

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 8:49 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Podesta and Light Exclusive on new Global Climate Partnership

From: John Podesta [mailto:]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 07:44 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: FW: Podesta and Light Exclusive on new Global Climate Partnership

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At least two people applaud what S is doing. No doubt Denis will be emailing asking why we didn't give POTUS credit.

From: Andrew Light [mailto:]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 6:38 AM
To: Energy Core; Energy Legislative Strategy
Cc: John Podesta
Subject: Podesta and Light Exclusive on new Global Climate Partnership

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Hi All: Below is the op ed John and I have in Politico on the announcement being made at State later this morning on short lived climate pollutants (black carbon, HFCs, and methane). Please circulate to your lists. State allowed us to put up the details early. It's at <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0212/72957.html>. Best, Andrew

POLITICO

New global deal on climate change

By: John D. Podesta and Andrew Light

February 16, 2012 04:36 AM EST

Those concerned about climate change and greenhouse gas pollution have been justifiably frustrated in the last few years. Despite some significant moves by the Obama administration — particularly improving vehicle efficiency and creating incentives for significant investment in wind and solar power — national action has been ground down by partisanship fueled by climate skepticism.

But Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's announcement Thursday plants seeds of hope. The United States, with Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico and Sweden, is launching a partnership aimed at reducing "short-lived climate pollutants" with a focus on methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons.

This new coalition to reduce short-lived climate pollutants aims to raise \$10 million in the first year to enhance public and private efforts worldwide to reduce these pollutants and scale up as we move forward.

We know the bulk of climate pollution comes from carbon dioxide generated by burning fossil fuels for energy. Mitigating this is essential — but has met fierce resistance from fossil fuel industries.

What is less understood is that carbon dioxide is a relatively long-lived greenhouse gas, with lasting effects. About half of all carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere for roughly 100 years, but some 20 percent remains for many thousands of years. It effectively locks in whatever warming we create well beyond our lifetimes.

This fact adds to the political difficulty in reducing these emissions — since the climate benefits of action now are felt decades in the future.

In contrast, gases like methane, black carbon (soot) and many types of HFCs are both shorter lived than most carbon dioxide and stronger in terms of their potential to cause atmospheric warming. Methane, for example, lasts only 12 years, but it has around 25 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide.

HFCs can also be much shorter lived, yet hundreds or tens of thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide. The rapid growth in these gases makes the case for action even more urgent. HFCs, largely used as refrigerants, now exert less than 1 percent of the impact on global warming as carbon dioxide, but at current rates they will rise to between a fifth and a quarter of the impact by 2050. Since these gases are used and produced in relatively discrete parts of the economy, they can more easily be substituted with off-the-shelf, affordable technology.

Action now on these gases can have relatively fast benefits. A study in Science last month by an international team of 24 scientists, led by NASA climate modeler Drew Shindell, estimated the effects of initiating 14 methane and black carbon control measures. Combined with other greenhouse gas reductions, these measures would reduce total projected warming by half a degree.

This is significant — given that the international goal to avoid the worst impacts of climate change is to try to stabilize temperature increase caused by humans at 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels. These measures would also save millions of lives by improving air quality, and increase crop yields by some 30-135 million metric tons by 2030.

With these benefits, the cost is minimal. Reducing a metric ton of methane costs around \$250, while the benefit is worth \$700-\$5,000.

Clinton's new partnership is not the first time this administration has proposed action on these pollutants. An initiative by the U.S., Mexico and Canada to reduce HFC emissions under the Montreal Protocol has been blocked over the last few years by a handful of countries.

Thursday's announcement should help to push that effort over the finish line. If successful, it would garner eight times the emission reductions of the U.N.'s Kyoto Protocol.

Action on these short-lived gases is not a substitute for the needed reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. That will require rapidly transforming America's energy portfolio by developing clean energy, clean energy technology and clean energy services.

But this new initiative is a bold move needed to achieve long-term climate safety for vulnerable people today and future generations tomorrow.

John D. Podesta is chairman of the board of the Center for American Progress. Andrew Light is director of the Center for Global Ethics at George Mason University and a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.



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