U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Blog Round-up
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ROUND-UP OF MAJOR BLOGS

BP SPILL

1.1 Million Gallons of Toxic Chemical Dispersants Now in the Gulf (*Treehugger*)

With the gruesome pictures of oil-covered birds and soiled shorelines now rolling in, and the narrative of the spill split between BP's continued inability to get a handle on the flow from the source and the federal government's inability to get a handle on BP, an important element of this debacle has slid under the radar: BP has continued to deploy hundreds of thousands of toxic chemical dispersants into the Gulf -- despite repeated directives from the EPA demanding that they halt the practice. They've now passed the 1 million gallon mark.

Here's Grist on why we should be concerned about the continued use of these toxic chemicals: the dispersant products, branded Corexit 9527A and Corexit 9500A, were made exclusively by a former Exxon subsidiary now owned by a company called Nalco. Exxon researchers had already acknowledged that they were significantly toxic for aquatic life. But just how toxic was mysterious -- particularly for humans. The publicly available data sheets for both products revealed that they have the "potential to bioconcentrate," but added this stunner: "No toxicity studies have been conducted on this product."And yet, as of June 9th, reports show that over 1.1 million gallons of the dispersant have been unloaded in the Gulf, according to Grist. This is after a firm directive was issued by the EPA to BP, essentially commanding the company to cease using the stuff. And if you recall, BP essentially responded with a silent middle finger -- they simply refused. So what did the federal government do? Nada. As this goes to press, the dispersants continue to be dumped.

Meanwhile, Nalco won't release samples of the chemical to independent researchers to study the

chemical, so someone could finally get an idea of just how toxic the stuff is. Multiple research units and universities have attempted to get a hold of a sample, but have been denied, according to Grist.

This is outrageous. I know that there's a sense of desperation in the need to find some way, any way to deal with the tragedy. When I went on a CBS news radio show a couple weeks back and mentioned my concern over the dispersants, the host basically asked me, well, do you have any better ideas? And I can't say that I do. But blindly dumping an untested toxic chemical in huge volumes would surely not be one of them.

June 16, 2010
Philip Radford
Executive Director, Greenpeace USA
Posted: June 15, 2010 07:03 PM

President Obama: Give Us Our Future Back (*Huffington Post*)

President Obama's Oval Office speech tonight could be a turning point of historical significance for his legacy, America's security, and the world that we leave our children. Will President Obama give a grandiose speech followed by more politically expedient baby-steps, or will he set America on a new path?
Tonight, the President owes America the unflinching, spin-free truth: The only way to avoid more fossil fuel disasters is to move aggressively away from dangerous energy sources like oil and coal. We have all seen the devastating pictures from the Gulf: ruined beaches, oil-slicked birds, dead and dying marine life. I have witnessed it first hand. It is a mess we can't clean up. No matter what you hear, the best-case scenario is that we clean up 5-10% of the oil.

This is a turning point of immense historical significance. If we miss the turn, we miss the chance to grab our future with both hands. For President Obama to show the leadership that people dreamed he would when sweeping him into office, he needs to declare a new Apollo program, the moon mission that invests in energy efficiency, clean energy, electric cars, public transportation, geothermal energy and safe biofuels that will help kick our oil addiction by 2030. President Obama must stand in the Oval Office tonight and turn away from apologies, excuses, and finger-pointing to seize this moment for America's future.

President Bush missed his chance to free America from the oil addiction that funds those who would attack our country. President Obama must not miss his chance to free us from the same substance that is now despoiling the Gulf.

Big oil, coal and nuclear companies have commandeered the President's energy policy. The recently-formed federal oil spill commission is headed by former EPA Administrator William Reilly, who has been on the Board of Directors at the Conoco-Phillips oil company since 2002. In an August 2009 sale, Conoco-Phillips finished second -- just after BP -- in snapping up deepwater leases in the Gulf of Mexico.

President Obama's Climate Czar, Carol Browner, is pressuring the commission to curtail the moratorium and rush into drilling again. If this commission, with its conflicts of interest, recommends a few safety and regulatory tweaks, it would be like a tobacco executive putting a band-aid on lung cancer.

