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ACHIEVING ENERGY INDEPENDENCE & STOPPING GLOBAL WARMING THROUGH A NEW ENERGY ECONOMY

by Senator John Edwards

Global warming is a crisis. We now know that global warming is happening and that human activity is to blame. If we don't change course, within decades we could be living on a fundamentally different planet—one with tens of millions of people facing starvation or forced to become refugees.

For too long, many in Washington have turned a blind eye to problems when the solutions were right in front of us. In part, that's because powerful special interests want to keep things the way they are. Oil companies running gas stations don't want to carry alternative fuels. Utilities making money by selling more power don't want to use it more efficiently. Automakers squeezing profits out of high-polluting SUVs don't see the need to develop the cars of the future.

But this crisis is also an opportunity. With strong leadership, we can emerge from the crisis of global warming with a new energy economy that embraces innovation and creates more than 1 million jobs.

To achieve energy independence and halt global warming, I will cap the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases starting in 2010 to reduce emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and by 80 percent by 2050. Because all nations must join the effort, I will share clean energy technology with cooperating nations and, if necessary, require climate-change commitments in our trade deals.

To cut oil imports by 7.5 million barrels a day by 2025, I will promote improvements in fuel economy, ethanol use, and hybrid cars. I will raise fuel economy standards to 40 miles per gallon by 2016 and will invest \$1 billion a year in helping U.S. automakers advance and apply the latest technology.

Renewable energy sources like wind, solar power, biomass and ethanol are cleaner and can be cheaper than traditional sources of energy. I will require their use to generate 25 percent of the nation's electricity by 2025 and invest more resources in researching and encouraging these clean forms of energy.

I will also open the electricity grid to competition. Thousands of smaller producers of electricity could spark innovation and generate cleaner, cheaper, more reliable power. I will support local renewable power and require utilities to buy it from homes and entrepreneurs.

Energy technology can create a nationwide economic boom, including clean tech investments from Silicon Valley, jobs in renewable energy in rural America, a revitalized manufacturing base and "green-collar" jobs. I will create a \$13 billion a year New Energy Economy Fund to invest in renewable energy and energy-efficient technology. The Fund will be financed by a cap-and-trade system that uses market forces to reduce pollution in a cost-effective and flexible manner.

None of this will happen unless we demand it. The oil companies won't do it. The utilities won't do it. The mining companies won't do it.

Our generation must do it—we can't wait for someone else to take responsibility. Our generation must be the one that says, "We must halt global warming." Our generation must be the one that says "yes" to alternative, renewable fuels and ends our dependence on foreign oil. If we don't act now, it will be too late. It won't be easy, but it is time for Americans to be patriotic about something other than war.



DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES' ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE, AND ENERGY STATEMENTS

Joe Biden:

Energy: <http://biden.senate.gov/documents/BidenRecordEnergy.pdf>

Climate: <http://www.joebiden.com/issues?id=0011>

Hillary Clinton:

Energy: <http://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/energy/>

Christopher Dodd:

Energy: http://chrisdodd.com/issues/energy_independence/

John Edwards:

Environment: <http://johnedwards.com/issues/energy/>
See also Senator Edwards' statement above.

Mike Gravel:

Climate: <http://www.gravel2008.us/issues.php>

Dennis Kucinich:

Environment: <http://www.dennis4president.com/go/issues/a-sustainable-future/>

Barack Obama:

Energy: <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/energy/>

Environment: <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/environment/>

Bill Richardson:

Energy: <http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/issues/energy>

Environment: <http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/issues/environment>