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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

ENERGY LEGISLATION: THE SENATE MUST JOIN THE HOUSE IN ACTING SWIFTLY

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, despite rabid partisanship, this House of Representatives has successfully pursued a productive legislative agenda this year. Among many important bills, such as the expansion of children's health insurance and passage of economic recovery legislation, we passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act just this past June.

This bill would reduce greenhouse gas pollution, create market incentives for investment in clean energy jobs, invest in green job training for workers, create incentives for farmers to sequester carbon, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and protect trade-sensitive industries from highly polluting foreign competition.

According to prominent economists, it would spur investments in technology that would further stimulate the economy right now.

Since we passed this bill, a growing number of businesses such as Apple Computer, Exelon, Pacific Gas and Electric, Johnson & Johnson, Timberland, Nike, Dominion Virginia Power and so many others from diverse sectors of the economy have called on the United States Senate to act. Many of these businesses believe climate

change legislation is so important to address for American business that they actually have withdrawn their membership or suspended their membership from various committees in the United States Chamber of Commerce to protest its policy of opposition to this legislation.

Now that the House has passed this bill, the Senate too must act quickly to pass it so that the United States can take its rightful place as a leading voice in the effort to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

Despite widespread business support for the bill, some partisan interest groups vigorously opposed its passage, and I applaud my colleagues, especially those from the other side of the aisle who had the courage to support it, for overcoming the shrill dissent of powerful special interests. Because those same interest groups are preparing a campaign blitz focused on the U.S. Senate, it is an apt time to recall the discredited arguments that they will employ once again when attempting to defeat this bill.

For example, the Republican leadership claims this bill will cost the American family \$3,100 per year. Not true. The Republican leadership cited an MIT study when first releasing that cost estimate. In response, the MIT professor who wrote the study wrote the minority leader here in the House pointing out that his figure vastly overestimated costs by 1,000 percent.

Moreover, the Republicans ignore a central feature of the bill to protect consumers. The American Clean Energy and Security Act distributes carbon allowances to the companies or co-operatives from which Americans buy electricity. And by law, the bill says that they have to use those allowances to protect consumers from any price increases.

Our Republican colleagues also ignore the impact new efficiencies will have on electric bills. The House En-

ergy bill will improve building codes by 30 percent, establish new efficiency standards for appliances and invest billions of dollars in home weatherization and efficiency programs. As a result, consumers will see a reduction in their electric bills as they consume less electricity. According to the nonpartisan American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, those savings will average \$750 per household when the bill is fully implemented.

Another common refrain from the opposition is that a cap-and-trade system is new, complicated and unworkable. As my colleagues will recall, it was a cap-and-trade system that allowed us to successfully stop the expansion of the ozone hole by reducing CFC pollution, and we cut acid rain and smog pollution by reducing emissions from coal-fired power plants with a cap-and-trade program in the 1990s. At the time, those same voices claiming that this would kill the economy said the same thing. And yet in the 1990s, we saw some of the most rapid expansion of economic growth in U.S. history.

Madam Speaker, scientists are observing more rapid climate change than their models anticipated. We do not have the luxury of inaction or delay. Moreover, the welfare of our economy demands that America lead in the clean energy revolution. We cannot allow China, Spain and other nations to profit from the construction of wind turbines, solar, advanced batteries and the like while Americans lose their jobs. Now is the time for the U.S. Senate to join us here in the House in passing a vibrant, clean energy bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, jumpstart our economy and lessen our reliance on foreign oil.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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