We hope that the commission will take their responsibility seriously and use this as a moment to reevaluate our energy plan for the future, without relying on false solutions like nuclear power, "clean coal," or "safer" drilling. They must deliver an independent evaluation that isn't compromised by industry interests.

Since we can't turn back the clock, we cannot clean up the mess in the Gulf, and going back to our old dirty energy habits will only mean more environmental catastrophes in the future, the only remaining option is to start fresh and do it right this time.

June 16, 2010
Jennifer GraysonFounding Editor of The Red, White, and Green
Posted: June 16, 2010 09:52 AM

Eco Etiquette: Will The BP Oil Spill Worsen Global Warming? (*Huffington Post*)

The oil and dispersants in the Gulf are enough to worry about, but why is no one talking about the methane from the spill possibly reaching the atmosphere? Could this have an effect on climate change? And if so, shouldn't BP be liable not only for the damage caused by oil, but for the potentially massive greenhouse impact?

-Josh

Methane. Long associated with bovine burps and putrid landfills, it's what triggered the explosion that caused the Deepwater Horizon to burn and sink in the first place, unleashing a torrent of crude into the Gulf of Mexico that has now surpassed the Exxon Valdez as the worst oil spill in United States history. The gas is also still being released along with the oil: According to BP scientists, the mixture spewing from the ocean floor is about 40 percent natural gas (read: mostly methane), and 60 percent petroleum compounds.

Just to refresh your memory, methane is a greenhouse gas that is 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled over the past two centuries, mostly due to human activity.

A potent greenhouse gas. That makes up close to half of the recently revised estimate of the 35,000 to 60,000 barrels of oil leaking each day. Of which an unknown portion is escaping into the atmosphere. You're right to ask: Why is no one talking about this?

When I contacted Jeff Chanton, a professor in the Department of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science at Florida State University who has been closely following the BP spill, he was quick to point out that the immediate short-term threat to the ecosystem in the Gulf, is, of course, the oil itself.

But, he says, "Methane is undeniably bubbling out with this oil and escaping to the atmosphere," he says. "This will exacerbate the greenhouse effect."

How much so, though, is not so clear. Based on Chanton's recent research looking at natural oil seeps on the sea floor, he estimates that anywhere from 10 to 50 percent of the methane released might make its way into the air. This, he says, is because the oil actually forms a protective coating around the methane bubbles, allowing the gas to escape to the surface instead of being dissolved in seawater and consumed by natural methanotrophic bacteria.

"We looked at several sites this past summer, and at one of the sites, the natural seep was very oily," he says. "At the site that was very oily, we did find elevated methane concentrations in the atmosphere over the site. But another site that was more shallow, where the bubbles were not oily, we didn't see that. So the oil helps the methane get to the surface by kind of armoring the bubbles and then they don't dissolve as much."

So now, for the holy cow analysis: For calculation's sake, let's use the flared natural gas figure reported by BP on June 14: 33.2 million cubic feet. (Keep in mind that this is based on the 15,420 barrels of oil BP claimed to collect that day; it doesn't account for the potential methane emissions associated with the oil that was not collected.)

Using the EPA Interactive Units Converter:

1 cubic foot (CF) methane (CH_4) = .04246 pounds of CH_4
33.2 million CF CH_4 x .04246 = 1,409,672 pounds CH_4 = 639.4 metric tons CH_4
639.4 metric tons CH_4 = 13,427.4 metric tons CO_2 equivalent a day

For comparison, that's more than 80 percent of daily CO_2 emissions for the entire New York metro area.

Of course, I'm neither scientist nor mathematician, which is why I'll be closely following the results of a team of researchers currently studying the methane leaking from the Deepwater Horizon disaster site. The group, led by Texas A&M College of Geosciences chief scientist John Kessler, hopes to uncover (along with other important data, like the precise amount of oil that has spilled) just how much of the greenhouse gas is being released into the atmosphere.

Should the spill be deemed a contributor to climate change, however, count it highly unlikely that BP will be held accountable. If Washington can't agree on a price point for carbon pollution, monetizing methane doesn't stand a chance.

Besides, getting BP to pay every penny for the damage that is measurable (like lost jobs) will be challenging enough, despite the president's insistence to the contrary: Twenty-one years after the Valdez oil spill, ExxonMobil still owes $92 million.

