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I want to thank you, Jill and Sean and the folks at the Cornell Global Labor Institute for inviting us here and I want to thank all of you for showing up and caring enough about this issue.

It is a new day in America. The debate over global warming has shifted from the science to the solution. Scientists agree that urgent action is needed and that the goal should be to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to eighty percent below the 1990 level by 2050, as Dr. Socolow laid out, with 2 percent current emissions a year starting immediately.

It is now the “*means* to that end” that is the focus of the political debate. Thanks to the effort of workers, farmers and entrepreneurs, we actually have the technology and the know-how to prevent catastrophic global warming.

The Sierra Club in our lives and in our environmental work is in the big business of moving public policy. We see three major hurdles now that we’ve almost solved the science that we need to navigate, if we’re going to adopt the legislation that we need to put America on the right track to reducing emissions at home and to provide leadership abroad. Three challenges. The first one is a public demand. The second is a political leadership. The third is pricing our carbon economy in a fair way.

Let me take that first challenge. The challenge of public demand. Does the American public care enough about this issue to demand action? In the last year, as Dave Foster and other folks have mentioned, the American public has actually turned a corner, both in their understanding of the issue, as well as their willingness to seek the solutions. Whether it was Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, severe droughts happening in the west, or Al Gore’s movie, American public opinion has shifted significantly over the last

year. Let me share just a few of those polling numbers with you all from the last month. From the ABC Washington Post poll: the number of Americans identifying global warming as the world's biggest environmental problem is double what it was a year ago, double. Thirty-three percent cited in an open-ended question which is huge. From the Greenberg-Quinlan research done in the middle of April, seventy-six percent of the people believe the effects of global warming are apparent already. And by a margin of almost two to one, sixty to thirty-three percent, Americans believe that we need to take action now, or it will be too late to stop it later. From the New York Times CBS poll done the day before Earth Day: only twenty-seven percent of people feel that our nation's energy policy is headed in the right direction. Twenty-seven percent. By a margin of seventy-nine to seventeen, people believe that shifting to a new alternative energy production will help America's economy and create jobs.

Americans believe there is a problem, and they believe there is a solution. For the American political system to tackle serious problems, especially when there's going to be winners and losers which there will as the wedge demonstrates, then it requires more than just passing interest. Our public needs to demand that the leaders make the tough choices and they *need* to make that demand loud and clear. At a fundamental level, this is about organizing. We are beginning to see the demand in the public, whether it was the importance of energy issues in last fall's elections, or whether it was thousands of people taking to the streets on April 14th to demand that Congress "Step It Up" and take some action. As organizers, we need to figure out how to nurture and foster more of that demand, how to amplify it and find creative ways to amplify it so that politicians have *no* choice but to act responsibly. The first challenge is a public demand.

The second challenge is one of political leadership. Do our national politicians and political leaders in the US understand the scope of the problem and have the political will necessary to do what is necessary to solve the problem? Unfortunately, our country has the history that on most major transformative policies, our federal government does not have much political will at all. They tend to follow, not lead. Federal action comes only

after a majority of states have passed laws that significantly move the country in a new direction.

As Dave Foster mentioned earlier, luckily hundreds of mayors, governors and state legislators across the country have sized up the problem of global warming and are moving forward to institute solutions. They recognize the opportunities associated with this new economy, and they're actually competing with each other to pass policies that will attract new business and put them on the cutting edge. Almost five hundred mayors across the country have signed on to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, pledging to take action to reduce global warming in their communities, and establishing local committees to implement the solutions to meet the Kyoto reduction targets. Twenty-three governors from state legislatures have passed renewable energy portfolio standards. The single biggest thing they do, is they establish a state market for clean energy technologies spurring innovation and job creation. Several of these states have actually passed this RPS since the new year. It's in the *new* governors and *new* state legislatures that were elected last fall.

Last fall's election also provided some backbone on the issue at the federal level. All across America at every level of government, clean energy and pro-environmental candidates won. We picked up approximately twenty-five new environmental votes in the House of Representative and five new environmental votes in the Senate, which was enough to create strong environmental leadership in both houses of congress. This leadership has raised the profile on the issue and the importance of the issue. Whether it's from holding hearings to creating special oversight committees to introducing really solid good legislations that in fact could help solve the problem. We've also picked up four environmental Governors in Ohio, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Maryland, where those candidates promise to develop new energy technologies, to create jobs and fuel their state economies.

