

## **TRANSITION: No new climate pronouncements, just assurances from key Obama adviser** (11/12/2008)

Darren Samuelsohn, *Greenwire* senior reporter

Don't expect big policy announcements on global warming before Inauguration Day, a key environmental adviser to President-elect Barack Obama said today.

"My suggestion to all of you is to enjoy the holiday season, spend some time with your family and friends and rest up, because it's going to be a very, very busy 2009," said Jason Grumet during a Washington conference hosted by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change and Point Carbon. "And we'll need all of you to be on top of your game."

Grumet, lead coordinator of Obama's energy and environmental volunteer team during the presidential campaign, was making his first public remarks since last Tuesday's election. He stressed that he did not have new policy ideas to discuss but still wanted to offer a signal that the climate issue will be on the incoming administration's front burner next year.

"We're in the midst of a wondrous, unusual process, the peaceful transition from one government to the next," said Grumet, who also serves as executive director of the National Commission on Energy Policy.

"And while there are many things happening in this transition, one thing that's decidedly not happening is having policy conversations where one talks about aspirations, imaginations, possibilities of the president-elect," Grumet said. "And so you might wonder why I come to you today with an absolutely firm commitment to tell you nothing at all about President-elect Obama's vision for the future."

Grumet said he accepted the conference's speaking invitation to thank people who have worked on climate issues during the Bush administration.

"We have operated absent a federal climate policy, a federal climate program with mandatory elements, for many, many years now," he said. "We'll have the opportunity to move quickly, because there's been a profound amount of knowledge created, demo projects initiated, efforts

under way, to really think through the tough issues to deal with the scope and scale of the problem, the permit allocations, targets and time frames and cost certainty, and all the rest."

He concluded, "We recognize that President-elect Obama comes to this moment with a tremendous depth of knowledge to draw upon."

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), who also spoke today, predicted early action next year on several pieces of energy legislation dropped during the 2005 and 2007 congressional debates, including a renewable portfolio standard.

"Once that's done, I think our prospects for moving ahead and seriously considering and enacting cap-and-trade legislation will be improved," Bingaman said.

The senator also said economic recovery and the complexities associated with cap and trade would slow action next year on climate legislation.

Eileen Claussen, president of the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, said she does not envision a global warming bill becoming law before 2010. But she worries about a focus on energy legislation that could kill momentum for climate legislation.

"That," Claussen said, "is one of my nightmares."

Bingaman replied that Obama's team would play an influential role in advancing the climate issue.

"My assumption is the new president and the new administration will be key to keeping that momentum going," Bingaman said. "They'll be lining up the initiatives they want to see pursued through the Congress and then be in the business of working through that agenda over the next couple of years."

The New Mexico Democrat added, "As long as the president keeps it high on his list of things to be doing, and having his key appointees refining the proposal they'd like to see Congress act upon, the momentum will continue."

Like Grumet, Bingaman warned climate advocates against expecting too much out of the Obama team too soon, especially before confirmation proceedings. "There's some sentiment around town that the transition team will develop the proposal and then we'll select the administration," he said. "I don't see it that way."

And Bingaman also rejected the idea of a congressional reorganization to prompt coordinated action on climate. Instead, he said he would prefer to see the current Capitol Hill setup work on the issue.

"I don't think setting up another subcommittee is the way to proceed," he said. "We've got subcommittees all over the Congress. Getting agreement on a comprehensive approach does make a lot of sense."