BP CEO Tony Hayward, however, has repeated his promise that the company will pay all "legitimate" claims arising from the Gulf spill. Let's hope that methane is the only hot air the company is spewing.

An abbreviated version of this article originally appeared on The Red, White and Green.

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identical spins

Waking America from the BP nightmare (*Grist*)

by Rep. Ed Markey
15 Jun 2010 1:35 PM
BP, Business, Climate & Energy, Ed Markey, Gulf of Mexico oil spill, Politics
57 days ago, in the dead of night, the worst environmental nightmare in U.S. history began.

The spill cam, requested by Congress, has brought the horror into homes across the country, as we watch tens of thousands of barrels of oil billowing into the Gulf every day.

For years, the oil industry swore this could never happen. We were told that technology had advanced, that offshore drilling was safe.

BP said they didn't think the rig would sink. It did.

They said they could handle an Exxon Valdez-sized spill every day. They couldn't.

BP said the spill was 1,000 barrels per day. It wasn't. And they knew it.

Now the other big oil companies, testifying in Congress today, contend that this was an isolated incident. They say a similar disaster could never happen to them.

And yet it is this kind of Blind Faith -- which is ironically the name of an actual rig in the Gulf -- that has led to this kind of disaster.

In preparation for this hearing, Congress reviewed the oil spill safety response plans for all the top five oil companies.

What we found was that Exxon, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Shell, and BP have response plans that are virtually identical. The plans cite identical response capabilities and tout identical

ineffective equipment. In some cases, they use the exact same words and made the exact same assurances.

The covers of the five response plans are different colors, but the content is 90 percent identical.

Like BP, three other companies include references to protecting walruses, which have not called the Gulf of Mexico home for 3 million years.

Two other plans are such dead ringers for BP's that they list a phone number for the same expert -- a man who has been dead since 2005.

The American people deserve oil safety plans that are ironclad and not boilerplate.

We now know the oil industry, and the government agency tasked with regulating them, determined that there was a zero chance that this kind of undersea disaster could ever happen.

When you believe that there is zero chance of a disaster happening, you do zero disaster planning. And the oil industry has invested nearly zero time and money into developing safety and response efforts.

The oil companies amassed nearly $289 billion dollars in profits over the last three years. They spent $39 billion to explore for new oil and gas.

Yet the average investment in research and development for safety, accident prevention, and spill response was a paltry $20 million per year, less than one-tenth of one percent of their profits.

The oil companies may think its fine to produce carbon copies of their safety plans, but the American people expect and deserve more. It is time to expect more from the oil industry. And that needs to start today.

First, Congress must ensure that there is unlimited liability for oil spills by oil companies. While we try to cap this well, we must lift the cap on oil industry liability.

Second, Congress must also enact wide-ranging safety reforms for offshore drilling. If oil companies are going to pursue ultra-deep drilling, we must ensure that it is ultra-safe and that companies can respond ultra-fast.

Third, the free ride is over. Oil companies need to pay their fair share to drill on public land. Right now every single one of the companies here today and dozens of others are drilling for free in the Gulf of Mexico on leases that will cost American taxpayers more than $50 billion dollars in lost royalties.

Fourth, we must ensure that new technologies are developed for capping wells, boosting safety and cleaning up spills. I will soon introduce the Oil SOS Act to go along with the SURF fund to ensure that we have 21st century technologies in place for 21st century drilling risks.

And finally, America must move to a safer clean energy future so that we don't have to rely as much on oil to power our cars and our economy. The House has acted, passing the Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy & Security Act. Every day we delay action, China moves ahead in wind technology. The Germans create more solar jobs. Worst of all, American consumers send half a billion dollars a day to OPEC and countries that wish us harm.

In overwhelming numbers, the American people are ready to start working our way to a clean energy future. They want to wake up from BP's oil spill nightmare to a future powered by clean, safe energy solutions.

CLIMATE CHANGE

June 16, 2010
Richard WilesPosted: June 16, 2010 09:36 AM

Forests New Coal in House and Senate Climate Bills (*Huffington Post*)

Biomass Energy , Climate Bill , Climate Change Legislation , Kerry Lieberman Climate Bill , Obama Climate Change , Renewable Energy , Waxman-Markey Climate Bill , Green News
At least 30 million acres of America's forests could be cut down and used for fuel at US power plants if renewable fuels and biomass provisions of current Congressional climate and energy proposals aren't radically revised. This will send a massive 4.7 billion ton pulse of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that would accelerate global warming as it drastically erodes forests' ability to pull carbon out the atmosphere.

