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Barack Obama

Recorded Remarks to Global Climate Summit



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Let me begin by thanking the bipartisan group of U.S. Governors who convened this meeting.

Few challenges facing America -- and the world -- are more urgent than combating climate change. The science is beyond dispute and the facts are clear. Sea levels are rising. Coastlines are shrinking. We've seen record drought, spreading famine, and storms that are growing stronger with each passing hurricane season.

Climate change and our dependence on foreign oil, if left unaddressed, will continue to weaken our economy and threaten our national security.

I know many of you are working to confront this challenge. In particular, I want to commend Governor Sebelius, Governor Doyle, Governor Crist, Governor Blagojevich and your host, Governor Schwarzenegger. All of you have shown true leadership in the fight to combat global warming. And we've also seen a number of businesses doing their part by investing in clean energy technologies.

But too often, Washington has failed to show the same kind of leadership. That will change when I take office. My presidency will mark a new chapter in America's leadership on climate change that will strengthen our security and create millions of new jobs in the process. That will start with a federal cap and trade system.



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We'll establish strong annual targets that set us on a course to reduce emissions to their 1990 levels by 2020 and reduce them an additional 80% by 2050. Further, we'll invest 15 billion dollars each year to catalyze private sector efforts to build a clean energy future. We'll invest in solar power, wind power, and next-generation biofuels. We'll tap nuclear power, while making sure it's safe; and we'll develop clean coal technologies.

This investment will not only help us reduce our dependence on foreign oil, making the United States more secure; and it will not only help us bring about a clean energy future, saving the planet. It will also help us transform our industries and steer our country out of this economic crisis by generating five million new green jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced.

The truth is, the United States can't meet this challenge alone. Solving this problem will require all of us working together. I understand that your meeting is being attended by government officials from over a dozen countries, including the UK, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Chile, Poland and Australia, India and Indonesia. And I look forward to working with all nations to meet this challenge in the coming years.

Let me also say a special word to the delegates from around the world who will gather at Poland next month. Your work is vital to the planet. While I won't be President at the time of your meeting and while the United States has only one President at a time, I've asked Members of Congress who are attending the conference as observers to report back to me on what they learn there. And once I take office, you can be sure that the United States will once again engage vigorously in these negotiations, and help lead the world toward a new era of global cooperation on climate change.

Now is the time to confront this challenge once and for all. Delay is no longer an option. Denial is no longer an acceptable response. The stakes are too high; the consequences too serious. Stopping climate change won't be easy and it won't happen overnight. But I promise you this: When I am President, any governor who's willing to promote clean energy will have a partner in the White House. Any company that's willing to invest in clean energy will have an ally in Washington. And any nation that's willing to join the cause of combating climate change will have an ally in the United States of America.

Thank you.