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Carpe Diem

As Congress comes back to Washington next week, the members have an excellent opportunity to seize the moment, and follow the wishes of the voters. And in one move, they can start us on the road to revitalizing the economy, and ending the looming planetary crisis of global warming.

Last week's extraordinary election showed voters educated, ready and willing to support bold action to change the way our nation is currently doing business. And while exit polls clearly showed the economy was the number one issue, a post-election poll by Zogby shows that, "more than three in four voters – 78 percent – believe investing in clean energy is important to revitalizing America's economy. Of those, 50 percent said they strongly agree clean energy investment is vital to the nation's economic future. While the vast majority of Democrats (96 percent) and independent voters (77 percent) view clean energy investment as a key means to boost the U.S. economy, more than half of Republican voters (58 percent) also said the same.

The Zogby press release on the poll further said, "This post-election survey also found that most voters want their elected officials to focus on global warming – 61 percent said they agree their elected officials should make combating global warming a high priority, an increase from 58 percent of voters who said the same in 2006. Among young voters age 18-24, 69 percent want a greater emphasis put on combating global warming. The desire for a greater political emphasis on global warming has increased to 88 percent among African American voters from 78 percent in 2006 and to 73 percent among Hispanic voters from 64 percent two years ago. This post-election survey also shows independent voters are increasingly likely to want their elected officials to make sure combating global warming is a high priority."

It's the perfect time for our elected officials to give the voters what they want. By taking action now – during the lame duck Congressional session – our senators and representatives can get a head start on meeting the voters' desires, and avoid the business lobbyist-driven interference that is sure to come as time clicks on.

While there several pieces of legislation already introduced, any new energy and global warming policy must be comprehensive and follow these principles, which nearly every U.S. environmental group has agreed to:

1. Reduce emissions from the use of coal, oil and gas on the scale that is needed to avoid dangerous global warming. That means, based on sound science, that Congress should establish a cap-and-trade program for carbon pollution, reducing

these heat-trapping by 20 percent by the year 2020, and by 80 percent by 2050;

2. Invest in the immediate and long-term transition to energy efficiency and clean energy sources that can stabilize energy costs, invigorate the economy and create new jobs for America's workers;
3. Assist workers and communities most affected by the transition; and
4. Protect the communities and ecosystems most vulnerable to the economic and physical impacts of global warming.

Enacting these principles into law will not only grow our economy and protect the environment; it will create certainty for businesses. Too many businesses –the U.S. auto manufacturing sector, for instance – have failed to respond to the need for global warming controls and the new energy future and are now faced with an inability to compete in the global economy.

And the need for U.S. companies to act is increasing, if only to avoid a competitive disadvantage. The United Nations launched its carbon credit trading link this week, and the Japan Electric Power Exchange joined the same day; Switzerland and New Zealand are set to join before the end of the year, and the European Union is deciding whether to join en masse or have the members join individually.

Smart business leaders are already asking for cap-and-trade legislation and policies to increase the supply of clean energy as solid market-based policies that will help them plan for the future. James J. Mulva, Chairman and CEO of ConocoPhillips, told *Fortune Magazine*, "...we need a national mandated framework to deal with climate change. Voluntary programs are not going to meet the challenge of climate change." T. Boone Pickens is funding a major national advertising campaign urging our policy makers to cut U.S. oil dependency by switching to cleaner and renewable fuels. And Exelon, the nation's largest electric utility, has thrown its weight behind cap-and-trade.

So as Congress returns next week, they can seize this amazing moment and take real action to grow the economy, create great green jobs, and set the stage for reducing heat-trapping gases and fighting global warming. The planets are aligned in a way they may never be again, with everyone agreeing on the need to act.

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You can seize the day yourself by going to PennFuture's website to send a message to Senators [Arlen Specter](#) and [Robert Casey](#) and [Member of Congress](#) on the need to act.

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