This perverse outcome stems from the glaring but largely overlooked Enron-style accounting practices being used by Congress, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state agencies to calculate carbon pollution, which falsely assume that burning biomass fuels, including trees, produces zero net carbon emissions. Close examination shows that the reverse is true: Logging and burning trees will produce a near-term surge in carbon releases -- greater than from burning coal -- while diminishing for decades the forests' ability to recapture those emissions.

EWG's analysis released today in our report - Clearcut Disaster: Carbon Loophole Threatens US Forests, http://www.ewg.org/clearcut-disaster is based on U.S. Department of Energy electricity sector forecasts of the likely impacts of the House-passed American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) bill.

Why trees? Increased logging is the only way to provide sufficient fuel for the predicted growth in biomass electricity generation, because the other principal sources of fuel are simply not available in quantities anywhere near adequate to meet projected demand. Major Utilities in Ohio have already proposed to "co-fire" giant coal plants with trees, and in some cases to switch their fuel entirely to "whole tree chipping." Across the country more than 120 wood burning biomass power plants have been proposed in just the past three years.

It's hard to imagine a more ill-conceived environmental policy. Coal-burning utilities and the biomass industry are promoting policies that will jeopardize millions of acres of forests while virtually guaranteeing that CO2 reduction goals from the power energy sector are not realized.

On June 10, Massachusetts released a potentially game-changing analysis of biomass electricity generation in that state, concluding that burning trees in power plants is worse for climate change than burning coal. Over the next 40 years, the report concluded, burning coal would release less carbon dioxide than cutting forests and burning the trees.

EWG supports strong climate legislation, but the biomass carbon loophole must be fixed immediately. We need climate policies that are not based on fake CO2 reductions.

Biomass fuel would provide the majority of renewable electric power under renewables fuel standards proposed or in place at the state and federal level. Increased logging is the only way to meet the demand for this biomass because the other principal sources usually cited, such as switchgrass, agricultural and construction wastes and logging residues are simply not available in sufficient amounts.

Forests are a major force pulling carbon out of the atmosphere. Cutting them down to burn in power plants will not only inject massive amounts of stored carbon into the atmosphere, it will destroy the best defense against the buildup of atmospheric carbon.

Follow Richard Wiles on Twitter: www.twitter.com/AlexEWG

Real Reductions America Can Easily Afford

EPA modeling shows American Power Act brings economic and climate benefits (*Grist*)

by Andrew Light
15 Jun 2010 4:42 PM
This post was co-authored by Richard W. Caperton.

Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) released analysis today of their American Power Act, or APA, by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA's analysis definitively demonstrates that we can reduce our carbon pollution and jumpstart the clean energy economy at a very small cost to American consumers. This analysis is also

consistent with several other studies showing that the American Power Act would create jobs, reduce consumer energy prices, and help the United States lead the world toward stabilizing carbon emissions at safe levels by 2050.

The EPA concluded that the APA would be affordable for American families if it is enacted. The average family will have to spend less on energy if this important legislation passes, primarily because of increases in energy efficiency mandated and stimulated by the legislation. EPA projects that passing the APA would reduce Americans' annual energy expenditures by 10 percent by 2020.

The agency also finds that Americans will be more prosperous in 2020 than we are today. While families will on average consume $79 to $146 less per year in 2020 if the bill passes, this pales in comparison to how much consumption will increase from 2010 due to predicted economic growth. The EPA also concluded that the bill's consumer protection programs work so well that those who can least afford a decline in consumption -- low-income households -- will actually be better off under this bill than in a future without it. In fact, the poorest 10 percent of the population would be almost $160 better off in 2010 under the APA.

It's important to note, however, that the EPA analysis is primarily focused on environmental modeling, which means it doesn't include everything one would want to know about the bill's economic effects. The Center for American Progress has previously argued, for example, that any analysis of climate legislation's economic impact is incomplete without discussing climate change's devastating effects. EPA does not explicitly model the economic benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but they do recognize the importance of this issue, stating, "Economic effects of these impacts are likely to be significant and largely negative, and to vary substantially by region ..."

