

SMART CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY BLOG

<http://smartclimatepolicy.blogspot.com/2009/12/eeis-kuhn-comments-on-obama-evolution.html>

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

EEI's Kuhn Comments on Obama, Evolution of Debate at Copenhagen

The National Journal's expert blogs feature examined how President Obama is trying to "satisfy the world and Congress" with a breakthrough agreement on GHG emissions reductions at the United Nations-led climate change talks in Copenhagen, Denmark, this week. The National Journal wrote that the president was expected to pledge to reduce U.S. GHG emissions by 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020 "and to commit the U.S. to paying 'a fair share' of a \$10 billion annual fund to help developing nations respond to climate change."

EEI President Thomas Kuhn commented on the blog: "Whatever the outcome of the negotiations at the end of this week, President Obama's personal engagement in the talks demonstrates the administration's deep commitment to addressing the climate challenge. It also highlights the critical role that Congress will play in crafting workable federal climate legislation, which will serve as the foundation for U.S. participation in any future international accord."

Kuhn wrote that he hoped Congress could complete its own work on climate change legislation "that leads to significant emissions reductions, while including strong consumer protection measures. Protecting electricity customers and other consumers from resulting energy cost increases is critical to maintaining public support for federal climate policy over the long haul and for successfully navigating the path to 60 votes in the Senate."

Rob Stavins, a business and government professor and the director of the Harvard Environmental Economics Program at the Kennedy School of Government, wrote: "Real progress in Copenhagen is consistent with the pace of domestic action in the U.S. Congress. President Obama can indeed satisfy both the U.S. Congress and the delegations from the around the world that have gathered here in Copenhagen. I say this because the best goal for the Copenhagen climate talks is to make real progress on a sound foundation for meaningful, long-term global action, not some notion of immediate triumph."

Bill Snape, senior counsel for the Center For Biological Diversity, wrote: "The targets floated by the White House--a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to 17% below 2005 levels by 2020--are even weaker than the targets proposed by the already weak climate bills currently stalled in the Senate."

Posted by Smart Climate Policy News Update at 12/15/2009