



1. **CAMPAIGN 2008: Obama win paves the way for big changes in energy, environment debate** (11/05/2008)

Darren Samuelsohn, E&E Daily senior reporter

Barack Obama cruised to a historic White House victory yesterday while winning larger Democratic majorities on both ends of Capitol Hill, opening the door to an environment and energy policy agenda sure to contrast with the last eight years under President Bush.

President-elect Obama captured 52 percent of the popular vote and comfortably defeated Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) in the electoral college, giving the Illinois senator significant room to maneuver as he takes office Jan. 20 as the country's 44th president and its first African American leader.

During a victory speech early this morning in Chicago's Grant Park, Obama included global warming and energy among a list of thorny items that he planned to take on as president. "For even as we celebrate tonight, we know the challenges that tomorrow will bring are the greatest of our lifetime -- two wars, a planet in peril, the worst financial crisis in a century," he said.

Moments later, Obama linked his energy policies with plans to stimulate the economy, adding, "There is new energy to harness and new jobs to be created."

Obama has 76 days to prepare his new government, a job that likely will include a major expansion and integration of top posts in the White House and across various agencies that deal with global warming and energy issues, said Dan Kammen, a University of California, Berkeley, professor and key Obama adviser.

"You're starting to see why this isn't just elevating the EPA secretary to the Cabinet," Kammen said. "It's really a much bigger integration."

The incoming Obama team is considering a "listening tour" around the country on energy and environmental issues before Inauguration Day in an attempt to build momentum for its policies and legislative plans. Kammen said details on the sessions remain in the planning stage.

John Podesta, a one-time chief of staff to President Clinton, has already begun planning the presidential transition in Washington, with key support on energy and environmental issues coming from two former Clinton appointees: U.S. EPA Administrator Carol Browner and Deputy Interior Secretary David Hayes. Key Cabinet-level appointments are not expected until later this month while Obama focuses first on naming his economic team, as well as a White House chief of staff and secretaries of State and Defense.

Previewing Obama's agenda

As for details of Obama's agenda, Kammen said he expected the new president to start with a close review of last-minute Bush administration regulations and other policies crafted over the last eight years.

"There's a whole range of things that need to be corrected," Kammen said. "Bad decisions by Bush and EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson. They weren't just marginal. They were bad for the economy. They were bad for the environment."

Obama plans to sign an executive order granting California's long-standing request for an EPA waiver allowing it to enforce greenhouse gas standards on automobiles, something Bush officials rejected despite advice from the government's own policymakers. Obama would also reject a last-minute Clean Air Act regulation that Bush officials say will be finished before it leaves office (*see related story*).

And the president-elect would launch a "carbon accounting" system that can help lay the groundwork for a much larger global warming cap-and-trade program, Kammen said. He did not have a timeline for how the Obama administration would try to pursue cap-and-trade legislation with Congress, but he said the effort would entail significant government reorganization while helping to restore U.S. leadership abroad.

"The one thing none of us could say during the campaign is how many calls we got from foreign leaders, ministers of energy and finance, around the world who were hoping for an Obama win because they know they can't solve the problem without the United States," Kammen said.

Other top-tier items on the horizon for Obama and congressional Democrats include an economic stimulus packages that funds rebuilding of roads, bridges and mass-transit systems, as well as water projects and renewable energy. Obama, for one, wants to follow through on campaign pledges to create 5 million new "green" jobs while spending \$15 billion per year to promote the

deployment of renewable technologies.

Working with Republicans

The Obama administration will take office with much larger Democratic majorities in the Senate and House and a Republican Party that has lost a significant number of the moderate lawmakers most likely to work across the aisle on energy and environmental issues.

In his Chicago speech, Obama repeated his campaign pledge to work with Republicans. "Let us resist the temptation to fall back on the same partisanship and pettiness and immaturity that has poisoned our politics for so long," he said.

But whether Obama will have success remains to be seen as the GOP looks to bounce back in another two years.

"I'm hoping they won't take the country as far left as I think they're going to," Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.), the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told reporters last night. "Higher taxes, more spending, more dependence on foreign oil."

Environmentalists last night celebrated Obama's win and insisted that their issues would fit well within the president-elect's plans to rebuild the economy through new energy policies, including home and building weatherization and a modernization of the electric grid.

"There's a whole laundry list of things that over the next months to a year or so can start to make a difference on the economic front," said Alden Meyer, policy and strategy director at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

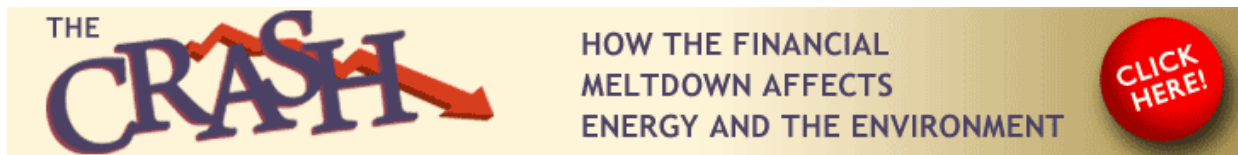
"They have to have a balanced perspective," added Dave Hamilton, director of the Sierra Club's climate campaign. "They're going to have to do what they have to do in a way that doesn't bankrupt the economy, in a way that actually solves the problems they're talking about. It requires being in the center and solving problems that are traditionally on the environment or left side."

Jeff Holmstead, an industry attorney and the EPA air pollution chief during Bush's first term, said he was suspicious of plans to link economic recovery plans to some of the big picture items an Obama administration may take on at the encouragement of environmental groups.

"The environmental community is clearly trying to argue that the kinds of energy and climate change issues they've pushed should be part of an economic stimulus package," Holmstead said. "From an economic perspective, I think that argument doesn't work very well."

Katherine Boyle contributed to this story.

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