would fail to guarantee any of the benefits for consumers, large energy users, and farmers and ranchers contained in the Bingaman amendment

For example, the Domenici amendment would:

Waive requirements for state to participate in the program if the governor found state programs to be ''substantially contributing to the overall goal.'' This vague language could stifle investment in renewables and cripple the federal trading program that assures the lowest possible cost for renewable energy.

Weaken renewable requirements by including non-renewables such as nuclear power. These provisions would subtract all existing nuclear generation from the utilities renewables requirement, give utilities credits for already-planned and economic capacity upgrades, provide a windfall for the poorest performing nuclear plants of the last 3 years, and give credits for building new nuclear power plants that are already heavily subsidized in the 2005 Energy bill. These nuclear bailouts and subsidies would reduce the potential contribution of new renewable energy from the Bingaman proposal.

Allow utilities to receive credits for ''an inherently low-emission technology that captures and stores carbon'' without defining what that technology might be or assuring how much, if any, of the carbon actually gets stored, or how permanent such storage is.

Allow DOE to designate ''other clean energy sources'' to qualify for clean energy credits without any restrictions on the Secretary.

Undercuts the development of new renewables by including all ''new'' hydropower. This would encourage new dam construction irrespective of the potential for significant environmental impacts these facilities can have. The Domenici amendment would reverse the compromise language in the Bingaman amendment that would permit ''incremental'' hydro power that encourages new hydropower generation while protecting natural resources.

Includes electricity savings from energy efficiency and demand-response programs, which will further erode the national energy security, diversity, economic, and environmental benefits of developing new renewable energy sources. While we support a separate standard for energy efficiency and demand-response, the Domenici amendment would create a zero sum game between efficiency and renewable energy by forcing them to compete under the same standard.

Overall, the combined effects of allowing nuclear, efficiency, demand-response, as well as new hydro, and other non renewable clean energy sources to qualify for the standard-without any restrictions—would greatly reduce, and potentially eliminate, the development of new renewable energy sources and the corresponding economic and environmental benefits.

We urge you to support the strong Bingaman RES amendment and oppose weakening amendment such as the Domenici amendment, as it would take us backwards, not forwards on energy policy.

Sincerely,

EarthJustice, Environmental Law and Policy Center, Greenpeace, National Audubon Society, National Environmental Trust, Natural Resource Defense Council, Sierra Club, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Union of Concerned Scientists, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, Western Organization of Resource Councils.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, at this point I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me thank Senator BINGAMAN for his leadership efforts in addressing one of the major crises facing our country. I thank Senator DOMENICI as well.

As Senator BINGAMAN just indicated, I would go further than he is going in his proposal. I think he has made an important step forward, but I think given the gravity of the situation we face, it is imperative for the future not only of our country but for the future of our planet that we seize this moment and we be bold and we be aggressive because if we are not, what the scientific community is telling us is that the results could be catastrophic.

When thousands of scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tell us with 100 percent certainty that global warming is real, and with 90 percent certainty that it is manmade, we should listen. When these scientists tell us that today, in terms of the melting of glaciers and permafrost, in terms of the increase in drought around the world, the increase of forest fires we are seeing in the United States, in terms of the loss of drinking water and farmland all over the world today, it would be absolutely irresponsible not only for us but for future generations if we did not stand up and say we are going to do everything we can to lower greenhouse gas emissions and reverse global warming.

I have introduced legislation—which the Presiding Officer is one of the cosponsors of and was introduced with Senator BOXER—which, in fact, would lower greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent less than where they were in 1990. I think that is the type of aggressive effort that we need. If Senator KERRY offers his amendment to make sure 20 percent of the electricity we produce in this country comes from renewables, I will strongly support that legislation. Fifteen percent, as Senator BINGAMAN has proposed, is a good step forward, but it does not go far enough.

The bad news is that as a nation, we are lagging far behind the rest of the world, or many countries in the world, in going forward in terms of energy efficiency and sustainable energy. The bad news is that today in America, in terms of transportation, we are driving vehicles which, if you can believe it, get worse mileage per gallon than was the case 20 years ago. Meanwhile, several weeks ago, I was in a car which was a retrofitted Toyota Prius which gets 150 miles per gallon. Yet, as a nation, on average we are driving vehicles which get worse mileage per gallon than we had 20 years ago.

All over our country, we are lacking in public transportation. In Europe, in Japan, in China, their rail systems are far more sophisticated and advanced than we are. Our roadways, from Vermont to California, are clogged with cars, many of them getting poor mileage per gallon. Yet we are not investing and creating jobs in mass transportation. But it is not only transportation that we are lacking in, studies have indicated that if we make our own homes more energy efficient, we can save substantial amounts of energy.

Some estimates are, if we do the right things, we could cut our energy expenditures by 40 percent—40 percent. Yet there are millions of homes in this country inhabited by lower income people who don't have the money to adequately insulate their homes, put in the kind of roofs they need, the kind of windows they need, and we are literally seeing energy go right out of the doors and the windows because we are not adequately funding weatherization. But it is not just lower income people. Many middle-class families are also in homes that are inadequately weatherized, inadequately insulated.

One of the things I have long believed as I have studied this issue of global warming is that not only do we have the moral imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly so that we can reverse global warming, but in that process we can seize this crisis, respond to this crisis, and create some very golden opportunities in terms of creating good-paying jobs. If you look at those areas in the world where they have moved most effectively in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as Germany, many countries in Europe, and our own State of California, the result has been, yes, there has been economic dislocation, but at the end of the day, they have created a lot more jobs than they have lost.

I have worked with groups such as the Apollo Project, which is a group that brings together labor organizations as well as environmentalists, that say: How do we move toward lowering greenhouse gas emissions and creating good-paying jobs? The opportunities are sitting right in front of us.

Detroit has lost billions and billions of dollars year after year by building cars that many Americans no longer want. Maybe if we move toward energy-efficient cars, people might start buying those cars, and instead of laying off workers, maybe we can create more jobs. Think of the jobs we can create as we build a rail system that we are proud of. As cities like Chicago and New York and other cities rebuild their antiquated subway systems, we can create jobs doing that.

We can create jobs all over this country in terms of energy efficiency. As we move toward biofuels, I can tell my colleagues that in my State of Vermont, our small family farmers are struggling very hard to stay on the