

The Honorable Robert Casey, Jr.
United States Senate
383 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

May 19, 2009

Dear Senator Casey,

On behalf of more than 24,000 statewide members and customers, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry respectfully asks that you carefully consider a number of concerns relative to the proposed national cap and trade program that is currently being debated in Congress as part of the discussion on climate change.

First, it must be pointed out that Pennsylvania's job creators are committed to environmental protection, and business in general has made tremendous strides voluntarily to reduce air pollution. This is part of the reason why, nationally, a number of emissions – airborne lead, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide – have experienced dramatic reductions over the past three decades while energy consumption has grown by more than 41 percent.

Additionally, the PA Chamber has many member companies that are involved in the development and implementation of renewable energy sources.

While the regulated community appreciates the Obama administration's desire to reduce carbon emissions, how our nation approaches this issue will have great bearing not only on our overall economic well-being but on the availability of affordable energy options for businesses and families. This is particularly true for Pennsylvania and similar large coal-producing and consuming states.

The potential impact on Pennsylvania is staggering. A hastily mandated cap and trade program has the potential to create a hostile economic climate that would no doubt result in the loss of thousands of jobs across many industry sectors, particularly the coal industry. As coal-fired plants are phased out, jobs will disappear with them. In the Commonwealth, the expectation is the loss of 66,000 jobs by 2020.

The cap and trade discussion further cannot ignore the impact on energy prices. Many experts agree that the program would lead to higher energy costs. For Pennsylvania employers and residents who are already worried about how they will afford electricity with the lifting of rate caps, combined with the nation's and state's continued economic struggles, the added pressure of even higher utility bills threatens the Commonwealth's livelihood and competitiveness.

Finally, the question needs to be asked why our nation is going down the cap-and-trade path if other countries are not willing to take a seat at the table. Regardless of one's stance on climate change, it is a global issue that requires a global solution. Even if the United States were to completely eliminate its greenhouse gas emissions, the carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere would be relatively unaffected if countries with emission rates growing at a far greater pace than ours are unwilling to make reductions.

Pennsylvania Chamber members are willing to work with federal and state lawmakers to develop an energy strategy that balances environmental protection with job growth and economic competitiveness. Our members believe that all forms of energy must be part of the mix in order to meet growing demand. This includes not only renewable sources, but also environmentally friendly nuclear power and natural gas, as well as clean coal.

Thank you for considering these points as the climate change discussion progresses.

Sincerely,

Floyd Warner
President
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry