



June 30th, 2009

Call to Action: Cap and Tax Passes the House

Anyone who thought misplaced climate legislation was a thing of science fiction received a rude awakening last Friday when the United States House of Representatives passed the Markey-Waxman energy, or as I like to call it the “cap and tax” bill, by a vote of 219-212. The bill will now go to the U.S. Senate.

The House version of the bill includes some minor changes from the original legislation; however it still contains a “cap and tax” provision as its centerpiece. This provision will push energy costs much higher and places businesses in the U. S. at a major disadvantage with foreign competitors. Furthermore, **“cap and tax” puts states like Wisconsin**, that produce more of our electricity from coal than other states, **at an economic disadvantage**.

“Cap and tax” will require any business that emits carbon dioxide to either reduce emissions or buy credits to continue emitting above the prescribed levels. The levels will be set by the government, an arbitrary practice ripe for abuse. (See Hot Air #14 on my website for examples of corruption that resulted from “cap and tax” in Europe:

<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/asm23/news/media.htm>).

The additional cost of reducing emissions or paying for credits will be passed on to consumers in the form of higher energy bills. Furthermore, this will impact any products that require energy in their production: food, heat, gas, clothes, cars, etc., also resulting in higher prices.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has stated the cost of the “cap and tax” bill to consumers and businesses will be too small to dampen economic growth. But the value of the carbon credits in the “cap and tax” provision alone (this doesn’t include other fiscal impacts the bill will have) has been estimated to be as high as \$220 billion in the first year. \$220 billion!!! Where does government think this money will come from? Of course, the answer is you and me. Estimates are that the cost of energy for every American family will increase anywhere from hundreds of dollars to as much as \$3,000 per year if the “cap and tax” bill eventually becomes law.

Let’s talk jobs. Global warming alarmists often talk about all the “green jobs” that will be created by fighting climate change. I’m still waiting for details on exactly what these jobs will be. Other than government jobs that cost tax dollars, I can’t think of one single job that needs climate legislation for its creation. We don’t need a “cap and tax” bill to produce windmills and solar panels.

Meanwhile on the climate front - the rhetoric continues. In a Sunday (June 28, 2009) editorial touting the merits of the "cap and tax" bill the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel repeated the claim that "...climate change is here and human activity is a primary cause." **That doesn't seem to match the CBS News report that stated the EPA may have suppressed a 98 page internal report that warned against making hasty decisions "...based on a scientific hypothesis that does not appear to explain most of the available data."**

Furthermore, the ongoing Journal-Sentinel rhetoric is contradicted by the actual climate data that shows global temperatures have not risen in the last decade and have actually fallen in the last two years. In reality, even in the warm decade of the 1990's temperatures were very similar to the 1930's.

The progress of the federal climate legislation is being closely watched here in Wisconsin, where Governor Doyle and a number Madison-area Democrats would like to pass their own version of climate legislation. That means even if the federal "cap and tax" stalls, Wisconsin could become part of a regional "cap and tax" scheme. Exactly how is an additional tax on manufacturers going to help Wisconsin's economy?

Don't expect common sense to prevail here. Remember this is the same Governor who thought it would be a good idea to place a measure in the state budget that would have made someone who was as little as one percent responsible for an accident to have to pay 100% of the damages if that person was the only one involved who carried insurance. Is it any wonder that this line of reasoning could make someone think it is a good idea to try to legislate cooler weather, when the weather has been getting cooler?

Let's hope the U.S. Senate makes a better choice than the House and rejects attempts to pass the climate bill. It's extremely important that everyone contact their U.S. Senators and let them know that jobs and a vibrant economy are important to the future of our country and our quality of life.

To find your U.S. Senator, go to the Senate's web page at www.senate.gov. Do it now and ask your friends and families to do so as well. Access my reports online, at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm23/news/media.htm>.

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