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### **Las Vegas, NM passes resolution supporting a new climate bill**

This week support for the much-awaited “cap and trade” bill that was being created by Senators Kerry, Lieberman, and Graham collapsed. At the same time the Las Vegas City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting an alternative climate bill, the CLEAR Act, that would provide a “clean energy rebate” for all Americans.

“The CLEAR Act makes sense for the people of New Mexico. We are already experiencing the effects of global warming and the CLEAR Act is an effective way to address climate change while protecting New Mexicans,” said Las Vegas City Councilor, Dr. Andrew Feldman.

Studies have shown that the CLEAR Act (Carbon Limits and Energy for America’s Renewal) would cut emissions, create jobs and put money in consumers’ pockets by establishing a monthly auction in which fuel producers would bid for “carbon shares.” 75% of the revenue resulting from these auctions would be distributed as a dividend to every legal resident in the United States as a way to offset the increased costs of carbon-based fuel likely to be passed onto consumers by fuel producers.

A report showing the benefits of a clean energy rebate was released in March - “Clear Economics: State-Level Impacts of the CLEAR Act on Family Incomes and Jobs,” by James K. Boyce and Matthew E. Riddle of the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This report showed that lower-income households benefit the most, and that middle class households are “made whole” in that their refunds more than offset their costs from higher fossil fuel prices. Only households in the [very] highest income brackets – who consume more and therefore pay more in fuel costs – fail to come out ahead after factoring in their refund.

Senators Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) introduced the CLEAR Act in December 2009, which creates a “clean energy rebate” system for collecting and distributing funds. It sets a cap—and requires the energy companies to bid each year for their permits to put carbon in the atmosphere instead of providing polluting industries with permits to pollute for free (as is the case with the failing cap and trade proposals). Then, it takes 75% of the revenues generated from the auction of pollution permits and uses it to write a check to every American every year to offset the rising costs of electricity and products. The remaining 25% of the revenues generated are used to invest directly in clean energy and energy efficiency research and development.

“The CLEAR Act has achievable carbon targets. It is transparent and fair. It is easy to understand; and most significantly, it does not involve the carbon trading casino that will disadvantage Americans. It doesn’t impact the EPA’s authority to regulate pollutants and it doesn’t involve guarantee full employment for Wall Street traders,” said Mariel Nanasi, Senior Policy Advisor for New Energy Economy.

The cap-and-trade bills such as the proposed Kerry, Lieberman, Graham legislation have dominated press coverage and discussions in Congress. However, this week Senator Lindsey Graham “promised to leave President Obama and Senate Democrats standing at the altar after they started pushing last week for a comprehensive immigration reform bill that he called “nothing more than a cynical political ploy” headed into the 2010 midterm elections.”<sup>1</sup>

Graham is the only republican thus far who has expressed support for cap and trade. In response, Senator John Kerry announced on Tuesday that the cap and trade bill would not be introduced until immigration reform is resolved.<sup>2</sup> All of these political hurdles come in light of the fact that Graham is the only Republican supporter of cap and trade and the other co-sponsors feel that they must have some Republican support to pass a climate bill this year.

At the same time, the CLEAR Act is a bipartisan climate bill that has already been introduced in Congress. Senator Susan Collins (co-sponsor of the CLEAR Act) is a Republican from Maine who is ready to work with other Senators to pass a climate bill that works to protect individuals and families. The passage of the resolution to support the CLEAR Act in Las Vegas, NM, as well as a similar resolution passed last month by the Santa Rosa, CA city council<sup>3</sup> shows the breadth of support for the CLEAR Act coming from communities.

“The Las Vegas City Council recognizes that the CLEAR Act is a far superior mechanism to cap-and-trade. The city councilors and mayor understand that the clean energy rebate being proposed in the CLEAR Act will create jobs and protect those with the least resources,” said Dr. John Fogarty, President of New Energy Economy.

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<sup>1</sup> NY Times - *Senate Sponsors Scramble to Save Climate Bill After Lost Weekend* – April 26, 2010

<sup>2</sup> NY Times - *No Climate Bill Until Resolution of Immigration Issue, Says Sen. Kerry* – April 27, 2010

<sup>3</sup> [http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/doclib/agendas\\_packets\\_minutes/Documents/20100330\\_CC\\_Item11.5.pdf](http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/doclib/agendas_packets_minutes/Documents/20100330_CC_Item11.5.pdf)