



News Release

EESI Calls for Bipartisan Action After Obama's State of the Union Speech

February 12, 2013—In tonight's State of the Union speech, President Barack Obama emphasized the need to keep the economy on the right track as it regains its strength and creates new jobs. He also reiterated the critical need to address climate change, after a year which saw record heat, drought, and weather extremes in the United States: "For the sake of our children and our future, we must do more to combat climate change."

"We at EESI share these goals, and believe they are inextricably linked, as the President himself made clear, both tonight and in his November 6, 2012, victory speech," said Carol Werner, Executive Director of the Environmental and Energy Study Institute. According to President Obama, clean energy jobs are the jobs of the future, and "as long as countries like China keep going all-in on clean energy, so must we." China had the highest renewable energy investment in the world from 2009 to 2011, and is the leading manufacturer of wind turbines, solar panels, solar hot water, and hydropower. America should not, must not, be left behind.

Renewables are very much part of the mainstream, representing almost half of the new electricity generating capacity brought on-line in America in 2012 (the growth in wind generation capacity alone outpaced that of natural gas). Renewable electricity generation has grown 62 percent since 2001, and now accounts for 1 million direct and indirect jobs. Jobs in energy efficiency have also grown substantially. Many of these are jobs that cannot be outsourced (e.g. weatherization expert, solar installer).

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute salutes the President's willingness to take action using his existing regulatory authority: "If Congress won't act soon to protect future generations, I will. I will direct my Cabinet to come up with executive actions we can take, now and in the future, to reduce pollution, prepare our communities for the consequences of climate change, and speed the transition to more sustainable sources of energy." But EESI firmly believes that bipartisan action is not only possible but required in order to tackle climate change. Two avenues that show particular promise for bipartisan agreement are investments in energy efficiency and phasing out short-lived climate pollutants (such as black carbon and methane).

Tonight, President Obama issued a challenge to America: that it "cut in half the energy wasted by our homes and businesses over the next 20 years." According to Carol Werner, "Boosting America's energy efficiency and cutting waste energy in half as the President called for is the low-hanging fruit in the campaign against climate change. Investments in energy efficiency will create jobs, save money, protect human health and reduce carbon emissions all in one fell swoop and in every energy sector of the economy. As the President said tonight, this should not be a partisan issue," said Carol Werner.

Reducing emissions of black carbon, methane, tropospheric ozone and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is also a win-win proposition. According to NASA research, many reductions can be made in ways that are economically beneficial. Methane mitigation techniques, for instance, can save up to \$3,500 per ton reduced, and the majority of measures cost less than \$250 per ton. Likewise, approximately half of black carbon measures are cost-saving. Reducing such emissions also has profound health benefits, preventing three million premature deaths annually. Finally, reducing short-lived climate pollutants will immediately slow rising temperatures, which can help keep global temperatures from rising more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

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Learn more about these issues here:

[Renewable Energy: Technology, Trends, and Economics](#)

[Reducing Short-Lived Climate Pollutants: An International Response for Fast-Action Climate Mitigation](#)

[Why China Is Acting on Clean Energy](#)

[Weatherization: A Success Story](#)

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