



2008 Democratic Presidential Primary Endorsement Guide



Climate Change

QUESTION

What mechanisms do you believe would most significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions during your presidency?

What is your proposal to protect the poor from potentially expensive strategies for mitigating climate change?

BACKGROUND

Many people believe that climate change is the most significant challenge humanity faces today, and that human beings are playing a major role in this phenomenon. It is now mainstream to propose limiting greenhouse gas emissions in order to help avert the major problems caused by the warming of our planet: radical fluctuations and extremes in weather patterns, mass species extinction, and rising sea levels.

The United States bears particular responsibility for this global threat, yet our political leaders have been particularly irresponsible in dealing with this issue:

- The United States has 5% of the world's population, but is responsible for 25% of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. That large share is not entirely attributable to our wealth, since our per capita emissions are twice as high as the EU and Japan, respectively. (1)
- In 2004, transportation and electricity generation accounted for 60% of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. (2) Despite this, it was only this year that the U.S. Senate voted to increase fuel efficiency levels in automobiles, after 3 decades of inaction.
- To avoid the worst effects of climate change, we would need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 50 – 80%. Compared to that standard, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol required developed countries to reduce CO2 emissions by only 5% from 1990 levels by 2008-2012. Yet, our leaders could not even stomach those minimal demands, and we failed to ratify the treaty. (3)
- In the face of federal inaction, states have taken the initiative. California sued the major automakers for damages from auto emissions, but the suit was dismissed this month by the federal courts. (4)

BIDEN

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>2007 - Cosponsored Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act (Sanders-Boxer S. 309)</p> <p>2006 - 100% rating on environmental issues http://www.capwiz.com/lcv/bio/keyvotes/?id=696&congress=1101&lvl=C</p> <p>Lifetime rating of 84% on environmental issues (Grist.com).</p> <p>2005 - Introduced the Lugar-Biden Climate Change Resolution (Senate Resolution 312) calling on the U.S. to participate in U.N. climate negotiations. http://www.grist.org/feature/2007/08/29/biden_factsheet/</p>	<p>Believes the US must take a leadership role in international climate treaty negotiations, and make it a top priority.</p> <p>Supports the Clean Power Act which would require power plants to achieve specific reductions in emissions of sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and mercury.</p> <p>Promotes improving fuel efficiency by upgrading to a better system that combines protection for U.S. automobile manufacturing jobs with predictable increases in fuel efficiency standards for cars, SUVs, and light trucks.</p> <p>Supports renewable energy, e.g., wind, solar, and geothermal.</p> <p>Would provide debt relief to developing nations in exchange for protecting tropical rainforests that are critical to the global climate.</p> <p>“He has called energy security his "first priority," and has [shown] enthusiastic support for biofuels. He has been a leader in pushing for a new round of international negotiations on climate change.” (Grist.org)</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Joe Biden campaign website.</p>

CLINTON

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>2007 - Cosponsored Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act (Sanders-Boxer S. 309)</p> <p>Made her campaign carbon-neutral in April.</p> <p>On June 19, 2007, voted in favor of an amendment that would provide loans for coal projects, including liquefied coal; the amendment did not pass. http://www.grist.org/feature/2007/08/09/clinton_factsheet/</p> <p>2006 - 71% rating on environmental issues (http://www.capwiz.com/lcv/bio/keyvotes/?id=10902&congress=1101&lvl=C).</p> <p>90% lifetime rating on environmental issues (Grist.com)</p>	<p>Would stop global warming by investing in clean energy technologies, establishing a national market-based program to reduce global warming pollution, increasing our fuel efficiency, and restoring the United States' rightful place as a leader in international efforts to address the problem of climate change.</p> <p>Would create a Strategic Energy Fund that would inject \$50 billion into research, development, and deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean coal technology, ethanol and other homegrown biofuels, etc.</p> <p>Would create the fund without raising taxes by giving oil companies a choice: invest in renewable energy themselves or pay into the fund.</p> <p>Would also eliminate oil companies' tax breaks and make sure they pay their fair share for drilling on public lands.</p> <p>"Her distinctive contribution is the notion of a "Strategic Energy Fund" financed by repealed tax breaks and royalties from oil companies. She tends to focus on "clean coal" and ethanol. Puts particular emphasis on "energy independence." (Grist.org)</p> <p>Calls for the U.S. to cut its consumption of foreign oil in half by 2025. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Supports a goal to get 20 percent of the U.S. electricity supply from renewable sources by 2020. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Supports raising fuel-economy standards for automobiles to 35 miles per gallon by 2020. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Supports coal-to-liquid fuels if they emit 20 percent less carbon over their lifecycle than conventional fuels. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Hillary Clinton campaign website.</p>