Even with this new leadership, there's been a full-court press to minimize the impact by special energy special interests, big oil, coal, nuclear power to minimize the impact of

their respective sectors and to protect the industry bottom line. We all sort of laugh when we talk about Senator Inhofe thinking that global warming is a “hoax.” Let’s remember that only thirteen percent of the Republicans in Congress actually believe that global warming is caused by human activity.

While we have in fact made a lot of progress, we also have a lot of challenges. I want to cite two things that in my mind while we are in a political era of incredible opportunity, we’re also in an era of incredible challenges. This first one is the carbon lobby, recently and quite successfully, pressured Congress to make the two *worst* available energy options coal to liquids and nuclear re-processing top priorities for federal research.

That’s one of the *only* things Congress so far has done to address this issue. A lot of talk but little action. Seventy-five democrats joined the Republicans in the House to override their own leadership and caved in to the special interests that have always run the energy policy in DC. We have a long way to go in our federal capitol.

At the state level, utility companies are passing laws to shift construction costs from shareholders to consumers, thereby eliminating their risk and thus the immediate need for long-term carbon planning. Right? There is still *clearly* a lot of politics happening in the energy debate and it is not at all clear that we are going to win in that debate. Ultimately we’re going to need new leadership in our White House to move policy at the federal level and to provide the necessary leadership we need in the international arena.

For the first time ever, presidential candidates are regularly talking about energy and global warming. A global warming question was actually asked in the Democratic debate, the *first time ever*. It appears that all major presidential candidates will be required to outline an energy platform and address global warming as part of their campaigns. The presidential contest does have the potential to be an important forum to strengthen our over-all political will to get something done in Washington. I think we’ll see the inner-play between what’s happening in Congress and what’s happening on the

campaign trail on this issue bounced back and forth in the political realm over the next year.

Finally, the third challenge we face, is that we need to price the policies fairly. You folks know this better than I do. Can we get the polices right to reflect our values in the new energy economy that reduces global warming, creates jobs here at home, and encourages fair trade abroad? We need to produce a revolution in the production and consumption of energy that protects the planet and creates new jobs, yet invests in the invention and distribution of new technologies. While we do not want to rely exclusively on the **market. We're** not likely to create the change that we need unless we figure out how money and profit are helping to drive that train.

Doing so raises a set of issues that in organized labor *and* in environmental protection we're very aware of. We need to create a new democratized energy economy that empowers consumers, not just producers, and that benefits workers and communities, not just corporations. We need to construct the economics around carbon carefully so we're not just substituting big wind or big ag for big oil or we're creating market incentives that drive corporations to move jobs to the lowest bidder internationally. We need to continuously ask, "Who benefits from the clean energy economy?" and to look for polices and practices that raise all boats and that benefit local workers, consumers and communities. There are a lot of proposals out there right now that don't address any of that at all.

We care not only about our local economy but also about an equitable global energy economy. We need trade policies that reflect the value of fair and equitable wages and establish standards for environmental health and safety. The international market remains tricky in this business. We need to be sure that as we price carbon in our country, that we're not creating the same problem we currently have with chemicals or pesticides. That we take action here which moves the jobs overseas and production overseas, just to have the pollution come back across the border. We need to be thinking about not only how we're pricing it here, but, "what are our trade policies?" Both for

equitable wages and environmental protection, but also so that we make the whole economic system work.

Finally, America needs to provide leadership in the international arena. Clearly, the single biggest thing the US can do to stop global warming is to curb our own emissions. Then we need to participate in international negotiations when we're ready to lead. We as a country need to review our international aid policies to be sure that we're promoting economic development that reduces greenhouse gas emissions such as: ending the subsidies we have right now for oil and gas industry through our foreign assistance programs and contributions to multi-international aid institutions. We need to be pricing the economy in a way that allows every country to rise to the challenge that we all face.

It really is a new day in America. The science is settled and opportunities abound everywhere. If we can weave our way through these political and public hurdles, both increasing demand, focusing that demand so that we're helping to strengthen political will of our leadership, and then proposing solutions that reflect the values of a clean environment, fair trade and good jobs, and I think we'll be on our way and it will be a new dawn, a new day indeed.