U.S. is back, ready to lead the world . . . In the effort to protect the planet from climate

change, these are the most significant travel reservations ever made. With one trip to Copenhagen, President Obama will put U.S. leadership back on the map in the fight against carbon pollution.”

Lew Hay, Chairman and CEO of Florida Power & Light:

“We commend the president for his efforts and leadership as the world strives for agreement on reducing greenhouse gases. Here at home, it’s critical that Congress act to cap and price carbon emissions while providing financial protection to energy consumers. The U.S. energy sector is ready to lead the world into a low-carbon future, but we need the right price signals to point the way.”

Jim Rogers, CEO of Duke Energy:

“I applaud President Obama’s travel to Copenhagen, demonstrating the United States’ commitment to action on climate change. His presence will help ensure a successful outcome at the global climate talks, driving new investment, strengthening our global economic recovery, and moving us forward in building a productive, competitive economy here at home. The rules that Congress is developing will complement Copenhagen’s global road map, supporting our business objectives to provide clean, efficient, affordable, and reliable energy to our customers.”

Former Vice President Al Gore:

“President Obama took an important step today with the announcement that he will attend the global warming treaty talks in Copenhagen . . . This action is another example of the significant change in policy on the climate crisis . . . Those who feared that the United States had abdicated its global responsibility should take hope from these actions and work towards completing a strong operational agreement next month in Copenhagen and guidelines for negotiators to complete their work next year on a comprehensive treaty . . . It is my hope that the Senate will support the President and move quickly to pass climate and energy legislation early next year in order to ensure that the world moves toward speedy solutions for the climate crisis.”

Sen. John Kerry (D-MA):

“This could be one hell of a global game changer with big reverberations here at home. For the first time, an American administration has proposed an emissions reduction target and when President Obama lands in Copenhagen it will emphasize that the United States is in it to win it. This announcement matches words with action. The Obama administration is now undeniably mustering bona fide leadership on climate change, not merely departing from Bush administration intransigence and ideology. . . By announcing a provisional target, contingent on the support of Congress, the President has defined a path to an international agreement that challenges the developed and developing nations to fulfill their obligations. It lays the groundwork for a broad political consensus at Copenhagen that will strip climate obstructionists here at home of their most persistent charge, that the United States shouldn’t act if other countries won’t join with us. It is an enormous shot in the arm for those of us working overtime to get a comprehensive bill passed in the Senate. And the fact that the President will attend the Copenhagen talks underscores that the administration is putting its money where its mouth is, putting the President’s prestige on the line.”

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA):

“I am so pleased that the President is going to Copenhagen to address one of the most pressing issues of our time - global warming. The goal he announced today, in the range

of 17 percent, reflects the work that was done in the House of Representatives and in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. It is realistic, it's smart, and it's credible."

Frances Beinecke, President of NRDC:

"President Obama is taking the full power and prestige of the highest office in the land to Copenhagen. He goes with a serious climate protection proposal from the United States that shows we mean business. It shows we're ready to lead. And it will help advance efforts to secure commitments for action from other countries around the world. We urge Congress to support the President and pass clean energy and climate protection legislation that will put millions of Americans back to work, reduce our reliance on foreign oil and create a healthier future for our country and the world."

Jonathan Lash, President of the World Resources Institute:

"President Obama's willingness to go to Copenhagen and put numbers on the table are two necessary pieces to make a binding global agreement possible. The 17 percent number is consistent with what Congress has been debating and we hope legislation eventually reaches an even higher target. The President's leadership in Copenhagen will have an even greater impact if he is able to give the world a timetable for when he expects a bill on his desk."