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## **Sen. Carper Introduces Clean Air Bill to Cut Pollution from Power Plants and Combat Global Warming**

*Bill Reduces Mercury Pollution, Creates First-Ever CO2 Controls on Power Plants*

**April 19, 2007**

Bipartisan legislation that would clean the air Americans breathe, while also addressing the threat of global warming, was introduced today by Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., chairman of the Senate's Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee.

Sen. Carper today outlined his Clean Air Planning Act of 2007 (CAPA), which is an improved version of clean air legislation he has introduced in previous Congresses. The 2007 version of CAPA would significantly reduce unhealthy emissions of mercury, as well as the harmful pollutants (nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide) that produce smog and acid rain. In addition, the legislation would set up a mandatory cap-and-trade program for utilities to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide, which causes global warming.

"For far too long, political wrangling has prevented the Congress from passing clean air legislation. But times have changed, and now a majority of Americans want us to find new and better ways to clean up the air we breathe while also doing something to combat global warming. The time for us to act is now," Sen. Carper said.

Sen. Carper's clean air bill has attracted support from utilities and environmental groups willing to lend their endorsement to this thoughtful and progressive proposal. In short, the bill would go farther, faster than the Bush

administration's new Clean Air Interstate Rule, which aims to reduce nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide emissions in the eastern United States. CAPA also would replace the administration's mercury rule, which has been roundly criticized as being too weak.

Specifically, the Sen. Carper's CAPA bill would:

- Cut sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by 82 percent by 2015. This acid-rain causing pollution would be cut from today's 11 million tons to a cap of 2 million tons in 2015.
- Cut emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) by 68 percent by 2015. Ozone pollution will be cut from today's 5 million tons to a cap of 1.6 million tons in 2015.
- Cut mercury emissions at each power plant by 90 percent in 2015. This is a stringent, yet achievable, goal to greatly reduce the risks this neurotoxin poses to children and pregnant women.
- Implement a cap-and-trade program to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would be capped at today's levels in 2012 and 2001 levels in 2015. After 2015 power plants would then reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually where by 2050, emission levels will be at least 25 percent below 1990 levels.

Although CAPA only covers pollution from electric power plants, Sen. Carper said his legislation tracks with the goal of writing an economy-wide global warming bill that also addresses the transportation sector and industrial sources. Sen. Carper said this bill could be folded into a larger comprehensive bill or it could move separately if it becomes too difficult to forge consensus around an economy-wide bill.

"My strong preference is to see this legislation folded into a broader global warming bill that addresses greenhouse gas emissions from across the economy," said Sen. Carper, who is an original cosponsor of Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act, as introduced by Sens. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., and John McCain, R-Ariz. "If we fail to reach consensus on an economy-wide bill, however, my bill could just as easily move on its own and still bring about a marked improvement in the air we breathe, while addressing climate change."

Sen. Carper warned that Congress shouldn't enact global warming legislation unless it also addresses the inadequacies of the current rules governing power-plant emissions of mercury, nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide.

"The bottom line is, this year, as we in Congress begin to develop an economy-wide solution to global warming, it's imperative that we simultaneously enact stricter caps on the mercury, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide emitted from power plants nationwide. It makes no sense to force power plants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions but accept the status quo on these other dangerous pollutants. We get more bang for our buck by addressing these four pollutants at the same time," Sen. Carper said.

CAPA would also address the nation's energy shortage and rising energy prices by providing incentives to bring new clean-coal technologies and a new generation of cleaner power plants into the marketplace. Under the legislation, highly efficient, clean-coal power plants receive bonus carbon dioxide allowances, which could be sold on the CO<sub>2</sub> market set up by the legislation to help offset the costs of building new, ultra-clean plants. A new generation of clean-coal power plants could take advantage of America's domestic coal reserves, ease pressure on natural gas prices, reduce U.S. dependence on foreign fuel sources and clean up the environment.

As a cost-containing measure, the Clean Air Planning Act of 2007 allows power plants that are unable to reduce their own CO2 emissions to purchase "offsets" from other sectors of the economy. EPA's analysis of this approach concludes that a significant portion of offsets would be purchased from the agriculture sector of our economy. Under CAPA, farmers throughout the country would have an opportunity to undertake projects that remove carbon from the atmosphere (e.g., by adopting low-till agricultural methods), creating emission reduction credits that could be sold to companies in the electric generating sector. Analysts project that the agricultural sector could potentially earn between \$200 million and \$600 million per year in additional revenues from carbon sequestration projects if Congress were to adopt a cap-and-trade program for CO2 like that proposed by CAPA.

In addition, CAPA provides a meaningful incentive not just to reduce emissions, but to avoid them altogether. The bill will encourage energy-efficiency measures of all kinds because they reduce the need to build new power plants, thus staving off future emissions growth. . If enacted, the bill would lead to rethinking of the nation's electricity network and removal of inefficiencies in electric generation, transmission, and use.

"This bill includes a host of incentives to help transform how we produce electricity in this country," said Sen. Carper. "We must use all of our available resources - coal, natural gas, nuclear, and renewable fuels like wind and solar - to build the cleanest, most-efficient power plant fleet in the world if we are to meet energy demands and combat global warming."

The six Senate bipartisan cosponsors of the Carper bill include: Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine), Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif), Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), and John Sununu (R-N.H.).

The environmental and industry groups supporting the language in the Carper bill include: American Lung Association, Clean Energy Group, Environmental Defense, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Environmental Trust, National Parks Conservation Association, and Solar Energy Industries Association.

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