CHRIS WAYNE & ASSOCIATES
NATIONAL CLEAN ENERGY PROJECT ROUNDTABLE

WELCOME AND MODERATOR:
TIM WIRTH,
PRESIDENT, UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

SPEAKERS:
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER HARRY REID (D-NV)

U.S. PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

U.S. VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE

U.S. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NANCY PELOSI (D-CA)

T. BOONE PICKENS,
CHAIRMAN, BP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

JOHN PODESTA,
PRESIDENT AND CEO, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS ACTION FUND

JOHN SWEENEY,
PRESIDENT, AFL-CIO

VAN JONES,
PRESIDENT, GREEN FOR ALL and SENIOR FELLOW,
CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS ACTION FUND

GLENN ENGLISH,
CEO, NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR KEN SALAZAR

U.S. SENATOR BYRON DORGAN (D-ND)

DENISE BODE,
CEO, AMERICAN WIND ENERGY ASSOCIATION

U.S. SECRETARY OF ENERGY STEPHEN CHU

GEORGE PATAKI,
FORMER GOVERNOR, STATE OF NEW YORK

ROBERT KENNEDY,
CHAIRMAN, WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE AND SENIOR ATTORNEY, NRDC

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD MARKEY (D-MA)

LEE SCOTT,
CHARIMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD, WAL-MART STORES, INC.

SPEAKERS (CONT.):

ANDREW STERN,
PRESIDENT, SEIU

RICK FEDRIZZI,
PRESIDENT, U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

CARL POPE,
CEO, THE SIERRA CLUB

ROSE MCKINNEY-JAMES,
PRINCIPAL, ENERGY WORKS CONSULTING LLC

SENATOR JEFF BINGAMAN (D-NM)

MICHAEL THAMAN,
CHAIRMAN/CEO, OWENS CORNING

NAT SIMONS,
SEA CHANGE FOUNDATION

JOHN WELLINGHOFF,
ACTING CHAIRMAN,
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

FRED BUTLER,
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULATORY UTILITY COMMISSIONERS

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TIM WIRTH: Well, good morning, and thank you all very much for coming to the National Clean Energy Project renewables program. My name's Tim Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation.

This event that we have today has been designed primarily by the Center for American Progress Action Fund and a number of allies, particularly Senator Harry Reid and Mr. Boone Pickens and a variety of the remarkable coalition that we have around the table.

This is a follow-up on the National Clean Energy Summit that occurred in August of 2008 in Nevada hosted by Senator Reid. Last August the group that came together at that point identified inadequate access to transmission as a major barrier to renewable energy, and the goal of today is to identify the policies that are necessary to address that problem.

We had an opening breakfast upstairs for sort of introductory and a lot of comments across the board and touched upon probably the central issues that we have to think about: siting, finance, intergovernmental cooperation and very complicated and thorny jurisdictional issues, and of course issues of national security, piled on the assumption that we can develop the technologies necessary to do the job.

So we have a multifaceted, many-sided problem, but rather than spending more time admiring the problem, the purpose of today is to see what we can do to break through and lead to real solutions. This follows President Obama's signing last night – last week – of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which includes significant funding for the electricity grid and other sustainable energy.

Decisions related to the grid – final comment that I will make – decisions related to the grid have really been plagued by two broad themes. One, while everybody agrees that we have to work on the grid – and that comes from just about every constituency – there is terrific disagreement over how those stakes can all come together in a single kind of policy and a single kind of legislation that can move us forward with the dispatch that's necessary. Until now, we have lacked the coalition necessary to move this issue.

And the second problem is that this has a lot of politics intertwined in it, but we have a constituency on the outside that looks at this issue as, as I would call it, one of the most anesthetizing issues there is. If you ask a constituency to say how – what do you think about the grid, they go blank right away and move on to the next question. And one of our jobs is also make sure that we get this as high in the lights as possible, and that's, again, why we are so indebted to Boone Pickens, Steve Bing and others for having helped us to get where we are today. Both of these are coming on line.

I'd like to begin today by asking the majority leader, Senator Harry Reid, who convened the August session and has been setting the table in the United States Senate, in the Congress for future action – Senator Reid, perhaps you could begin our morning with comments about where we are and where you believe we can be going.

Senator Harry Reid.

SENATOR HARRY REID (D-NV): Tim, thank you very much. It's so good to be with you again. We had our days – and we were able to talk about them a little bit this morning – of our glory days in the House and the Senate. We had such a good time. We were younger then, but we sure knew a lot, didn't we? Yeah. (Laughter.)

I – so happy to have you here, President Clinton. My mentor from my early days in the House, Al Gore, who talked me into one of the best things that I was ever talked into, being on his subcommittee on the – the Science and Technology Committee. We had a wonderful time there. Still – some of the things we started there are still ongoing. So very, very happy to have you here today.

My partner in all we do in the Congress, Speaker Pelosi, who has been such a inspiration to me and the American public. The person I'm looking to, to do so much of my work in the Senate is Jeff Bingaman, who's here, with the Energy Committee, working, as he will, with the appointment made by the speaker to our friend Massachusetts Senator Ed – Massachusetts House member Ed Markey, who's been a remarkable advocate and helped us from the very beginning on nuclear waste, when he was a lone wolf in the House, crying foul, and we appreciate that very much.

