



NEWS RELEASE

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Snowe Addresses International Climate Change Summit

***** PHOTOS INCLUDED *****

WASHINGTON D.C. – U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine), Co-chair of the International Climate Change Taskforce, today addressed an international climate change summit in Washington D.C. Hosted by GLOBE International, the two day forum is comprised of legislators from the G8 and 5 other emerging economies from around the world. This group is working to draft a statement of recommendation on the optimal path forward to confront global climate change that will be presented to German Chancellor, and current President of the G8, Angela Merkel and the G8 + 5 Climate Group in June of this year. The final statement will be presented to the Japanese President, and sitting President of the G8, in 2008.

“Denying that humans are changing our climate is no longer a tenable position and, given the scale and scope of the problem, it should be clear that time is not on our side,” Snowe said. “I was pleased to join legislators from around the world today to continue the discussion we began with the International Climate Change Taskforce in 2004. Progress is being made, and it is incumbent upon us, as legislators to lead the charge forward as we face this monumental threat.”

In 2005, the International Climate Change Taskforce chaired by Snowe and the Right Honorable Stephen Byers, a member of the United Kingdom Parliament, submitted a plan and specific recommendations to then G8 President and British Prime Minister Tony Blair that resulted in the creation of the G8 +5 Climate Group. Based on those recommendations, a group of Ministerial representatives was appointed by each member of the G8 + 5 Climate Group. The legislators attending today’s GLOBE International summit serve as counterparts of the Climate Group Ministerial representatives.

Snowe is also a member of the Columbia University’s Earth Institute International Roundtable (GROCC), a group of 150 international stakeholders formed in 2004 to create a joint recommendation statement that focuses on core scientific, technological, and economic issues

critical to all nations in shaping sound public climate change policy. This statement will be released on February 20th.

Along with Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Senator Snowe is a cosponsor of the Global Warming Reduction Act currently before the Senate. This legislation would set aggressive greenhouse gas emissions targets that leading scientists conclude provide the best means to keep global temperatures below the danger point, which is 2 degrees Centigrade above the pre-industrial level.

Snowe has long championed legislation that would increase the corporate automobile fuel efficiency (CAFÉ) standards for American cars, and joined Senator Diane Feinstein in 2005 as a cosponsor of the 10 in 10 bill. This legislation would increase CAFÉ standards for the U.S. auto industry by 10 miles per gallon over the next 10 years and dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emitted by cars in the United States each year.

Senator Snowe was joined by German Chancellor and G8 President, Angela Merkel; Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank, Sir Richard Branson, Senator Joe Biden (D-DE); Jeff Bingaman (D-NM); Barbara Boxer (D-CA); Larry Craig (R-ID); Joe Lieberman (I-CT); and John McCain (R-AZ) as guest speakers at the GLOBE International summit.

During her speech to the Globe International forum, Snowe cited her home state of Maine as an example of leadership and innovation in the effort to confront global climate change. “Maine is one of eight Northeastern states at the vanguard of environmental stewardship agreeing to a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative that calls for a cap-and-trade program. This partnership will cap carbon dioxide emissions from power plants at current levels, 121 million tons per year, through 2015. By 2020, member states must cut CO₂ emissions by 10 percent,” Snowe said.

Excerpted text of Senator Snowe’s address to the GLOBE International Summit as prepared for delivery:

I believe we are witnessing a sea-change in acceptance of the reality of global warming; the issue has intensified not only environmentally but also politically and, as such, has dramatically changed the prospect for passing climate change legislation substantially for the better. And I am working to further improve the dynamic not only as a member of the Finance Committee that considers key tax incentives to develop alternative, advanced technologies and more energy-efficient infrastructures that will help mitigate our dependence on fossil fuels, but also as the highest ranking Republican on the Subcommittee that, for the first time, has been assigned oversight of the agency responsible for researching climate change.

Moreover, our objective at the outset of the International Climate Change Taskforce, or ICCT, was to submit a plan in 2005 to the G8 President at the time – Prime Minister Tony Blair – which helped create the G8+5 Climate Group. We believe our recommendations still provide a template for progress both domestically and internationally as you develop recommendations for presentation to Chancellor Angela Merkel to consider this spring. And there will be another major announcement next week, when the international roundtable I’ve participated in –

conducted by Columbia University's Earth Institute – releases its joint statement focusing on core scientific, technological, and economic issues critical to all nations in shaping sound public climate change policy.

