



**THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING**

**Opening Statement of Chairman Edward J. Markey**

**“Solar Heats Up: Accelerating Widespread Deployment.”**

**September 24, 2009**

The focus of today’s hearing is solar power, which will play a critical role as policymakers around the world promote renewable energy as part of the global response to climate change. It is important to see this hearing in the larger context. In his first address yesterday to the United Nations, President Obama highlighted the unprecedented investment in American renewables as a concrete sign of American progress on global warming. China’s Premier Hu Jintao also made an important announcement at the UN, stating China’s commitment to draw 15 percent of its total primary energy from non-fossil sources by 2020.

The announcement by China’s premier has been backed by billions of dollars, and billions of yuans. Last week the Speaker and I met with Mr. Wu Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. He had just arrived from Arizona, where they had signed an agreement with First Solar for a 2,000 megawatt photovoltaic farm to be built in the desert of Inner Mongolia. This will be world’s largest solar photovoltaic power plant project and is projected to cost nearly \$5 billion. But it is only a small part of a nearly 12,000 megawatt renewable energy park planned there.

Thankfully, after years of neglect under the Bush Administration, America is no longer just watching other countries race ahead. We are now making real strides to reclaim a leadership role in a technology that was invented on *our* shores. The Bureau of Land Management has received more than 150 large-scale solar plant applications with a projected capacity of 97,000 megawatts of electricity, mostly in the sunny southwest. Imagine that: we have healthy competition for clean energy technology between the barren steppe of Inner Mongolia and hot desert of Nevada and Arizona.

In just over 70 days the nations will convene in Copenhagen to commit to solutions for the common good. Here in the United States, the need to position American industry for new areas of long-term growth is also urgent. As Americans across the country can attest, pink slips at work can be as personally devastating as the threat of melting ice caps, rising seas, and more frequent floods, droughts, and hurricanes. The climate and the economy are two challenges facing our country that will impact us globally and locally. Clean energy technology will be a key solution to both.

The global transition to clean energy presents an opportunity for job creation in all areas of the country. Solar power in the West and Southwest, wind turbines in the Plains and Texas and off shore in New England and the mid-Atlantic, biomass in the South and Northwest. All areas of the country have energy resources they can use that are plentiful, clean, renewable, affordable, and MADE in AMERICA. That is a statement that cannot be said about most of the oil we consume, which comes marked MADE BY OPEC.

We have taken the first step in assuring that these clean energy jobs stay in the United States and unleash a global energy revolution. Last June, the House passed the Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy and Security Act. When enacted this bill will cap the carbon pollution causing global warming, require the widespread deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and invest \$200 billion in energy technology.

The clean energy revolution will not happen magically. Addressing important issues like electricity transmission, land use, and financing are critical to integrating our vast solar resources. Saving our planet and our economy from our fossil fuel addiction will take targeted policy and active engagement from utilities, the renewable energy industry, project developers, and the environmental community. I am pleased that we have just such a panel of experts today to move this conversation forward.

I thank you all for being here and I look forward to hearing your ideas.