I want to just point out one person in Nevada: Michael Yackira at NV Energy. We started out a year-and-a-half ago or so, bumping heads a little bit on some coal plants that were going to be built there, but we worked through some issues there. And I want to extend my appreciation. He really has set a marker for how others should approach this issue. NV Energy, led by Michael Yackira, chose to postpone construction of that coal plant and increase its investment in Nevada's wealth of renewable resources. His country in the west is truly a trail-blazer, and I appreciate that very much.

We have, of course, John Podesta, who is someone, as Speaker Pelosi said, is – sets the gold standard. And that's certainly true for his work in public service. He's a remarkable human being. We appreciate his lending his name and his organization to this event.

Seventy percent of the oil that we use comes from places like Venezuela and the unstable Middle East. Last year, we spent about $500 billion, a half a trillion dollars, giving money to these countries for oil; which has created a three-pronged problem for us, a three-pronged threat: what it does to our economy, what it does to our national security and, of course, what it does to our environment.

And the first step in approaching this in a big-time way was the economic recovery package. Money has been invested. It's there. With the signing of the bill in Denver last Tuesday, this money is already being sent throughout our economy. It was a giant step in the right direction: $11 billion alone for the national energy grid, or as some said, like Secretary Chu, a national highway to produce – to transmit energy.

So we all must partner and focus on energy investments and moving energy producers to where the power is needed. I'm going to introduce a bill this week that's going to do exactly that. It's going to be – anything we do in Washington is going to be done on a bipartisan basis, as we showed on the work that we've done already this year. With President Obama reaching out to the Republicans, there may not be in the sight of many any short-term gain, but the long-term gain from his reaching out is going to pay dividends for many years to come.

So Tim, thank you very much for moderating this. You're someone that is certainly a remarkable person, and we appreciate your good work.

MR. WIRTH: Senator Reid, thank you very much. We are honored to be joined this morning by former President Bill Clinton.

Mr. President, thank you for being here. Harry Reid points out the progress that's being made. Maybe you could enlighten us a little bit. Why did this take so long, and how do we sustain this momentum?

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON: We didn't have the votes before. (Laughter.) Boone Pickens and I were talking on the way down here about how one of the best things that's happened in the last couple of months, with these two – these miserable last four or five months – is that this coalition has held together and intensified its conviction in the face of falling prices for oil and coal.

In other words, nobody changed their position, because we got it, finally. There's a – there's a glue here holding people together, understanding that we have to build a new economy and that if we don't it'll compromise our national security. More fundamentally, it will end vast prospects of civilization, at least for our grandchildren or great-grandchildren. And it's the best way to bring our economy back. So I think – that's, to me, is the – one of the bright spots of these last few tough months: This coalition held together.

Every time before in the last 35 years we've started this – we passed a bill in Arkansas when I was attorney general which authorizes everything that California did, you know, in terms of decoupling and everything else – and my governor's real happy now because he doesn't have to pass any bill through the legislature to do what he needs to do – and nobody ever did anything with it. Every time oil dropped, people said, give me my Hummer back. And that's not what they're saying now.

We want America to be independent. We want to protect the future of our children and grandchildren. And we know this is the key to our job growth. So that's good. The only point I made at the breakfast I'd like to make again, Senator, is that first I want to thank the speaker and Senator Reid and President Obama and everybody – Secretary Chu, Secretary Salazar, everybody who was behind this.

Carol Browner, I'm really proud of you. This economic recovery bill has good things in it, and I'm grateful as a citizen. And the second thing I would like to do is to thank John Podesta, who has been great at this. But thirdly, I'd like to ask you all to help the Congress now and the president and these departments. We have to maximize the impact of this economic recovery money. And I hate to be like a Johnny One-Note, but – the sexiest things are to talk about what we're going to do in clean energy; the big short-term gains in jobs and in greenhouse-gas reductions with technologies that are available right now are in energy-efficiency advances, in building retrofits and smaller packaging and a gazillion things. It's the kind of thing that my foundation works on all over the world. Please don't overlook that. Let's don't undersell the efficiency-investment angle.

You know, John – I mean Harry mentioned – or John mentioned, I guess, Steve Bing. I was at the terminal that – I mean the hangar his company built out in Burbank. It's 100 – it's a carbon-positive building, produces 110 percent of the energy that the building uses at full utilization from clean sources. And everybody knows a lot of it's solar panels, but a lot of it's because of the conservation technologies in the building. And I think that if we're not careful, we will undersell that.

The year before last, Goldman Sachs issued a study that said that if we, the Chinese, the Indians and the Russians achieved the energy efficiency level of the Japanese, that would take the world 25 percent of the way home to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050. And yet, when you – there is never, in my opinion, enough thought given to how to do that. And I'm biased, because we work on these projects all over the world in my foundation. But we need to think about, for example, is there some way these bank reforms can be harmonized with the stimulus, the economic recovery funds?

