

Opening Statement for Chairman Edward J. Markey
Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming
“Roadmap to Copenhagen: Driving Toward Success”
September 10, 2009

For those of you who spent any time in the water this summer, you may have noticed it was warmer than usual. On the East Coast, typically chilly Maine beaches felt more like those usually found in Maryland, which were in turn feeling more like Florida. Worldwide ocean temperatures in July were the hottest recorded during the last 130 years.

While this might benefit your beach weekend now, it is the latest reminder of the serious consequences of global warming. As the oceans warm and become more acidic due to increasing absorption of carbon dioxide, coral reefs and other critical components of the ocean ecosystem are put at risk, threatening food supplies for a significant portion of the world.

Global warming is a global problem in need of a global solution. The next opportunity to find that global solution is coming quickly. In December, the nations of the world will gather in Copenhagen intent on finalizing an international climate agreement that will protect people and the planet and unleash a clean energy revolution.

Todd Stern, the U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change, is with us today to report on the progress made thus far and the challenges that remain to reaching an agreement in Copenhagen.

Since the start of the Select Committee, I have maintained that the most effective way of advancing the negotiations of the next international climate change agreement would be for the United States to show leadership by committing to mandatory domestic reductions of heat-trapping pollution. In June, the House of Representatives took the first step by passing the Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy and Security Act.

To the rest of the world, House passage of this bill signaled America’s growing commitment to preventing climate change and building a global clean energy economy. It helped leaders at the G8 and the Major Economies Forum held in Italy this July reach agreement on important points, including the need for emissions to peak as soon as possible, commitments to prepare “Low Carbon Growth Plans,” and a pledge by developing countries to take actions that would meaningfully reduce their emissions from their current trajectories. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues so that we can send the strongest possible signal from the U.S. Congress to the negotiations in Copenhagen.

Sending clean energy legislation that reduces global warming pollution to President Obama is not just important for international diplomacy; it is critical to our

national interest. The great race of the 21st century will be to provide affordable clean energy to the world.

Whether countries are trying to revitalize flagging economies or pull their people out of poverty, they are turning to clean energy technology. In a race that the United States once had a clear lead, we are now falling behind. The Europeans, Japanese, and increasingly, Chinese are using their domestic policies to drive the development of clean energy industries and stake their claims to the burgeoning global clean energy economy. If we want to be globally competitive, we must do the same.

The U.S. effort to reverse this trend began with the 2007 energy bill's increase in fuel economy standards and commitment to renewable fuels. It accelerated with the \$80 billion investment in clean energy infrastructure and technologies in this year's Recovery Act. It will culminate with a comprehensive clean energy law like the Waxman-Markey legislation that passed the House this summer.

The world is watching in the United States. It is time to reclaim our technical leadership on clean energy, our economic leadership in the next great global jobs race, and our moral leadership to protect the planet. I am confident that this is the foundation upon which a new global climate agreement -- one that includes all countries doing their fair share -- will be built.