



## General Jones and the Chamber of Commerce Energy Plan

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Well they say that “the Times they are a changin’ ” and with the impending change in the Administration and its approach to [energy](#), and the change in the leadership of [the Energy and Commerce Committee](#) in the House, I suspect that change is what we are going to get. One indicator of a possible path forward comes from the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, where General [James Jones](#), anticipated to be the next [National Security Advisor](#), has been heading a panel that has just issued [A Transition Plan for Securing America’s Energy Future](#). So I thought we might take a quick look at what it says. To quote the preamble

Global demand (for energy) will increase by more than 50% between now and 2030 – and perhaps by as much as 30% here in the United States. We must develop new, affordable, diverse, and clean sources of energy that will underpin our nation’s economy and keep us strong both at home and abroad. Our energy future must address growing shortfalls in infrastructure capacity and emerging environmental issues. . . . And looking ahead, even the most optimistic among us must conclude that we are not well positioned to anticipate nor prepared to meet tomorrow’s energy needs.

Based upon an initial list of 13 pillars that had been submitted as an open letter earlier this year, the Chamber has presented a detailed plan to move forward. The thirteen pillars are:

1. Aggressively Promote Energy Efficiency
2. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Energy Consumption and Production
3. Invest in Climate Science to Guide Energy, Economic and Environmental Policy
4. Significantly Increase Research, Development Demonstration and Deployment of Advanced Clean Energy Technologies
5. Significantly Expand Domestic Oil and Gas Exploration and Production
6. Commit to and Expand Nuclear Energy Use
7. Commit to the Use of Clean Coal
8. Increase Renewable Sources of Energy
9. Transform our Transportation Sector
10. Modernize and Protect U.S. Energy Infrastructure
11. Address Critical Shortages of Qualified Energy Professionals
12. Reduce Overly Burdensome Regulations and Opportunities for Frivolous Legislation
13. Demonstrate Global Leadership on Energy Security and Climate Change.

To ensure that the program is given the importance it deserves, the plan recommends the creation of a new office within the Executive Office of the President, to coordinate energy policy.

Further that the holder of this post should sit on the National Economic and National Security Councils.

The plan then goes ahead to list 88 recommendations as a roadmap to meeting the above imperatives. In the interests of space, and time, I am not going into all of these – they are broken down into initiatives from the President and Administration, those that involve the Administration and Congress, those that relate mainly to Congress, and the Individual States. They are divided by the thirteen themes listed above, so let me briefly glance at each sector and give you my abbreviated thoughts on the recommendations for that theme.

In the area of Energy Efficiency, part of the recommendations relate to tax incentives for items such as more energy efficient buildings and the installation of more efficient appliances, windows, furnaces etc, but carry those on into the electric grid and smart grid devices. Since the document is from the Chamber it is more oriented toward business, but Alan wrote to me earlier this week about the Energy Savings that can come from retrofitting homes, citing the [Austin Energy](#) initiative, and the significant energy savings it has accomplished by the sort of Aggressive approach that the Chamber seems to be advocating. This pro-active sort of program is claimed to have saved the energy of a 500 MW power plant already, and at that level would also seem to deserve inclusion in the agenda, but does not appear.

Moving on to Environmental Impacts (separated from Climate Science) it seeks Congressional activity to give tax credits for retrofitting existing coal-fired power plants to reduce criteria pollutants and carbon dioxide emissions. It also seeks clarification that greenhouse gas emissions should not be regulated under the Clean Air Act or the Endangered Species Act.

There is an interesting paragraph in the section on Climate Science, which largely calls for a greater investment in Climate Science, and the integration of data. It reads:

To maintain the public's trust and support and to ensure transparency, researchers who receive federal support should be required to disclose their data, models, and other relevant material, subject to protections for confidential business information, so that results can be assessed and reproduced.

Perhaps, having read of some of the issues that [Steve McIntyre](#) has had with [the hockey stick plot](#) of global temperature rise, I will quietly tiptoe away from this one. It is difficult to dispute, however, the need for the integrated surface, ocean and space-based observation network that the plan calls for.