For example, you get 6,000 jobs directly for every billion dollars you spend in building retrofits or other efficiency efforts. If you put a billion dollars into an SBA-like loan guarantee program – banks need to start lending money again – they might actually lend money, on condition that – the way we do it, at least the public entities – that the loans are repaid only from utility savings, backed up first by a guarantee from the energy service organizations that organized the project. If you backed that up with an SBA-like loan guarantee, you could have a multiple of 10 to 20, just like the SBA does, and give a super-safe loan for the banks that are interested in beginning to loan again, and maybe create 10 or 20 times as many jobs, at least in the places where this is available.

These are the kind of things I would like to ask you all to think about. We owe it to the American people now, all the rest of us, after the president and the Congress have done this good thing for us, to maximize the impact of these stimulus funds in a way that generates the largest number of jobs and the most rapid reduction in greenhouse gases.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

As we were all discussing domestic policy, the stimulus package, transmission and related questions, hovering over us, of course, is the looming climate crisis. And no individual has done more to remind us of our responsibilities and our opportunities than Vice President Gore.

Mr. Vice President, maybe you could help us think about this issue in the context of our global responsibilities and the pressing science that is upon us. The question that we all have to keep in mind, and the burden that we carry, is to make sure that the policy keeps up with the science and what it tells us we must do.

MR. GORE: Well, thank you, Tim. I want to listen more than talk here, because there's so much talent, so much knowledge in this room. I do want to acknowledge your leadership and, as I said upstairs, thank you for the chance we've had to work together on this for so long; and acknowledge John Podesta's leadership – really an awesome job, John – as head of the transition team for the new president.

This incredibly impressive fast start is partly due to what you and your colleagues in the transition did. I want to congratulate the members of the administration here and first and foremost President Obama for an extraordinary job. And for all of the words of criticism you'll hear from one direction or another in 30 days to get this amazing package – and I speak particularly of the green portions of the stimulus, but I want to compliment the entire package – it's really an amazing accomplishment. And Secretary Chu and Secretary Salazar, Carol Browner, congratulations.

And then, it never would have happened, obviously, except for the extraordinary leadership of Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi and their colleagues, some of whom are at this table. It was an amazing feat to see the Congress move so swiftly, and to get so many things right on the renewable-energy provisions, on the smart grid. The attention to detail – and the details are so important on this. And there are more of them that lie just ahead, and that's why this session is so valuable.

Just briefly, Tim, to answer your question – and there's – there is a genuine world-class scientist here at the table with us, so I'm going to tread carefully – but my reading of the science over the last 20-plus years that the IPCC – the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – has been producing, these reports, there is a stark pattern that shouts out at us. They always come out with these reports that have ranges of estimates: best case, worst case, medium case. In most instances, when they go back and observe the CO_2 emissions and the melting of the ice and the various other things a few years later, they come back and they say, well, it is right at or above the worst-case projection last time.

There are feedbacks in this system. There is the potential for the melting of ice in the Arctic to dramatically increase the absorption of heat in the Arctic Ocean, which then raises the specter of thawing the permafrost in the territory around the Arctic, which contains as much carbon if turned by microbes into methane as it thaws – that amount alone is equal to all of the global warming pollution that's up there now. And there are other feedbacks as well.

So the science is continuing to warn us that we really do have a planetary emergency. And that phrase still sounds shrill to many ears. We are not used to thinking in these terms. But the generation that's coming on after us will look back and assess what we did or did not do. We – and they'll ask one of two questions, either, what were you thinking? How could you have done this? Or, how'd you find the courage to step up to the plate and do the right thing?

And what makes me so hopeful and optimistic now is that the United States of America is stepping up to the plate. That's what the real meaning of this – these developments of the last month and more are all about. And it's so important because even though we are not the most populous nation in the world, we still have the strongest economy, and more importantly, we still have the core of values that, along with other things, has given us a unique position in history.

Now, this may come off as, you know, we're all – almost all of us, I guess, are – don't see any foreigners here, but we're all vulnerable to being, you know, proud of our country. But it is an objective fact that the United States of America, our country, is the only nation that can lead the world when a crisis like this looms. And in order to lead the world, we have to restore the momentum and the can-do spirit that – Boone Pickens exemplifies this – let's go and let's do this.

But we've got to focus on two strategic goals simultaneously. We have got to reduce global-warming pollution, principally CO_2. And we have got to wean ourselves from this dangerous overdependence on foreign oil. So the three crises, the climate crisis, the economic crisis, which is on everybody's mind as we meet here and the national-security challenges exemplified by our continuing involvement in Iraq and the continuing threat to the world economy if this huge pool of recoverable oil reserves suddenly became unavailable or fell under the control of malignant forces – then that would be a dangerous thing.

The common thread running through all of them is our ridiculous overdependence on dirty, dangerous, expensive carbon-based fuels. Grab that thread and pull on it, and all three of these crises begin to unravel. And we hold in our hands the answer, which is a generational one-off investment to switch from an energy infrastructure that's based on these carbon-based fuels to a new infrastructure that's based on fuels that are free forever – the sun and the wind and geothermal – and ingenuity, efficiency and conservation.

The energy's not free. We have to build the infrastructure. And the one single most important infrastructure-jobs-creating program, in addition to the installation and the retrofitting and the efficiency, is to build this unified national smart grid. And some people around this table have been talking about it a long time. But that will open up a whole new universe of options to take the renewable electricity and build it out and get it to the places where it's used.