Among other things, EPA also doesn't study how the bill would affect jobs and employment, the federal budget, or oil consumption. But fortunately the EPA analysis is not the only study of how the APA would affect the United States.

Recent work from the independent Peterson Institute (using a U.S. Energy Information Administration model) and ClimateWorks (using a McKinsey model) both show that the APA would lead to new jobs for American workers. These studies find that it would create an average of 203,000 to 440,000 more jobs per year between 2012 and 2020 than would exist without the bill.

The Congressional Budget Office found that similar climate legislation would generate revenue for the federal government. Upcoming CBO analysis of the APA will also likely show that passing this bill will actually reduce the government's budget deficit.

The Peterson Institute analysis further shows that Americans will use less gasoline and import far less oil in 2030 if the Senate passes the APA than under a business-as-usual scenario. Despite the oil industry's claims that climate legislation will make gasoline unaffordable, the EPA finds that this legislation will only increase the price of gasoline by about a dime by 2020 -- well within gasoline's normal price volatility.

The APA will also encourage American businesses to invest in clean energy technologies that will power our low-carbon future, and it will drive significant increases in renewable energy. What's more, the EPA predicts that there will be seven-and-a-half times more generation from coal with carbon capture and storage if the Senate passes this bill.

Finally, the EPA convincingly answers an old criticism leveled by many who are opposed to U.S. action on this global problem: If the United States acts to reduce its emissions will it make any difference in global levels of carbon pollution? EPA's answer is a resounding yes.

EPA modeled three scenarios for global emission reductions based on the APA's passage, which is unlike their analysis of the House of Representatives' climate bill from last summer. Their first scenario assumes concerted global action, where the United States follows the carbon reduction path laid out in the Kerry-Lieberman legislation and the other developed countries of the world follow suit, keeping good on their pledge at the Group of 8 meeting in July last summer of cutting their emissions 80 percent bellow 2005 levels by 2050. This scenario assumes the plausible outcome whereby developing countries adopt a policy beginning in 2025 that caps emissions at 2015 levels and reduces emissions to 26 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

The scientific goals for achieving climate safety established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are that we should aim to hold temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels by 2050. Under this first APA scenario, EPA estimates that there is a 75 percent chance of keeping temperature rise at 2 degrees and a 95 percent chance of holding temperature rise at 95 percent.

But EPA also modeled a more modest scenario for those such as Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), the ranking Republican on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, who find such developing country action overly optimistic. Under the second scenario developing country contributions to global emissions reductions do not effectively start until they make good on their promise to cut emissions by 80 percent by 2050. On such a "we act only if you act" scenario, which imagines the contribution of developing countries to be nothing until 2050 and from thereafter to hold their emissions at 2050 levels, there is still a 50 percent chance of holding temperature increase under 3 degrees Celsius and an 11 percent chance of holding the increase at 2 degrees. Of course, we would also need to pass APA for this to work.

Clearly this second scenario does not represent where we want to wind up. But it does illustrate how important U.S.-led action is for developing countries. We can expect a more realistic "tit-for-tat" scenario if the United States acts. If the United States makes good on its promise to reduce its emissions now -- rather than waiting until 2050 to act -- then the developing countries that matter the most -- the major emitters such as China and India -- will likely reduce their emissions in response, which increases the likelihood that we will stabilize temperature increase at 2 degrees Celsius for each year we move forward.

The third scenario that the EPA modeled was no global action, which, as one might expect, essentially gives us no chance of holding temperature increase at 2 degrees. But when we step back and look at the total package APA offers on the plus side of the ledger -- the reduced

energy costs, decreases in dependence on foreign and unsafe sources of oil, and the job creation possible from this legislation -- the best choice is clearly enacting this legislation and improving our global chances for achieving climate safety.

EPA analysis of Senate climate bill shows modest costs, omits benefits (*Grist*)

Grist admin avatar badge avatar for David Roberts
by David Roberts
15 Jun 2010 11:27 AM

USDA Forest ServiceToday marks the release of the long-awaited EPA analysis of the American Power Act, Kerry and Lieberman's climate bill. It could not come at a more consequential time: the decision about whether to include a carbon cap in the impending energy bill will be made in the next few days. Along with Obama's speech tonight, the EPA's analysis will play a big role in guiding that decision. It also comes on the heels of news from NOAA that global temperatures in May were the warmest on record. Tick-tock ...