These efforts, combined with the seminal unveiling of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change declaration that global warming is unequivocally occurring and human activities are the primary cause, should serve as a nexus for spurring the kind of unprecedented cooperation and action that is required to address this unprecedented challenge. Denying humans are changing our climate is no longer a tenable position and, given the scale and scope of the problem, it should be clear that time is not on our side.

We have unquestionably reached scientific critical mass, the question now is can we gather the political critical mass? What it will require is all of us moving forward on a dual, simultaneous track, with the G-8 plus 5 Ministerial hopefully coalescing around many of the proposals you will develop during this forum. In the meantime, it is also imperative the United States seize the opportunity to serve as a model to encourage participation of developing nations by implementing a plan to reduce our own CO2 emissions. Because we recognize our unique responsibility to exercise leadership both nationally and globally in this historic challenge given that, while we represent about five percent of the world's population, we contribute at least 20 percent of the planet's manmade greenhouse gas emissions. And we acknowledge the U.S. must engage with a significant level of commitment so that other countries will participate in adopting a global strategy.

Indeed, the primary objective of our climate change taskforce was to provide a foundation for building international consensus by creating practical alternatives to the Kyoto Protocol, thus allowing the U.S. and other nations not signatories to Kyoto to shape and participate in this critical debate while offering the world a long-term agreement to guide international policy over the course of this century. These initiatives were drafted as a blueprint, rather than a doctrine, for moving forward specifically to avoid unattainable recommendations that few if any nations could actually follow.

One of the most significant goals we proposed was to prevent the global average temperature from rising more than 2 degrees Centigrade above the pre-industrial level to limit the extent and magnitude of climate-change impacts. We chose this approach because beyond the two-degree increase, scientists suggest there is a "tipping point" beyond which they predict catastrophic environmental and economic events such as the loss of 95 percent of coral reefs, irreversible damage to the world's major forests, and sea level rise that threatens human life, property, and whole societies. And I believe our ICCT recommendation is extremely consequential to consider and incorporate for the G-8 plus 5 Legislators' Dialogue.

That goal has been the catalyst for many of the initiatives introduced in the United States Senate, including the appropriate latitude in how the goal is actually achieved. In the Senate, I've cosponsored bills introduced by Senators Kerry, Lieberman and McCain, with the purpose of helping to prevent that 2 degree Centigrade rise. Senator Biden's Resolution I am cosponsoring calls on the U.S. to address global climate change through the negotiation of fair

and effective international commitments as we did under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992.

The genesis of change will likely have to develop in Congress – and it will be vital that any legislation musters the kind of strong, bipartisan support that will garner the concurrence – and the signature – of the President. And I believe it's an encouraging sign that 33 Senators, on a bipartisan basis, testified in a recent hearing on global warming convened by Senator Boxer as Chair of the Key Environment Committee. But to truly build bipartisan support, one of the key obstacles we must clear is overcoming the myth that environmental stewardship and economic growth don't go hand in hand as we all know, they do, and they can. That's why I authored a bill that ultimately became law that for the very first time utilizes our tax code to encourage greater investments in energy efficiencies for commercial buildings, equipment, and new homes.

Further the International Climate Change Taskforce called for mandatory but flexible market-based carbon cap and trade systems to render the uniformity and predictability in standards that industries require, as they must plan for their futures as far out as 30 or even 50 years so legislation should incorporate such a system. In fact, generating additional momentum on this issue – just last month, CEO's of ten of America's largest companies created a groundbreaking partnership with key environmental groups in calling on Congress to pass a mandatory cap and trade program. Because they realize it is the power of the "invisible hand" that will result in more cost-effective strategies for these companies that are positioning themselves in the growing global market, by investing in climate-friendly technologies they say will be crucial to their future success. I couldn't agree more, and so too, does government have a vital interest in providing incentives for such environmentally and economically beneficial investments.

The collective impact of all of these initiatives should resonate across party lines and help to unite us in purpose. In the final analysis, it's identifying the common ground for common strategies that will maximize our success in embracing global action before it's too late to attack this global problem. Our message as legislators, both here and internationally, must be coordinated, compelling, and clear. The existence of global warming is beyond dispute that energy efficiencies, alternative energies, advanced technologies and economic growth are increasingly interconnected across the globe and not mutually exclusive, that same sense of interdependence must pervade public policy globally.