



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on October 20, 2009

Fewer Senators Support Climate Bill

“The fence is getting a bit more crowded” is how the New York Times put it on October 20. They were referring to the growing number of senators “unwilling to commit to voting for” cap-and-trade climate legislation.

The legislation in question is S. 1733, a bill that purports to “create clean energy jobs, promote energy independence, reduce global warming pollution, and transition to a clean energy economy.” In actuality, it would restrict the use of fossil fuels to produce energy and skyrocket energy costs by radically restricting CO₂ emissions. As

[summarized by the Milwaukee Examiner:](#)

“This bill requires greater reductions in CO₂ emissions than its counterpart from the House of Representatives. The Senate bill calls for 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2020, whereas the House bill only calls for a 14% reduction by that time.”

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Supporters of S. 1733 are pushing hard to line up a filibuster-proof total of 60 votes, but the list of fence sitters “continues to swell from both directions as key senators hedge their bets.” The *Times* reported that “24 senators now belong in the ‘fence sitter’ category.”

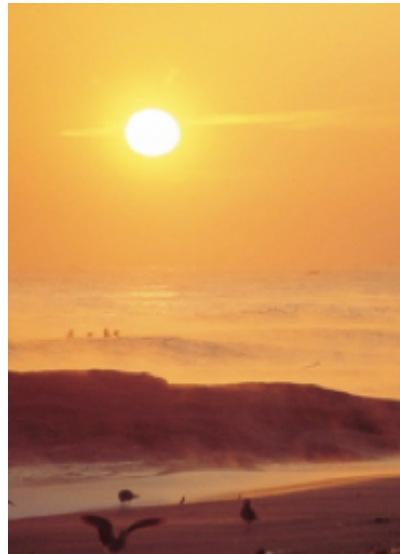
Senators John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), the primary sponsors of S. 1733, currently have 31 “yes”-voting Senators on their side. The coalition includes Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), and Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

Twelve senators are in what the *Times* calls the “probably yes” category, including Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), and Mark Warner (D-Va.). Some have gone from “probably no” status to sitting on the fence, such as Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio).

The *Times* wrote that “Byrd has long questioned action to curb emissions but has taken a lead role on carbon sequestration language that Kerry and Boxer are trying to wrap into their proposal. Voinovich has a reputation for bipartisan consensus building, and recent signals supporting the nuclear power industry are raising hopes in some sectors that the retiring senator should still be considered in play.”

Republicans will play a significant role as it is unlikely that all the Democrats will support the legislation. The *Times* sees Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) as falling in the “probably yes” classification, and believes that “Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) stands out as one leading GOP candidate to get behind a climate bill.” Murkowski has said, “Count me as one of those who will keep my mind open as we move forward in looking at all aspects of this.”

Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) is working with Kerry to find areas of compromise, and his support could lead





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to a domino effect on other Republicans. Jason Grumet, the president of the Bipartisan Policy Center, has noted that as many as 10 Republicans “are certainly poised to come back if the Graham beachhead becomes more secured.”

While the efforts to garner support continue, five committees are still working on details of the bill. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has left open the possibility of floor debate before the end of the year, but given that no deadlines have been established for the committee leaders, many expect it will be early 2010 before the full Senate addresses S. 1733.

Environmentalists are, of course, pressing for progress. David Goldston of the Natural Resources Defense Council stated, “People have to understand this vote is going to happen sooner rather than later.”

This makes it all the more urgent that Americans become informed about climate change and about how climate change legislation will affect their lives. *The New American* recently [interviewed Phelim McAleer](#), the co-producer of *Not Evil Just Wrong*, a documentary on the harmful effects of regulation growing out of global warming hysteria.

Reading the interview and viewing the documentary, which just debuted at more than 7,000 locations on October 18, is the first step. Then Americans must express opposition to climate change legislation to their representative and senators so that, in McAleer’s words, “the politicians will be afraid to pass laws that will surely harm the American family.”



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