Final point: We've seen the oil-price rollercoaster. And as long as our economy is shackled to that, our political will is vulnerable to being suddenly diminished when oil goes down in price. But Chinese demand and Indian demand, the slowing rate of new discoveries – this rollercoaster is headed for a crash, and we're in the front car.

So now is the time to shake off the temptation to say, oh, oil prices are down again, and just keep on going. We need to get the market to work for us, by putting a price on carbon. So the combined measures of a renewable energy standard and a cap-and-trade measure, and a renewable energy standard is the best, is one of the best ways to reduce down, to get a cap that allows us to go to Copenhagen, this December, and really play the role in leading the world toward this pivotal shift.

When President Kennedy in 1961 announced that we would go to the moon and come back safely in 10 years, a lot of people said it couldn't be done. But eight years and two months later, Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon. And on that day, the average age of the engineers, in Mission Control in Houston, was 26, which means that when he issued that challenge, their age was 18.

And this new generation is looking to the people in this room and in this administration and in this Congress, to make sure the United States of America redeems the promise of self-government and control of our own destiny. And I'm really happy to be part of this. Look forward to the discussion.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, for that eloquent statement.

For those of you who would like a quick tutorial, on the urgency of the question, I don't know if you saw this. Last weekend, the Los Angeles Times' Margot Roosevelt had a remarkable story on feedback loops in the Arctic and the impacts of that.

It is a very brief window for everybody to see the crisis that we are in and the urgency of the needed action and urgency of leadership by the United States of America. Pulling her colleagues together has been a major chore for Speaker Pelosi, who has done it with her usual grace and determination. Madame Speaker, we're so pleased to have you with us today. Thank you very much for joining us and for your great work.

SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI (D-CA)I: Thank you very much, Tim. And thank you for your leadership, on these and so many other issues, over the years. Thank you for bringing us together. To John Podesta, as the leader said, the gold standard; everything he does, he does excellently. And I thank you for what you have done and what you are going to do, in relationship to the issue.

What an honor it is to be here with my colleague Harry Reid. What a fighter he is for the issues that we're talking about here, issues that are important to our children and their future. It's an honor to serve with you, Harry. Thanks for the invitation to be here today.

And I know we're all thrilled to be in the presence of our former president, President Clinton, and Vice President Al Gore. Broad in their thinking, specific in their suggestions, really an inspiration to us all. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Vice President, you wrote the book. You taught us early on and you continue to do that and to inspire us. He sets a high standard, and we are all struggling to keep up with that. But let me tell you what we are doing about it very briefly and why I thank all of you, for what you have done and what you will do, as I mentioned.

We have to have an enormous vision about this as we go out to the American people, to talk to them about it because there is always some reason why it isn't in someone's interest to get this done whether it's local, state or at the federal level. I like to think about the fact that 200 years ago – well, 200 years ago in 2008, so 201 – the president then, Thomas Jefferson, had a vision for America, about building the infrastructure of America. It was called the Gallatin project, after his secretary of the Treasury.

And it was an idea that we had to build into the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis & Clark expeditions, to follow that, to build the infrastructure. So it was the Erie Canal and the Cumberland Road and all of those kinds of things that built America. But they thought of it on a big scale, and many of these projects flowed from that.

A hundred years later, on the centennial, Teddy Roosevelt had his own vision, and to celebrate, he established building the infrastructure of America. The National Park Service was the centerpiece of that. Last year, we didn't have that vision in the White House. Now we do. And just a few weeks ago, on the steps of the Capitol, President Obama said we will – we will harness the sun and the wind and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And just a few weeks after that, he signed a bill into law that would do just that.

And part of building the infrastructure, which this was a continuation of, is the building infrastructure of the grid – so essential. It's actually essential just if we had no fresh ideas about all the good things it could do. But in our legislation that was signed into law, as Harry mentioned, as you know, and so appropriately, in Colorado, a lead state in this regard, Mr. Secretary, in doing so, we not only captured the grid, but so much else in the bill that contributes to what – you challenge us, Mr. Vice President, global climate crisis as well as reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, with the language; and that renewable-energy resources will mean nothing if there's not a grid to transmit it. They go together.

And I – since the vice president's here, I'll mention that another infrastructure project that was mentioned at the breakfast was the building of the interstate highway system by President Eisenhower. That had the vision of protecting America. It was a jobs project, it did build infrastructure, but it had a national-security purpose. And Al Gore's dad, Senator Gore Sr., was the lead author of that legislation in the Congress. So there's a lot of history in this room – the president mentioned what he did as governor in Arkansas – a lot of history that is going to serve the future well.

So as we go forward with this, understand there are obstacles – I know that's one of your things. There are obstacles. The status-quo folks will try to stop this. When I became speaker – when we won and we took over the Congress two years ago, we had a vision. And a – really a flagship issue was addressing global warming and reducing our dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels.

And I formed a select committee to do just that, and Ed Markey has chaired it since then. He also now chairs the Energy Subcommittee of Energy and Commerce, so he wears two very important hats in this regard. And he was a very important part, along with Mr. Waxman, in making sure that in this energy bill – and George Miller – that making sure in this recovery package we didn't just have the grid, and we had the renewable energy resources, but we also had the resources to invest in the education of scientists and rest, as part of an innovation agenda.

