

WORC

Western Organization of Resource Councils

WORC Statement on the American Power Act

May 14, 2010

On May 12, Senators Kerry and Lieberman released a draft of their long-awaited energy and climate bill, the American Power Act. The Western Organization of Resource Councils released the following statement by its leaders in response:

“WORC supports real and effective climate solutions and clean energy investments,” said Ellen Pfister, a Montana rancher and chair of WORC’s Coal and Climate Change Campaign Team. “However, we cannot support the legislation proposed by Senators Kerry and Lieberman. Instead of retooling our energy infrastructure it focuses on providing money and resources for unproven technologies to preserve coal generation, offshore drilling and nuclear power.

“This bill would invest billions of taxpayer dollars in unproven, high risk carbon sequestration technology in an attempt to make it possible to mine and burn every lump of coal, regardless of the economic and environmental costs,” Pfister said. “If this coal cannot be mined without exemptions to the air, water and waste pollution standards – and this bill sets up a process to do so – then we should leave it in the ground.”

“This bill does not build a bridge to a new energy future,” said Randy Joseph, a community wind energy developer in Oregon and chair of WORC’s Clean and Renewable Energy Team. “It squanders the opportunity to set Renewable Energy Standards and Energy Efficiency Standards that would provide sustainable energy investments for generations.

“Furthermore, a clean, renewable energy future is within our reach. A new report from Synapse Energy Economics released by the nonpartisan Civil Society Institute shows an alternative approach that would meet our electricity needs without the use of coal or new nuclear plants. This approach would give us the same reductions in carbon emissions through a stepped-up program of energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy instead of bailing out the coal and nuclear industries.”

“One of the only new protections in the bill is a requirement that oil and gas companies tell the public what chemicals they use in hydraulic fracturing,” said Don Nelson, a North Dakota rancher and chair of WORC’s Oil and Gas Campaign Team. “This is an important step toward giving landowners the information they need to protect their drinking water and their families. But, more protections are needed if Congress is going to create significant new incentives for natural gas production as proposed in this bill.”

The Synapse Energy Economics report can be found at CivilSocietyInstitute.org. The complete text of the Kerry-Lieberman American Power Act discussion draft is available at <http://kerry.senate.gov/americanpoweract/intro.cfm>.