

UPDATE: CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION

June 10, 2008

Boxer-Lieberman-Warner Substitute to the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act (S. 3036)

SUMMARY

The Senate's global climate change debate ended last Friday, after an attempted cloture vote fell short of the votes needed to allow the "Boxer-Lieberman-Warner Substitute" to come to the senate floor for debate. The cloture vote was 48 to 36 (60 votes were needed). In addition, six Senators not present sent notes supporting the cloture vote. In all, 54 Senators demonstrated support for the legislation. The vote count is listed below. In 2005 the Senate voted on a comprehensive climate change bill, it failed by a 38-60 vote.

The failure to allow debate and bring the legislation to a vote means that the measure is dead for this Congress. However, the good news is that the vote represents the strongest indication yet that Congress may be ready to address climate change legislation that lowers greenhouse gas emissions, begins to create incentives for alternative energy and, most importantly for the U.S. Catholic bishops and the wider religious community, includes strong measures to protect the poor and vulnerable at home and abroad from both climate change and the impacts of climate change legislation.

YOUR EFFORTS WERE CRITICAL TO THIS PROGRESS

Looking at the improving results, it is evident that your efforts to reach out to Senators, especially those who were on the fence about the bill, made a big difference. We especially thank those bishops, diocesan social concerns offices and state Catholic conferences who wrote letters, made phone calls and activated networks. The Senate leadership made a point to thank faith community leaders for their hard work in generating more support than they thought possible as the vote neared.

For those Senators who voted yes on the bill, please thank them with a phone call or e-mail.

WHAT'S NEXT

This non-victory is worth celebrating as it laid significant groundwork for next year. With your help, the U.S. Catholic bishops and other faith leaders made substantial gains in their key priority area: protecting poor and vulnerable persons at home and abroad. Throughout this past year, the bishops and others have worked closely with Senators Boxer, Lieberman and Warner to ensure that:

- a significant portion of the public proceeds generated by the cap and trade approach would be targeted to poor people in vulnerable developing countries to help them adapt to a changing climate;
- sufficient assistance would be available for the poorest individuals and families in the U.S. to help them offset anticipated rising energy costs; and
- workers and their communities dependent on industries directly impacted by the legislation would be afforded some transition assistance.

We will be working to shape future climate legislation and action, and will ask your assistance again to safeguard and strengthen these provisions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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VOTE TOTALS FOR S. 3036

Voting Yes: (48)

Akaka Baucus Bayh Bingaman Boxer Cantwell Cardin Carper Casey Collins
Dodd Dole Durbin Feingold Feinstein Harkin Inouye Kerry Klobuchar Kohl
Lautenberg Leahy Levin Lieberman Lincoln Martinez McCaskill Menendez
Mikulski Murray Nelson (FL) Nelson (NE) Pryor Reed Reid Rockefeller Salazar
Sanders Schumer Smith Snowe Stabenow Sununu Tester Warner Webb
Whitehouse Wyden

Voting No (36)

Alexander Allard Barrasso Bennett Bond Brown Brownback Bunning Burr
Chambliss Coburn Cochran Corker Crapo Domenici Dorgan Ensign Enzi
Grassley Hagel Hatch Hutchison Inhofe Isakson Johnson Kyl Landrieu Lugar
McConnell Roberts Sessions Shelby Thune Vitter Voinovich Wicker

Absent and not voting (16)

Biden* Byrd Clinton* Coleman* Conrad Cornyn Craig DeMint Graham Gregg
Kennedy* McCain* Murkowski Obama* Specter Stevens

*Sent a note saying they would have voted yes if present.