Changing the Climate in Washington, DC

Or, What I've Learned About Climate Policy After One Year

Lesson #1: The job of Congress is NOT to pass laws; it is to prevent bad bills from becoming law.

Lesson #2: Compromise is NOT a dirty word; it's the only way to get things done in Washington.

Lesson #3: There is no such thing as the perfect climate bill.
Corollary #1: If such a thing existed, it would never pass Congress.
Corollary #2: An "imperfect" climate bill offers tremendously more climate protection than a "perfect" bill that doesn't pass.
EDF article on cost: http://www.edf.org/article.cfm?contentID=5405

Lesson #4: Urgent action is needed immediately.
IPCC AR4 Synethesis Report: http://www.ipcc.ch/
Stern Review: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

Lesson #5: A price on carbon is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for solving the climate crisis.
Musical Chairs Analogy (Holmes Hummel): http://www.thunks.net/Cap-and-Trade.htm

Lesson #6: When it comes to climate bills, the simpler the better.
Details on Lieberman-Warner: http://lieberman.senate.gov/issues/globalwarming.cfm
Resources from USCAN: http://usclimatenetwork.org/federal/lieberman-warner-bill

Lesson #7: Several general principles must be included in comprehensive climate change legislation.
Dear Colleague Letter (Waxman-Inslee-Markey):
http://oversight.house.gov/documents/20080422101143.pdf
Select Cmte. Press Release:
http://globalwarming.house.gov/mediacenter/pressreleases?id=0209
Grist blog post: http://gristmill.grist.org/story/2008/5/19/7381/19982

Lesson #8: The United States must reengage with the international community and work in good faith to achieve emissions reductions worldwide.

Lesson #9: There is no such thing as "clean" coal, and investments in CCS technology are sorely needed.

Lesson #10: Being right is rarely the deciding factor in implementing policy.

Lesson #11: Climate policy is energy policy.

Lesson #12: Solving the climate crisis will require Presidential leadership and decisive, coordinated action within the next 1-2 years.

Lesson #13: Congress will likely be among the last to respond and will only do so under continuing pressure from the public.
**** Grassroots Action is Critical!**

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