



Enviros Mum on Kerry Meeting

— By Kate Sheppard

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Leaders of a number of big environmental groups met Thursday evening with John Kerry (D-Mass.) to discuss details of their forthcoming legislation on climate and energy, but were tight-lipped about what they learned.

Kerry, Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) met with industry groups like the American Petroleum Institute and the Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, who walked away from the meeting praising what they saw as “in sync” with industry requests. But enviros had little to say about what they think of the bill--and dashed away from the handful of reporters awaiting them outside Kerry's office following the nearly two-hour meeting.

"We had a very encouraging meeting, and we're looking forward to continuing to work together to pass a comprehensive bill this year," said Gene Karpinski, president of the League of Conservation Voters. He didn't offer much more than that.

"I'm not going to comment on any specific conversations or alleged leaks about alleged bills," he continued. "We're very encouraged, very promising, looking forward to moving forward as quickly as possible."

Included in the meeting were representatives from LCV, the Center for American Progress, Sierra Club, Environment America, the National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense Fund, the Alliance for Climate Protection, and the Blue Green Alliance.

Other environmental groups not included in the briefing, however, had harsh words for what they've heard so far about the outline of the bill, which reportedly includes a number of incentives for offshore drilling and nuclear power in addition to a scaled back cap on carbon dioxide pollution. "Everything we're seeing and hearing is dreadful," said Bill Snape, senior counsel at the Center for Biological Diversity. "I think there's some hard thinking that needs to go on by the big greens on what is a bottom line here."

One thing enviros stressed even before the meeting is that the bill is still in the draft stages and may change significantly. "From what I understand, it's not final. There are still things in flux," said Dan Weiss, director of climate strategy at the Center for American Progress, prior to the meeting.