So what's the verdict? Overall, EPA finds that the impacts of APA will be broadly similar to the impact of the House's American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES), i.e., affordable. Here are key takeaways:

* The impact on U.S. consumers will be "modest." Says the report: "Average household consumption is reduced, relative to the no-policy case, by 0.0-0.1% in 2015, by between 0.0-0.2% in 2020, by 0.2-0.5% in 2030, and by 0.9-1.1% in 2050." Averaged over 2010-2050, households will pay an extra $79 to $146 a year. Not exactly a steep price to pay to avoid catastrophe. (Incidentally, overall household consumption will continue to rise, even with the mild constraints of the bill.)
* EPA's analysis only measures costs; it does not measure benefits. Specifically, it does not include the benefits of avoiding climate change. If you think that's absurd, well, you're right. As Michael Livermore wrote last week, the "all costs no benefits" method of analysis utterly distorts lawmakers' perspectives. Obviously if the costs of unrestrained climate change were included, the bill would look like a screaming bargain.
* Energy-intensive and trade-expose industries are held harmless. To quote: "the allowance allocations in H.R. 2454 [which are roughly the same as APA's] can essentially eliminate any adverse effect that a cap-and-trade program would otherwise have on energy-intensive trade-exposed industries' international competitiveness, and can thereby prevent emissions leakage that might otherwise arise if such a program were to reduce the competitiveness of U.S. industry."
* Offsets hold the cost of compliance down, but the limits on offset use are never reached. Overall, domestic offsets would account for about 18 percent of total reductions, and international offsets would account for another 18-29 percent, depending on how many are used.
* Several key provisions are not included in the EPA model. These include, for example, "lighting standards, new regulation for offshore oil and gas extraction, powering vehicles with natural gas provisions, and GHG tailpipe standards." For these and many other reasons,

"uncertainties remain that could significantly affect the results" of the analysis. (What EPA won't say: this kind of modeling is worth about as much as throwing darts at a dartboard.)

For reasons I've written about before -- and discussed with energy wonk Trevor Houser -- this kind of modeling tends to overestimate costs and underestimate the benefits of climate legislation. Even with those weaknesses, however, the analysis still shows costs that are, in the grand scheme of GDP growth between now and 2050, tiny.

Cost is simply not a credible reason to oppose a carbon cap.

I'll update this post if Kerry and Lieberman say anything in their press conference introducing the EPA report.

June 16, 2010

Dan LashofDirector, NRDC's climate center
Posted: June 16, 2010 11:02 AM

It's Time for the Senate to Act Responsibly (*Huffington Post*)

Last week the Senate debated—and defeated—the Murkowski resolution which would have overturned EPA's science-based finding that global warming pollution endangers public health and the environment. During the debate, many Senators who voted for the resolution, and some who voted against it, argued that it's Congress' job to determine how to reduce carbon emissions.

Here is a sample of those statements—

Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR):

Congress, the elected representatives of the people of this Nation—not unelected bureaucrats—should be making the complicated, multifaceted decisions on energy and climate policy.

We know, desperately, that we want to lower our carbon emissions, lessen our dependence on foreign oil, and create good, green jobs.

Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE):

Finding a national consensus on how to control the levels of carbon emissions is the job of the elected members of Congress. Reducing carbon emissions will have a substantial economic impact on our country, but in different ways for different states. Congress should take the lead in determining the rules that will apply.

Sen. John Rockefeller (D-WV):

I am willing to work with people on a solution, but it has to be legislative because on this, above all, the Congress must decide.

Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA):

Congress—and not the EPA—should make important policies, and be accountable to the American people for them.

Tomorrow Senate Democrats will meet in a special caucus to discuss the content of energy and climate legislation to be brought to the Senate floor in July. This is the opportunity for Senators who want Congress to define America's climate policy to speak up for a comprehensive bill that sets real limits on global warming pollution.

If it's Congress' responsibility to decide America's climate policy, then it's time for the Senate to act responsibly. Talk is cheap. It's time for action.

This post originally appeared on NRDC's Switchboard blog.