DODD

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>2007 - Cosponsored Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act (Sanders-Boxer S. 309)</p> <p>Aired the first-ever presidential campaign ad to focus on global warming.</p> <p>Made his campaign carbon neutral in June 2007. http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2007/08/02/dodd_factsheet/</p> <p>2006 - 100% rating on environmental issues http://www.capwiz.com/lcv/bio/keyvotes/?id=686&congress=1101&lvl=C</p> <p>77% lifetime rating on environmental issues (Grist.com)</p>	<p>Seeks to reduce 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through various mechanisms, including a Corporate Carbon tax .</p> <p>Would enhance national security by eliminating our dependence on Middle East oil by 2015.</p> <p>Would increase efficiency standards for consumer products, raise fuel economy standards in automobiles to 50 mpg, impose tough standards for construction of new coal plants, and increase access to mass transit.</p> <p>Would increase renewable electricity standard to 20% by 2020 and make the Production Tax Credit permanent for clean and renewable sources of energy.</p> <p>Supports investments in Biofuels and other Clean Energy Technologies Produced Out On Our Farms.</p> <p>Would require that all new government vehicles use hybrid, plug-in, or other fuel efficient and alternative technology, and require that all new and existing federal buildings be equipped with the latest energy efficiency technologies.</p> <p>Supports creating a technical education curriculum that trains a new generation of automobile mechanics, electricians, plumbers, and construction workers to install, repair and maintain energy efficient goods across the spectrum, from cars to lamps.</p> <p>Export safe renewable energy technologies to, friends, allies and developing nations.</p> <p>“His climate and energy plan includes a corporate carbon tax. The revenue from the tax would be put in a fund devoted to renewables and efficiency. There's also a ban on new coal power plants with no carbon sequestration, an emphasis on public transit, hybrid cars, and green buildings, and much more.” (Grist.org)</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Chris Dodd campaign website.</p>

EDWARDS

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>Made his campaign carbon-neutral in March 2007. He is buying carbon offsets to neutralize the effects of his campaign travel and office energy use, while also cutting energy consumption at campaign offices, buying recycled-paper office products, and encouraging staff to walk to work and take other energy-saving measures. The first Presidential candidate to go carbon-neutral.</p> <p>2003-2004 - 32% rating on environmental issues - http://www.capwiz.com/lcv/bio/keyvotes/?id=439&congress=1082&lvl=C</p> <p>During his single term (from 1999-2004) representing North Carolina in the U.S. Senate, John Edwards received a middling 63 percent rating from the League of Conservation Voters -- a score lower than might have been expected because he missed a number of key votes while campaigning for president and vice president in 2003 and 2004. http://www.grist.org/feature/2007/07/31/edwards_factsheet/</p>	<p>Would cap greenhouse gas pollution starting in 2010 with a cap-and-trade system, and reducing it by 15 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050.</p> <p>Would lead the world to a new climate treaty that commits other countries—including developing nations—to reduce their pollution. Will insist that developing countries join us in this effort, offering to share new clean energy technology and, if necessary, using trade agreements to require binding greenhouse reductions.</p> <p>Proposes to raise share of renewable sources in energy section to 25% by 2025, and to raise fuel economy standards to 40 mpg by 2016. Proposes a Green Collar Jobs Program to train 150,000 workers in energy-related jobs. (DC for Democracy questionnaire)</p> <p>Would create a New Energy Economy Fund by auctioning off \$10 billion in greenhouse pollution permits and repealing subsidies for big oil companies. The fund will support U.S. research and development in energy technology, help entrepreneurs start new businesses, invest in new carbon-capture and efficient automobile technology and help Americans conserve energy.</p> <p>Proposes meeting the demand for more electricity through efficiency for the next decade, instead of producing more electricity.</p> <p>“He’s stumping for 80 percent cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050, and fleshing that goal out with detailed proposals for big boosts in renewables and fuel efficiency, changes to the energy grid and efficiency standards, a green-jobs program, and more.” (Grist.org)</p> <p>Calls for a ban on new coal power plants unless they capture and store carbon dioxide emissions (CO2). Would invest \$1 billion a year in research on ways to store large amounts of CO2 underground safely. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Opposes nuclear power, as well as government investment in coal-to-liquid technologies. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Source, unless specified: John Edwards campaign website.</p>

