

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Woman's National Democratic Club (WNDC) applauds your vigorous efforts to get Congress and the American people behind legislation to move the nation from an economy based on fossil fuels toward one built on renewable energy sources. While we regard as quite modest the initial targets set by the House to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases, we recognize that it is a first step -- and a hard fought one at that. We look to you, now, to build on these early targets to fashion a more robust program encompassing a wide variety of tough changes, including, as well as renewable energy, creative new approaches to conservation and rigorous energy efficiency, and yes, even as you yourself have suggested, tougher efficiency standards for light bulbs.

Passing a Senate bill with carbon reduction targets similar to (or better yet, more rigorous) than those that just cleared the House will face passionate resistance from those legislators who deny the very existence of human responsibility for climate change. But the passage of legislation in Congress is only one of many milestones that require your leadership in the journey to tame global warming. Vitaly important, as well, is America's role at the UN Copenhagen Conference, December 2009. To achieve agreement for international action, the American representatives must clearly demonstrate, the commitment of the United States to undertaking serious and robust action to curb the accelerating pace of climate disruption.

Mr. President, you have professed to honor the science of global atmospheric warming. Scientific reports on this unique environmental challenge to life on this planet are updated regularly. They conclude that the pace of change is even more rapid than previously suspected. Dangerous levels of carbon dioxide are not just a threat for the future – they are already here. We are now at 385 parts per million, a level that already surpasses the 350 ppm that climatologists consider almost irreversible in terms of placing a check on “dangerous anthropogenic interference.”

The WNDC, created in 1922 “to act on issues of the day,” is dedicated to mobilizing effective action and making its voice heard in Democratic and public forums. We believe the UN Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change deals with one of the most important challenges affecting our democratic values today -- in the USA and, indeed, around the world. Changes in the earth’s climate as extensive as those now projected by science will have untold consequences for the wellbeing, health, and security of the human population and, in fact, threaten all life on this planet.

Addressing climate change poses a unique challenge to democracy and to the human community. As Democrats who take seriously our role as responsible citizens, we urge you to step up to this challenge in the strongest possible terms, using the political capital you have garnered so far as leader of the world’s most powerful nation to bring the world’s nations together to adopt a consensus on solving this common threat to civilization as we have known it.

We know that the journey will not be easy, but we appreciate all you are doing to bring needed changes to this country in a host of difficult areas. We stand by you in the hard work you are doing to educate, convince and persuade the public about what is at stake and what we need to do as a community to protect and preserve the legacy of what is best in this fragile world.

Respectfully, and with appreciation,

Alice T. Day, PhD
Chair
Environment & Energy Task Force
Woman’s National Democratic Club

Shelly Livingston
Chair
Public Policy Committee
Woman's National Democratic Club

The WNDC was created in 1923 “to act on issues of the day.” As a Club composed of women (and men) believing in democratic values, reflecting individual freedom, social equality, women’s rights and legal and social justice, the WNDC is dedicated to mobilizing effective action and making its voice heard in Democratic and public forums.

One such forum, the UN Copenhagen Conference is scheduled to convene December 2009. This forum deals with one of the most important issues that affect our democratic values today -- in the USA and, indeed, around the world. That issue is the disruption of the earth’s atmosphere, popularly known as “global warming.” Changes in the earth’s climate as extensive as those now projected by science will have untold consequences for the future wellbeing, health, and security of the human population and, in fact, threaten all life on this planet.