

**EPW/Green Jobs and the New Economy Subcommittee Hearing
“Clean Energy Jobs, Climate-Related Policies and Economic Growth –
State and Local Views” Dirksen 406 10am July 21st**

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS

Opening

Let me welcome our guests to this committee today, governors and mayors and elected officials. A great deal of exciting and innovative work has been taking place in states and cities throughout our country in breaking our dependence on fossil fuel and foreign oil, in lowering greenhouse gas emissions and, in the process, moving us to the creation of millions of good paying jobs in the years to come. We are here today to learn from your efforts and see how Washington and states and cities can go forward together in transforming our energy system and our global environment.

The Opportunity To Reinvest in American Jobs

Today, as a nation we spend some 350-450 billion dollars a year importing oil from abroad – from countries like Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Mexico, Russia, Venezuela, and Iraq. Think for a moment what an incredible impact \$450 billion a year could have on our economy and job creation here if that money were invested in this country in weatherization, energy efficiency, sustainable energies like wind, solar, geo-thermal, bio-mass and other technologies, public transportation and automobiles that are far more energy efficient or not using fossil fuels at all.

What we are talking about is an energy revolution – a revolution that leads us toward energy independence and the ability to avoid Mid-east wars fought over oil; a revolution that not only has the potential to save the planet from the devastating damage being caused by global warming, but which will also, as a side-effect, clean up our air and water and make us a healthier nation. This is a big deal.

Now, in terms of green job creation let me say a few words about where we are today, what some other countries are doing than we can learn from, and the direction that we should be going in the next five to ten years.

Today, it is estimated by the Pew Charitable Trusts that there are some 770,000 green jobs in America. These include a wide-range of jobs at every

level of education and for every skill set. These are jobs for machinists, engineers, and electricians. These are jobs for workers who weatherize older homes and buildings - making them far more energy efficient and, in the process, saving substantial sums for the inhabitants on their fuel bills. These are jobs for factory workers who are now producing the most advanced insulation material, energy efficient windows, and improved roofing materials. These are jobs being created in companies in America that build, distribute, install and maintain wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, solar hot water systems, geo-thermal heating and cooling systems, and bio-mass heating systems. These are jobs being created on our farms and in our forests as workers produce bio-fuels and use farm waste to generate electricity. These are good-paying, domestic jobs that put people to work while turning the tide against global warming and pollution.

My Vision for A New American Green Economy

I see a new future for this nation where our need for energy independence and environmental sustainability drives our economic growth. While today we have hundreds of thousands of green jobs, tomorrow we can have millions of green jobs. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, green jobs grew by 9.1 percent between 1998 and 2007, and during the same period other jobs grew by just 3.7 percent. According to the Center for American Progress and Green for All, if we invest \$150 billion per year in the public and private sectors in sustainable energy, we can create 1.7 million *net* new jobs per year. That is almost 2 million jobs a year – 17 million new jobs over a decade! And although these are good-paying jobs, roughly 870,000 of them each year would be available to workers with high school degrees or less. Green investments, green energy, green jobs: this is how we will replace our lost manufacturing jobs.

I see a future where by 2025, we are producing a quarter or more of our electricity from clean, sustainable energy sources. I see a revitalized American manufacturing base where instead of importing 90 percent of the batteries used in hybrid vehicles, 46 percent of solar PV cells and modules, and half of all wind turbines used in the U.S., we make these products here. In 1970, Denmark made a commitment to renewable energy and now gets 20 percent of its electricity from wind alone. In doing so, it also created a new export industry: Danish companies now earn billions and lead the world in wind energy. I see our nation's commitment to renewable energy producing a similar influx of good jobs in this country. I see a future where instead of

creating 330 jobs to build yet another fossil fuel plant, we create 4,000 jobs building a solar thermal plant that has no carbon dioxide emissions and does not pollute our air - and whose only fuel is endlessly renewed, and no cost, sunlight.

I see a future where by 2020, our nation is far more energy efficient than it is today. In Vermont we have recently seen two consecutive years where our electricity demand has been *lowered* thanks to our energy efficiency efforts. This is the greatest investment truth in sustainable energy: it costs only 3 cents for each kilowatt hour we save through energy efficiency, while it costs 14 cents for each kilowatt hour we buy from new generation. I see a future where states compete with one another to see which can be the most efficient, and where businesses seek out efficient states in which to locate so they can reap the economic and environmental benefits for their businesses and employees. I see a future where, by 2020, we can do nationally what Vermont has been doing on a state level - making major savings through energy efficiency. Efficiency can save utility customers \$168 billion, avoid the need for 390 medium-sized coal plants, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions so much that it would be the same as taking 48 million cars off the road. Efficiency!

By stressing efficiency, we will also create the framework for innovative technology development and economic growth. We will see companies like Cree, based in North Carolina, which produces LED lighting, create jobs and expand all across this nation. In 2002, Cree had 893 employees; now they have more than 3,000, and these workers are producing environmentally friendly products for a fast-growing global marketplace.

I see a future where getting to work, or to school, or to the store does not have to cause pollution. I see a future where plug-in hybrid vehicles and electric vehicles are commonplace, producing a fraction of the emissions of conventional vehicles while providing the same mobility for drivers. Already today, a Chinese company called Build Your Dreams is producing plug-in hybrids for sale in China. We need to see American companies producing such advanced vehicles and exporting that technology to other nations, instead of the other way around.

I see a future where we have reinvested in our mass transportation and rail systems. For every \$1 billion we invest in public transportation, we see 30,000 jobs created, thousands of dollars saved annually by individual

commuters, and dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions for each mile travelled.

I see this future already being planned in Vermont, where our cities and towns are working to develop district energy systems that capture “waste” heat from power plants and use it to heat buildings. I see it in our efforts to power and heat our schools and public housing with clean technologies such as wood chips and solar hot water heating. I see it in the Vermont National Guard’s facilities, which we are working to convert to solar, geothermal, and biomass powered and heated facilities. I hope to see these and other world-changing innovations and common-sense practices replicated throughout our country.

Closing

I am pleased to have worked with Chairman Boxer to convene this first hearing of the Green Jobs and New Economy Subcommittee. I look forward to learning what each of our witnesses is doing in their state or city to create green jobs and build a foundation under our vision of a new, green future for our nation.