In the field of Clean Energy Technologies the plan calls for venture capital firms and businesses to work within the national laboratories to commercialize technologies being developed there. It calls for a new ARPA-E program or its equivalent to fund high-risk, exploratory research on innovative concepts and enabling technologies, and also notes the need for an Electrical Energy Storage Initiative to develop cost-effective technologies that can store 50 to 100 MW of power, for use with intermittent technologies (I presume that means wind and solar). It calls for doubling federal spending on Energy Technology R&D, a long-term tax credit for companies in that area, and a Clean Energy Bank that will be able to accelerate the market penetration of advanced clean energy technologies.

Under the section dealing with the expansion of Domestic Oil and Gas Production it seeks to open the Outer Continental Shelf, encourage the Alaska natural gas pipeline and the expansion of the leasing program for access to fuel sources on non-park federal lands. It recommends repeal of the

Seems that Leanan had noted that the Bush Administration was doing [something](#) about the access to federal lands earlier last week, we'll just have to see how that one plays out. As to the fuel source issue, seems to me there was a Congressman . . .

And speaking of Congressmen, it should be noted that if Leanan's catch on the new head of the Energy and Commerce Committee not liking hydrofracing holds up then it is possible that the techniques that are [currently producing gas](#) from the shales of the East and Mid-West might be in trouble. He seems a sort of determined type of guy, so again, we'll just have to see how that plays out.

Under the section dealing with the Expansion of Nuclear Energy, the plan calls for a resolution of the storage issue for spent fuel, and growth in the strategic stockpile of uranium.

Under Clean Coal technology it suggests partnering with other governments in advancing CCS technology, it recommends \$500 million toward the IGCC program and related carbon capture technology research, and \$500 million for an IGCC demonstration plant, with creation of an industry-funded research program to support further R&D in this area. It suggests that tax credits be used to encourage the first five or six advanced coal-fired plants.

When discussing Renewable Sources of Energy, the plan does not single out different potential programs, but rather (within the framework of doubling overall federal R&D spending) recommends more research and more tax credits to encourage investment. Maybe they think that all the current commercials for the technology, and the support of T. Boone will be all that it takes.

The recommendations for the Transportation Sector include encouragement for the military to find alternate sources of fuels for military use. Interestingly it is here that the possible conflict between biofuels and food is addressed, with the suggestion of a multi-agency review, though the problem gets tossed to the National Academies for recommendations. Sadly there is no encouragement of urban transportation systems, such as those that Alan, inter alia, advocates.

Infrastructure recommendations include the implementation of a smart grid, the inclusion of refined products in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which should be grown to 1 billion barrels, and the problems that water availability is going to bring to the production and availability of energy.

Hmm, and the section on the Critical Shortage of Energy Professionals – apart from the nice sounding “providing adequate financial and institutional support for researchers”, I don't see a lot of recognition of a real program that will help get us where we need to be, though it contains the appropriate phraseology. Motivation, motivation, motivation . . . (so--when are we all retiring ??)

Under the heading of Reducing Frivolous Litigation, it suggests streamlining the permitting of refineries, a federal siting authority and a review of the Clean Air Act to allow routine maintenance. (This one goes right by me – I have no clue!!)

And that brings us to the final recommendations on Leadership in Energy Security and Climate Change. This includes the safety of international shipping routes, and the raising of energy as a critical part of the U.S. trade agenda. In light of our other ongoing discussions on the IEA it does recommend a strengthening of support for that Agency, and for the expansion of its membership to include India and China. It also calls for the creation of an International Clean Energy Fund,

Nations should improve transparency, reliability, and availability of oil and gas market data as well as their analysis of long- and short-term supply and demand trends to help make the world energy market less volatile.

Well, this has been a bit longer than usual, and yet has only skimmed the highlights of the recommendations, so I would encourage you to visit the site, and then add comments to perhaps explain some of the issues that I have glossed over. We will see if it has any future.



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