GRAVEL

Record	Platform/Statements
	<p>Would reduce America's carbon footprint in the world by passing legislation that caps emissions, and lead the fight against global deforestation. (Mike Gravel campaign website)</p> <p>Would launch and lead a massive global scientific effort to end energy dependence on oil and integrate the world's scientific community in this task.</p> <p>"He has advocated a cap on carbon emissions, an international effort to battle climate change, and a large-scale fight against deforestation."</p> <p>Supports imposing a carbon tax and would convince other countries to do the same, then pool the resulting revenues and use them to fund an international scientific and engineering effort to wean the world from fossil fuels within a decade.</p> <p>Would "lead the fight against global deforestation" as one way to fight climate change.</p> <p>Calls for ending the use of coal to produce electricity.</p> <p>Calls for fast adoption of auto fuel-economy standards as strict as those in Europe, about 40 miles per gallon.</p> <p>Supports an extensive national maglev train system.</p> <p>Supports a wholesale shift to a liquid-hydrogen energy system.</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Grist.org.</p>

KUCINICH

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>2006 - 100% rating on environmental issues - http://www.capwiz.com/lcv/bio/keyvotes/?id=468&congress=1101&lvl=C</p> <p>Cosponsor of Rep. Henry Waxman's Safe Climate Act, the toughest climate bill in the House, which calls for reducing carbon emissions 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050.</p> <p>Has been a vegan since 1995.</p>	<p>Would rejoin the Kyoto accord and implementing its recommendations. (Dennis Kucinich campaign website)</p> <p>Proposes a Works Green Administration (modeled on Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration) that would put millions of Americans to work building and installing clean-energy technologies, retrofitting homes for energy efficiency, etc.</p> <p>Calls for extensive government funding to develop renewable-energy technologies, and for withdrawal of government subsidies for nonrenewable energy.</p> <p>Calls for a "Global Green Deal" that would push development of renewable energy in the U.S., creating jobs in the process, and partner with developing nations to provide them with affordable, clean energy technologies.</p> <p>Calls for a phase-out of all nuclear power plants, and for more stringent regulation of nuclear waste.</p> <p>Calls for a phase-out of all coal power and coal mining. Has highlighted the threat of mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants.</p> <p>Calls for a ban on logging, mining, and other resource extraction on U.S. public lands.</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Grist.org.</p>

OBAMA

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>2007 - Cosponsored Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act (Sanders-Boxer S. 309)</p> <p>2007 - Also cosponsored the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act.</p> <p>2006 - 100% rating on environmental issues - http://www.capwiz.com/lcv/bio/keyvotes/?id=3181&congress=1101&lvl=C</p> <p>Cosponsor of the Coal-to-Liquid Fuel Promotion Act. Would support liquefied coal only if it emitted 20% less carbon over its lifecycle than conventional fuels.</p> <p>Introduced the Health Care for Hybrids Act, which provide federal support for health-care benefits for retired U.S. autoworkers in exchange for US auto companies investing at least 50% of savings in fuel-efficient vehicle technology.</p> <p>Primary cosponsor of the Fuel Economy Reform Act, which would raise vehicle fuel-efficiency standards by 4% each year via tax incentives for retooling auto factories.</p> <p>Introduced Oil SENSE Act, which eliminates select oil-industry tax breaks and requires that oil companies renegotiate flawed Gulf of Mexico drilling leases that have let companies avoid paying billions in royalties.</p> <p>Cosponsor of the 2005 Vehicle and Fuel Choices for American Security Act, which called for cutting U.S. oil consumption by 2.5M barrels/day within a decade, and 10B barrels/day by 2031. In 2005, the U.S. consumed 20M barrels/day.</p> <p>Has sponsored/cosponsored many bills, including the Biofuels Security Act and 2005 FILL UP Act, to promote ethanol and other biofuels, via tax credits and other incentives for biofuel production, E85 infrastructure, and flex-fuel/alt-fuel vehicles; mandates levels of biofuels/alt-fuels be added to our fuel supply; requires federal agencies to buy alt-fuel vehicles and use ethanol blends when possible; requires all new cars sold in the U.S. to be dual-fuel capable.</p> <p>Has been working to get the nation's first zero-emissions coal power plant, FutureGen, built in Illinois.</p> <p>Voted for the 2005 Energy Policy Act, a sweeping, oil-friendly energy bill opposed by enviros; Obama cited the bill's support for ethanol and "clean coal" technology. The act passed and Bush signed it into law in August 2005.</p> <p>Inserted language into the 2005 Energy Policy Act to provide \$40M for bringing a combined flexible-fuel and hybrid car to commercial distribution within five years.</p>	<p>Supports implementation of a market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050.</p> <p>Would auction carbon permits and use the revenue to fund the transition to new energy sources and technologies.(DC for Democracy questionnaire).</p> <p>Will gradually increase and strengthen CAFE standards while protecting the financial future of domestic automakers.</p> <p>Will lower the carbon in our fuels by setting national standard.</p> <p>Encourage Auto Manufacturers to Build More Advanced Vehicles.</p> <p>Expand the Use of E85 and Other Renewable Fuels. Require 20 Percent of Electricity to Come from Renewable Sources by 2020.</p> <p>Invest in Advanced Technologies.</p> <p>Supports raising fuel-economy standards for automobiles to 40 miles per gallon by 2020. Promises to restore environmental protections that the Bush administration rolled back by executive order. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Opposes oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.(Grist.org)</p> <p>Supports a goal to get 20 percent of the U.S. electricity supply from renewable sources by 2020. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Calls for a National Low Carbon Fuel Standard, which would require that all transportation fuels sold in the U.S. have a 5% lower carbon intensity by 2015 and 10% lower by 2020. The legislation could spur the production of biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, since one way to lower the carbon intensity of petroleum-based fuels is to add a proportion of biofuels. The proposal is modeled after a similar standard that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger implemented in California in January 2007. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Barack Obama campaign website.</p>