And throughout it, with the leadership of Secretary Chu helping us, I would say there are four words that describe what we did there and what we intend to do as we go forward: science, science, science and science. Science in the technologies and the engineering to build this grid right; science to do the renewable-energy piece; science to make sure that when – as we do it, we have a healthier America; and the science Mr. Van Jones is here to see, to help make these green jobs, educate these kids, make these green jobs, and change our economy altogether.

So we have a lot of hope riding on what you are doing, because we put the money in, but – I think rightfully so – we did not proscribe how this would happen. We did say we were seeking a plan to do it. I'm so glad our friends in Labor are here today, because they've been so much of an important part of making sure that this was about the four things that we always say. It's about – this is essential – about growing our economy, creating these new green jobs; about the national-security issue, first and foremost, that the president mentioned. This is a national security issue. We must reduce our dependence on foreign oil. It's a health and an environmental health issue, to improve the quality of our air and the health of our children.

That's why I'm glad last year on our energy bill we had the first change in CAFE standards, thanks to Mr. Markey, in over 30 years. Why? You ask why, why did it take over 30 years? But again, change. So national security; and for our economy; for the health of our children and the clean environment that we owe them; and then fourth, it's our moral responsibility to preserve this planet.

That's why when we sit around and have our discussions on this subject, Mr. Vice President, as you know, we have business and labor, we have concerned scientists, and evangelicals. They have told us that this is God's planet, and those of us who share that view think we have a moral responsibility to save it.

But as we do, we must be careful of the impact that it has on poor – poor people. So this grid issue just is central – central – to all that we do. And we are very eager to hear what the outcome of your deliberations are. The world is watching. We were just, Mr. Markey and others – we were in Afghanistan. They want to see – they have energy problems.

They want to see how we take the lead. We were in Italy talking about the EU and what they are doing. But this – none of it really works on the global climate piece unless America takes the lead. The world is crying out for that. Even when I was at the Vatican, the – I congratulated the pope because Vatican City is carbon neutral. So again, people are doing their part, but we must lead the way.

I think that as we do the grid and we address the renewable energy resources and the need to transmit them, we must do the renewable electricity standard to a highest possible standard. President Obama has said 25 by '25. We have 15 by '20, very modest. We'd rather, obviously, have it stronger. And Al Gore challenges us to a hundred percent by 2020. But again, we must have that strongest piece.

That – the renewable energy resource, the rebuilding of the grid, which is – they're tied together – and reversing climate change, in my view, must be part of the same package if we're going to accomplish what we need to do to take the country in a new direction on renewable, clean energy. I see the words renewable, freedom, abundant, security, clean – all of that. So on your National Clean Energy Project I wish you tremendous success. A great deal is riding on it, and we look forward to seeing what lines of communication you take us on as we – to use a pun, know your power, the power of all of you and your outside constituency groups to be – as the president said – to hold together as we go forward, or else we will have a missed opportunity, which would be a tragedy, instead of sending the clearest message that we understood our responsibility, had the wisdom to proceed so that future generations will have a cleaner planet and judge us for what we did rather than regret that we missed that opportunity.

So thank you for what you're doing and thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts about how we intend to proceed in the House on this issue. Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Speaker Pelosi. It is heartening for America and for the world to have the kind of political leadership that we see here from Majority Leader Reid and from the speaker. It's really an extraordinary shift and change.

If the inside leadership is extremely important, so is the outside framework in which we operate. And I want to pay a special thanks to Boone Pickens and to Steve Bing among others here who have really helped to put a frame around this issue publicly.

Boone, could you share with us some thoughts from your perspective, which has been very aggressive and certainly very public on the issue? Thanks for joining.

T. BOONE PICKENS: Glad to. Senator, I thank you. I hope that there is a camera here and has me between the two Nobel – (laughter) – leaders. It would be very, very exciting if my mother was still alive to see that – (laughter) – but it also would be very exciting for the faculty at Oklahoma State University to see me in this chair between these two honorees.

The – I would like to mention – you know, you and I almost solved corporate America's problems back in the '80s, on those hearings that we had. But there were others that were there that didn't – you all don't know what we're talking about, but we – back in the '80s, well, Senator Wirth and I were – had real ideas about how to fix corporate America, but we didn't get it done. But maybe now it's going to happen.

But anyway, I'm happy to be – very happy to be at this energy summit. And we're going to have an energy plan for America. I am convinced of that. In 40 years no energy plan, and now it's going to happen. It's – you know, and I've been around to see all this. I'm 80 years old, so I've trooped through it. I've trooped through the halls. I've tried to get things done. Everybody was always nice to me and all, but this time something is going to happen.

But we've got to reduce dependency on foreign oil. I've – I mean, the grid, sure. The renewables, sure. I mean, those are set, I think, in the stimulus plan, and it's going to happen. But this is the time to solve the foreign oil problem.

In 2008 we imported nearly, well, 70 percent, which Senator Reid mentioned, but $475 billion is what we spent for foreign oil. We know that we can do a better job than that. Can you get it all back? Probably, you know, the Canadian oil is very friendly to us, and that's North America. But one thing, remember, on the oil we get from Mexico, which is 1,400,000 barrels a day, that oil is projected to decline, deplete, and they, the Mexicans, will be importers in five years.

