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# The Washington Post

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APRIL 22, 2010



## Greens to bless climate bill first, attack later

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By Juliet Eilperin

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When it comes to the draft climate bill that Sens. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) and Joseph I. Lieberman (I-Conn.) plan to unveil Monday, mainstream environmental groups are planning to praise first and criticize later.

In an e-mail obtained by The Washington Post, Heather Brutz -- field operations coordinator for the environmental coalition Clean Energy Works, outlined the group's media strategy in the coming days. While it will include a "national telepresser with Kerry and big state media on April 27," it notes that high-ranking greens are working on draft statement that "will initially be released for community. Afterwards will follow up with call for strengthening bill."

Those criticisms, Brutz said, include "Clean energy should be

clean (no nukes, etc.)," retaining the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate greenhouse gases and "deal with dirty coal plants."

One of the most interesting things about this coordinated plan, however, is that environmentalists still don't know the details of the bill. That may cause some to wait before jumping on board.

"No decisions have been made because we haven't seen the bill," said Sierra Club spokesman Josh Dorner said.

There's a clear reason for this: The senators haven't finished writing the bill, particularly the transportation section.

"The transportation sector's a problem," Graham told reporters Thursday afternoon. After coming under attack last week for a proposed linked carbon fee on transportation fuels that would raise the price of gas, Graham said, "the linked fee

somehow became a gas tax, and no, we're not going to do that. We're not going to raise gas prices."

So it's back to the drawing board for the senators' staffers.

In the meantime, environmentalists such as William Snape, senior counsel for the Center for Biological Diversity, have begun to worry about what the compromise climate proposal will actually contain.

"By strenuously avoiding any enunciation of a scientific or legal bottom line in the climate bill process, the big green groups have essentially capitulated to industry and will cheer the crumbs thrown at the public's interest in truly clean energy," Snape said. "Even if Kerry-Lieberman-Graham try to argue their bill is only an important first step, it's hard to see how throwing the successful Clean Air Act under the bus is either a gradual or sensible way to reduce the most dangerous air pollutants in human history."