

BUSINESS COALITION CALLS FOR ACTION

Climate and energy legislation can create new jobs and increase investments in Tennessee and the U.S.

**by Cortney Piper
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In true bipartisan fashion, Tennessee Business Leaders for a Clean Energy Economy recently visited our U.S. senators to talk about the benefits of passing climate and energy legislation to support Tennessee's clean energy economy—because good jobs and clean energy are not partisan issues.

Representatives from Alstom, Signal Energy, and the Energy, Technology, and Environmental Business Association along with the vice chairman of the Chattanooga Green Committee were united in their message to our senators: Pass climate and energy legislation that puts a price on carbon and gives the industry market certainty to unleash investments, innovation, and jobs.

All agreed that without a comprehensive energy policy, investments will be lost to China and Germany, countries that have already established market certainty for clean technologies.

All agreed the time to act is now. With climate and energy legislation, they can create new jobs and increase investments in Tennessee and the U.S. Without it, those jobs and investments go overseas. America's 21st century, clean-energy businesses, like the ones we took to Washington, D.C., have a message you don't hear too often these days: We're hiring.

Investors Are Waiting

The way we see it, however, the current-day U.S. economy is like a baseball team with a roster full of top-notch players but a coaching staff that refuses to field a full team. Until the U.S. Sen-

ate acts by passing comprehensive energy and climate legislation, America's talented team of workers and innovators can't win the global competition game as often or as quickly as we'd like.

Large-scale investors are ready to put their money into the clean-energy game—like Alstom and Hemlock. But first they need to know clean energy's costs relative to fossil fuels.

As the catastrophic event in the Gulf Coast reminds us, there are hidden costs to our dependence on old-school energy sources. And many investors won't unleash their cash until those fuels are fairly priced. Once markets start to factor in the true cost of carbon, clean energy will become an even more attractive investment. But until the U.S. gets clear about carbon pricing, these investors will stay on the sidelines.

Existing technology is also sitting on the bench. From energy-efficient windows and lighting to advanced wind, solar, and geothermal technologies, we have an array of American technologies, goods, and services ready for prime time. The American businesses that manufacture, market, distribute, and provide these goods and services are ready to expand when our country is ready to buy.

The clean technology industry is booming in Tennessee. Pew Charitable Trusts says we have the third-fastest-growing clean-energy economy, and major investments from Hemlock, Confluence Solar, Nissan, Volkswagen, Wacker, and Sharp Solar show we are in a position to gain more. We need Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker to work with us to further support Tennessee jobs and investments in the clean-energy economy, and we encourage them to do so.



Cortney Piper (above) and Susan Richardson Williams (below) cofounded Tennessee Business Leaders for a Clean Energy Economy. The informal network of businesses and business leaders spans a wide spectrum of industry and commerce and supports a transition to a low-carbon clean energy economy in Tennessee and nationally.