So that million, 400,000 barrels – where do we go for that? We're going to have to go OPEC for it, is where we'll have to go. And I want to stop that, if we possibly can, that we never go to the point where we have to take up the slack that came from Mexico and have that go.

Okay. We – in January, even with the price of oil down like it was, it was $17 billion, is what it cost. Look at the Russian situation on natural gas just recently. You – maybe you've seen my ads. I'm back on with ads again. (Laughter.) Damn, those things are expensive. (Laughter.)

And they – but the Russians, they cut off the Ukrainians and Europe and had a squabble over it, and it – truly got down, almost on their knees. I was reading in the paper the other day, we've got to have the gas; we're cold; give us the gas. And Europe is dependent on Russia for natural gas. We are dependent on foreign oil. That same thing can happen to us. And I looked at that and I thought, oh, my gosh, that could be us at some point.

Okay, we do have a resource to solve the problem. We've got to solve the problem with our own resources. And what are they? Okay, we've got the renewables working. That's going to work. But power from wind or solar or geothermal does not operate an 18-wheeler. It does not operate an 18-wheeler. Get realistic about it. What resource do we have that would move the 18-wheeler? And you know, you've heard me say before, I don't like R&D at 80 years old. (Laughter.) It seems like it's going to be too long to get an answer.

So I go to operating models. And I have an operating model sitting behind me back here, David Freeman, who runs the Port of Los Angeles. And he is changing the Port of Los Angeles over to clean trucks because he can't stand the air quality he has to deal with out there. But that's an operating model for me. Thank you, David.

A complete plan includes the domestic source for transportation, built out of the wind and solar, have a 21st-century grid, retrofit homes and buildings to energy efficiency. And I know we've covered the grid here. I mean, we've talked about it, and there's going to be more said about it. But I'm very hopeful that even more than that, I know it's going to happen. It's got to happen. I'm running out of time, and so it's got to happen before I go. But we are going to have an energy plan for America.

Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Boone, thank you very much. And we'll send that picture to the provost at Oklahoma State.

MR. PICKENS: Very good.

(Laughter.)

MR. WIRTH: He was horrified about past history. You've made up for it all today.

MR. PICKENS: Oh, yeah.

MR. WIRTH: John Podesta has been not only the gold standard but just a remarkable conceptual and political figure for all of us. John, thank you for bringing us all together.

JOHN PODESTA: Thank you, Tim. And I want to come back to the question you posed, to President Clinton, which is, what's different than the last 35 years? And I'd say, after this beginning, it's that we have new leadership to move this issue forward. And I just want to commend all the people who have spoken.

It's just inspiring to think that we can get the job done, President Clinton, Vice President Gore, Speaker Pelosi, the president, President Obama, and his great team that's here, Boone Pickens. And I want to make a special acknowledgement of Senator Reid, who got us going on this project last August, in a forum that we did in Las Vegas. And I think a lot of the ideas that were on the table at that forum made their way into this recovery bill. And the ideas that are going to be put on the table to day will make their way, I hope, into the effort that Senator Bingaman is going to lead.

Look, I think we have to recognize that we're living through a terrible recession. We've got volatile oil prices. We've got a dependence on fossil fuels. And of course, the tremendous, almost existential threat of global warming that the vice president spoke about.

People say to me all the time recently, we've done so much, this bill's so big, how could we do more? And I think the answer to that is: We can't do any less than do more. We have to get on with this project, to get the economy going again, to get jobs growing again, to take this challenge on and do something that, as the current White House chief of staff is fond of saying, we can't – we can't let this crisis go to waste. (Chuckles.) We've got to build for the future and really build a whole new energy future for our country.

We face rising demands on an aging and stressed energy infrastructure that pose real economic risks. In the past, that's been Balkanized – no one's responsibility. But these are national problems; they require national solutions. First step, obviously, was the recovery plan that these leaders pushed through Congress and the president signed. It'll create jobs by investing in clean energy programs and reducing oil use. It'll invest in more efficient buildings and wind and solar power. The plan will upgrade 2,000 miles of our electricity grid and put smart meters in 40 million American homes, so consumers themselves can begin to reduce their – their energy bills by increasing efficiency.

Those investments are vital to a sustainable economic recovery, but that's just step one. The electricity grid is outdated and inefficient. Outmoded transmission lines prevent moving clean electricity to meet demand to major cities. We've got this tremendous resource in the Southwest, in the Midwest, offshore, but we've got to get it to where the consumers live. The current system to rebuild our electricity grid is inadequate. Bracken Hendricks, a senior fellow at CAPS, put out a paper today that focuses on this question of clean energy grid, on planning, on siting, on cost allocation.

So we've got to redouble our efforts, as Boone noted, to end our dependence on oil, by building the infrastructure for delivery of clean domestic alternative transportation fuels. We need a fresh approach. We need a plan, as my friend Mr. Pickens says. And that's why we're here to talk about that.

We've got great bipartisan leaders from government, business, labor and the environmental community. I think what we're trying to do is build momentum, Senator Bingaman, for policies that will help put wind at your back, so that we can get – we can finish the job, take the next step, Congressman Markey, to try to move those – these issues forward in the Congress.