RICHARDSON

Record	Platform/Statements
<p>Signed a bill in March 2007 that will require New Mexico's large electric utilities to get 15 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2015, and 20 percent by 2020. Signed four additional clean-energy-related bills in April 2007.</p> <p>Teamed up with governors from Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington in 2007 to create a Western Regional Climate Action Initiative, which will set regional goals for cuts to greenhouse-gas emissions.</p> <p>Led New Mexico to become the first state in the country to join the Chicago Climate Exchange, a voluntary carbon-trading marketplace, in 2005.</p> <p>Fought against the Bush administration's plans to open nearly 2 million acres of desert grassland in New Mexico, known as the Otero Mesa, to oil and gas drilling.</p> <p>As governor of New Mexico, signed groundbreaking executive orders in 2005 [PDF] and 2006 [PDF] that have the state addressing climate change in a number of ways.</p>	<p>Will work to double the CAFE standards to 50 mpg by 2020. And will set a life-cycle low-carbon fuel standard that reduces the carbon impact of our liquid fuels by 30% by 2020.</p> <p>Calling for a national renewable portfolio standard of 30% by 2020 that will rise to 50% by 2040.</p> <p>Dramatically Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: 90% by 2050 20% by 2020, 80% by 2040 with a market-based cap and trade system for greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Will create a North American Energy Council with Mexico and Canada, which supply about 20% of our oil, and make sure our relations with these neighbors are firm and friendly.</p> <p>Work with the Persian Gulf nations, and our partners at the UN, to create a multilateral system for protecting the Persian Gulf.</p> <p>Will raise some revenue, from the sales of carbon permits.</p> <p>Invite oil companies to become energy companies, and invest in our thriving new energy economy.</p> <p>Support energy productivity, new technologies and alternative fuels.</p> <p>Calls for cutting U.S. oil demand 50 percent by 2020. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Calls for 30 percent of the U.S. electricity supply to come from renewable sources by 2020, and 50 percent by 2040. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Opposes Bush administration policies that let old, coal-fired power plants make significant upgrades without installing new pollution-control equipment. Calls for a life-cycle low-carbon fuel standard that would reduce the carbon impact of liquid fuels 30 percent by 2020. (Grist.org)</p> <p>Source, unless specified: Bill Richardson campaign website.</p>

FURTHER READING:

Information on Cap and Trade: Grist.org (<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagID=1085> (info on cap and trade)

Environmental scorecards (<http://presidentialprofiles2008.org/>)

Climate Change 101 (http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/1114_OverviewFinal.pdf)

NOTES

(1) Climate Change 101 (http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/1114_OverviewFinal.pdf)

(2) Ibid

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Please contact dcfordemocracy@gmail.com with any questions/comments.

- (3) OneWorld.net (<http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/114123?PrintableVersion=enabled>)
(4) DetNews.com (<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070918/AUTO01/709180359/1148>)