

A constructive Congressional dialogue

Part of what makes our country great is the ability to discuss an issue, make up our own minds and determine a course of action. This summer, we've been hearing about Congressional town hall meetings that have been reduced to shouting matches. No matter which party is the target, I think such actions can shut down effective communication. Important discussions are more fruitful when they are civil; when people are willing to listen and consider the opinions of others.

And while health care has been headlining these town meeting discussions, cap-and-trade legislation is often a topic as well.

For more than a year, your electric cooperative has been dedicating significant resources to education on this issue without engaging in a debate over the science of climate change. There are dozens of experts and studies to consult if a person hasn't already made up his or her mind on global warming.

Clearly, though, most Congressional representatives have established their positions on climate change. As a result, we believe carbon emissions will eventually be curbed either by those on Capitol Hill or by the Environmental Protection Agency. A step in that direction



Bruce Graham
CEO of Indiana
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occurred in June when the U.S. House approved H.R. 2454, also known as the American Clean Energy and Security Act, Waxman-Markey, or simply as cap-and-trade legislation.

Throughout that House debate, and as the discussion continues, our goal has been to work with the public, Congress and other policy-makers to craft both an environmentally effective and cost effective solution.

We began that process with the launch of "Our Energy, Our Future" (www.ourenergy.coop). In addition, cooperatives have communicated with consumers through *Electric Consumer* and other publications, annual meeting presentations, and various outreach programs. Indiana cooperative members have responded with more than 40,000 e-mails to our Congressional delegation urging an affordable and workable solution. Unfortunately, the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act does not meet that test.

Substantial amendments are necessary in the Senate to make a carbon mitigation program more affordable, more workable, and more technologically achievable. The ACES Act unfairly penalizes Hoosier ratepayers. In fact, a utility bill increase of \$50 a month is

not out of the question for an average household in a state such as Indiana that depends heavily on fossil fuel generation.

Fortunately, crafting legislation is a long process with opportunities to improve provisions along the way. The Senate is expected to embark on its deliberation this month and both our senators have expressed proper caution regarding the House legislation's punitive impact on Indiana. However, the Senate will likely begin with new language and it will be imperative to continue a dialogue with both Sen. Bayh and Sen. Lugar as legislation is developed. If the Senate can't produce a bill that includes significant improvements over the House-passed bill, the legislation should not be enacted.

Indiana electric cooperatives will be on hand delivering hundreds of member-signed postcards of concern to both senators later this month. Contact your local cooperative to receive a card and add to the mountain of messages. You can also learn more about the issue, needed legislative improvements, and express your opinion via e-mail by accessing www.ourenergy.coop or www.fairpowernow.org.

Thanks for your interest and for helping us maintain an open, respectful and constructive dialogue with Congress on this important issue.

LETTERS

Alternative to coal is cleaner coal

I am a wife of a Southern Indiana underground coal miner. He is an electrician/mechanic for one of the country's largest coal companies. I was reading the July issue of *Electric Consumer*, and I noticed people were talking about carbon emissions, the burning of coal, and how it pollutes and endangers our air, water and everything else anyone could think of.

If people think our economy is bad now, it would become a lot worse if we quit or slowed down our use of coal. There are thousands and thousands of people in Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois who work for a mine or sell some type of equipment to the coal mines.

We live in the country's coal belt. Coal was put here for a reason. We should utilize the energy source we have in our area and keep thousands of people in jobs, with good benefits and good pay.

We all want clean air. In our part of the country coal is the least expensive means of energy, and we have a lot of it, so we need to use it. The alternative to burning coal is to make sure we are burning cleaner coal, and the coal industry wants that just as much as rest of our county does.

I would hope the people in our area think about all the other things that pollute — from burning trash to not recycling and putting their trash in our over-filled landfills — little things can go a long way.

We need to let coal be our energy source and keep our electric bills manageable. Thank God for coal and for our coal miners. They risk their lives to dig in the dark, so you can flip a switch and have your lights come on. They need our prayers, not our complaints.

Rhonda Dillon, Pike County, Ind.

Look at historical data in impact debates

Instead of worrying about which impact review of the pending climate change is right or biased, why don't we look at historical data.

In the countries where similar climate legislation has been enacted, household electricity bills have skyrocketed. Just using data from Europe, we could see our electric bills jump more than \$50 a month.

Steve Jefferson, Connersville, Ind.

How practical are electric cars?

Richard G. Biever's interesting article "Is your 'beer and bait' refrigerator running?" (August issue) points out the wastefulness of the old garage fridge. In the article he states, "We keep using more electricity and are running out."

Statements like that, which I tend to believe, make me wonder how practical it is for our country to promote electric cars which surely would use more electricity than that

'Gigantic hoax'

In the July issue of *Electric Consumer* there were some letters asking to pay more to combat carbon emissions and climate heating (or cooling, or change). If these were legitimate, and these folks actually believe this "hurry, we must act now" environmental nonsense, they are welcome to pay my share. Surely a legitimate crisis will at some point redirect their concerns from this gigantic hoax.

Don Noland, Leopold, Ind.

old fridge in the garage.

With summer brownouts common in states like California, are electric cars practical as a solution to our dependence on foreign oil?

Richard Rooker, Warsaw, Ind.

(Note to readers: While it's projected that charging electric cars will normally be done at night during off-peak times, the impact of electric cars will be a topic in a future issue.)