We're not the only summit going on here in Washington today. There's another one down Pennsylvania Avenue that's about to begin. Some of the people who are here at the table are going to have to excuse themselves to attend to other duties. But I'm looking forward to a great conversation.

So with that, Tim, I turn it over to you to lead us.

MR. WIRTH: Great. Thank you very much, John. And thank you for pulling us all together.

It is customary in a session like this to start with all of the political leadership, and do everything at 35 (thousand) or 60,000 feet. But I'm going to change that a little bit.

We've gotten some of the broader perspective. And I'm going to – I'm going to ask for now a time for some commentary on what it means to real people. How is this going to impact people across America?

I'm going to ask John Sweeney to perhaps give us a start on that and then move from there to Van Jones and then Glenn English. It seems to me that the impact that this has on millions and millions of Americans, if this is done right, not only has to be understood but has to be carefully articulated.

John, do you want to give us a start on that? John Sweeney from the AFL-CIO.

JOHN SWEENEY: Thanks, Tim. Thank you, Tim.

I'm – I think the challenges of clean energy and climate change really creates a rare opportunity to do two things at once. Meet the – we all talk about the importance of rebuilding our middle class. And I think that we should be looking also at how to use this opportunity to create good jobs in a new economy.

A new U.S. energy strategy can be the foundation of rebuilding the middle class. And if we ensure that the jobs we create are good, innovative jobs here in our country, that can then become the foundation of a strong, new economy. So there are a few basic steps that are essential to all this. We have to solve the workforce problem that we have now. Industry recognizes it. There are not enough trained workers in this field, and it is an aging workforce. So good training is crucial to create good jobs. We need access to this training for a diverse group of residents of local communities. We need apprenticeship programs and labor management partners like those funded in the green jobs section of the recovery package to create high-quality training and good jobs with career ladders.

There are some exciting opportunities to marry both education, higher education and very good skills development programs, and we really need to pursue them. We need to be sure we invest in the materials and the equipment needed for green technology. There's an important opportunity here for the United States to become a leader in technical and manufacturing capacity, and that is why we push Buy America language, to ensure that we invest the money in building new technology in our own country. We also need to set job standards for our investment so federally funded programs support good living standards. We need to be sure that these jobs include health care, worker safety programs, apprenticeship and training programs, as well as compliance with existing federal laws such as OSHA and environmental laws.

And they should be required to respect workers organizing rights. A related point is the importance of Congress passing the Employee Free Choice Act to allow workers the freedom to bargain with their employers, to make their jobs good jobs. Workers will organize to make their jobs better if we protect their right to do so.

Finally I'd like to say a word about the work in the AFL-CIO right now towards this goal. Mark Ehrs (ph), the president of the building and construction trades, is leading a national initiative with their affiliates, their 11,000 apprenticeship training centers and community organizations to step up the opportunities to green jobs and new energy investments offer. In the past year the IBEW and the utility workers and their employers have created a series of joint regional training programs for linemen and other skilled workers in the industry. And we at the AFL-CIO have created a center for green jobs that will expand our research, training and policy work in support of good green jobs.

We worked with the Center for American Progress, as you heard this morning, on "Wired for Progress" because of that economic and environmental opportunity. And I want to commend Bracken Hendricks (ph), I want to commend John Podesta for providing this valuable roadmap. We intend to lead by example as we move ahead.

Thanks, Tim.

SEN. REID: Senator Wirth, could I say something?

MR. WIRTH: Please.

SEN. REID: You know, we are very tepid. And as I've gone around the country I find that people are so afraid that the government may be involved in something. If this is going to succeed: smart grid and continue what we started with, this economic recovery package with renewables, we're going to have to accept the fact that that's the way we've always done things. The railroads weren't built just because we thought it was a good idea. The federal government was heavily involved in that.

Eisenhower's idea to have a national highway system, the federal government was involved in that. Even something like the telegraph, that came about as a result of government investment. So everyone should get off the kick that this program won't work if the government is involved in it.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Harry. Van Jones is the president of Green for All. You've electrified people at your commitment at how green jobs and neighborhoods and real people come together. Van, give us a sense of that, would you please?

VAN JONES: I will. First of all, it's an honor to be here. I want to thank Senator Reid for getting us started. I also want to thank President Clinton for letting me launch Green for All at the CGI. I want to thank Mr. Podesta for including me as a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. And I especially want to thank Al Gore for his friendship and mentorship.

We've combined to create a Green for All academy, training people across the United States from disadvantaged communities, from Appalachia to native American reservations to Watts to be a part of this clean energy revolution. So, it's just an honor to be here. There's genius around this table. There's also genius around the room: Paul Hawk (ph) and Bracken Hendricks, Amy Christiansen (ph), Jason Walsh (ph).

And there's genius across this country in the most unlikely places, where poor people are hearing about this green opportunity. And I think we've got a moral obligation. There's a moral challenge here, not just a practical challenge or a technological challenge, there's a moral challenge to make sure this green wave lifts all boats.

If Dr. King were here he would say we need equal protection from the worst of global warming – no more Katrinas. Let's get in front of this thing. He'd also say we need equal opportunity and equal access to the upside of the climate solutions.

