

Chaos In Copenhagen

By Rose Braz

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As we write this, the Copenhagen climate talks are reaching a crescendo. On Wednesday December 16, there was a walkout, groups such as Friends of the Earth and Avaaz have been threatened with being banned from the Bella Center headquarters, hundreds of people outside the Bella Center were clubbed and tear-gassed as they tried to go in and participate in the proceedings, and as this is written, there is a youth sit-in inside the Bella Center.

Why? Rather than getting us down to the science-based target of 350 ppm CO₂ we need, current numbers on the table in Copenhagen are projected to put us on a path to 750 ppm by the end of the century, and there is no agreement on adequate financing to support developing nations in shifting to a clean-energy economy or adapting to climate change.

Over the weekend, church bells rang across the globe at 3:50 p.m. in their respective time zones, up to 100,000 people marched through the streets of Copenhagen and about 1,000 were detained, and in San Francisco, a soggy, stalwart band of Center for Biological Diversity supporters, along with Organizing for America volunteers, Greenpeace, and the Mobilization for Climate Justice, came together under a single banner: WE NEED A REAL DEAL IN COPENHAGEN NOW!

What's a real deal? One that's ambitious and grounded in science, and that means no more than 350 ppm of CO₂. One that's just and fair, and that means nations largely responsible for carbon pollution need to take the lead in curbing that pollution and cleaning up the mess. And one that's binding, meaning political promises without legally binding commitments won't fly.

Before the vigil in front of San Francisco's City Hall, organizers met with the staff of Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein and delivered a Center petition with nearly 30,000 signatures on it calling for 350 ppm, maintaining all of the Clean Air Act's capacity to curb carbon pollution, and eliminating or greatly reducing offsets.

They also delivered a letter from nearly 100 organizations
[/www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/global_wa](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/global_wa)

[rmimg_litigation/clean_air_act/sign-on_letter.html](#)> supporting the Center and 350.org's petition to the Environmental Protection Agency to cap carbon pollution at no more than 350 ppm under the Clean Air Act's National Ambient Air Quality Standards program. If you belong to an organization, please consider asking your organization to sign on!

Already this week, Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski announced that she will try to reverse the progress made last week when the Environmental Protection Agency found that greenhouse gases endanger public health. In response, the Center for Biological Diversity's Executive Director Kieran Suckling said, "It is a sad day when a United States senator attempts to stop a federal agency from enforcing one of our nation's most successful and cost-effective laws - the Clean Air Act." We need to vigilantly defend the Clean Air Act -- the only existing tool that can ensure a truly science-based greenhouse-pollution cap.

From the Senate offices, the SF group marched through a constant drizzle to City Hall, passing several painfully cute holiday displays of polar bears as they went. These holiday depictions could soon be the only polar bears left on the planet if we don't translate our symbolic love of the bears into concrete action to save their lives.

Take one minute to call the White House at (202) 456-1111 to let President Barack Obama know the world is looking to him for bold leadership to take on the greatest threat of our time: catastrophic global warming. Tell him we must cut CO₂ emissions by 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, rather than the 3-percent cut he has pledged to take with him to Copenhagen.

Let's keep up the pressure till the end for a real deal in Denmark.