And we can, in this country, fight both pollution and poverty at the same time with green jobs. The green part of the recovery package is the most fiscally conservative thing we've ever done because every green dollar is going to go out there and work double-time, triple-time. The dollars that will cut global warming emissions will also cut unemployment. They'll also cut asthma by giving us cleaner air. They'll also lift and raise up our home values by retrofitting buildings.

We're the most fiscally conservative people in the history of American politics when we talk about greening this economy. And the opportunity that we've got is to take this work that is the most important work that needs to be done, retrofitting a nation, repowering a nation, and connect that work to the people who most need it. If we can connect the people who most need work to the work that most needs to be done, we can fight pollution and poverty at the same time.

And the mechanisms exist. We have programs like YouthBuild. We have programs like the Conservation Corps that are taking disadvantaged kids out of rural America, out of urban America, giving them the tools, the training, the technology, telling them to put down those hand guns and pick up some caulking guns and be a part of the solution.

Let's make sure that everyone of those young people can get on a pathway not just to a green job but to a green career, where they can go from being the worker to being the manager to being the owner to being the inventor, to being the investor. The genius in this country that can be unleashed if we do this the right way, will give us not just the coalition we've always wanted, but the country we've always wanted.

MR. WIRTH: Van, thank you very much. And I'm going to go back to Lee Scott and ask him, in part, to respond to that. But I want to go to you, if I can, Glenn English, and how is this vision going to reach to rural America, the consumers that you represent? And as you make your comments I'm going to ask Ken Salazar and Byron Dorgan to listen particularly carefully because I'm going to ask them to respond to issues that you may raise, as both of them have such responsibility for making this reality.

Former congressman, Glenn English.

GLENN ENGLISH: Well, thank you very much. Obviously most of the renewable energy that this country is going to be producing is going to be produced in rural America. And I think rural electric cooperatives – our very name implies the people that we serve. What most people may not be that familiar with is that we serve 70 percent of the land mass of the United States. So, we have a lot of territory, not many people, about 42 million people in 47 states all across this nation.

Also, we are a not-for-profit, consumer owned organization, so we're a consumer group. And I know I speak on behalf of all consumer groups that we're very sensitive with regard to the affordability of electric bills. And certainly that's of concern today. So as we move forward to deal with all of these issues I hope that everyone around this table will keep that in the back of their mind, that we want to make sure that we make smart decisions, good decisions and very affordable decisions as far as the American people are concerned. And cost should be a factor.

I might also say, Leader Reid, rural electric cooperatives were established with that partnership between government and people. The federal government made it possible for electric cooperatives to be established and for rural people to receive power. We'd like to return the favor today. We believe that electric cooperatives are well positioned to, in fact, help this country meets its renewable energy needs. And, in fact, a national renewable cooperative has already been established today and is in existence to do that very fact, to generate as much electric power through renewable energy as we possibly can, and do it in the most cost-effective manner possible. What we are doing is operating as a cooperative: 930 cooperatives in those 47 states across the country, and make contributions to the national renewable cooperative to invest in those projects so that we can help keep those electric bills affordable, to do it in the most cost effective way.

The thing that's holding us back is our reason for meeting. It's transmission. And that, I think, we have to recognize and understand is going to be the issue. If we can build that transmission then I think we can make a significant contribution as far as renewable energy. And I think renewable energy can play a big role.

Without that transmission, with all due respect the Congress can set all the timetables and guidelines they wish, they're not going to be met. We simply can't do it. So transmission is the key and that's what we've got to deal with. And that's a very tough political issue to come to grips with and we fully recognize and appreciate that. Let me also say that speed is of the essence. Speed is of the essence. I think that has to be understood. This is not one of those issues we can talk about for another five years and then hopefully get underway.

We, as far as electric cooperatives are concerned, have two-thirds of the power that our members receive are residential, residential folks. And we're very concerned today that within the next decade our members may not have enough power if we don't solve this problem, if we don't address this problem. And certainly if renewable energy is going to play the kind of role that we all hope that it will, and still keep the lights on, we've got to move very, very rapidly.

So I hope that the group will keep that in mind. And I want to thank everyone around this table, and certainly all of our political leadership, for taking on what is a very, very difficult challenge and is a problem that we simply must solve.

Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Glenn, thank you very much. And thank you for bringing your constituency into this coalition as well as you have. Probably nobody around the table understand rural America more carefully and clearly than Secretary Salazar.

I can tell all of you he grew up in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, probably as rural and poor an area as exists in the whole of the Rocky Mountain region. And his is the American success story. It's an extraordinary story of political will, political achievement and political accomplishment. And Ken, you have to bring all of that to bear to solve these issues and reach to deciding questions. Thank you very much for being here.

SECRETARY KEN SALAZAR: Thank you very much, Senator Wirth.

And as I was listening to Senator Reid talk about how the federal government has taken on major issues and has been a part of those solutions in the past, I was thinking, Glenn, about the REA and how in my own lifetime and in our house in southern Colorado, we didn't get electricity out to our place until 1981, just a few short years ago. And so I remember Senator Reid's story about Searchlight and what it was like living as he was growing up without the modern-day conveniences that we have with electricity and the energy that we so depend on. And so this is a very important and timely conference.

Let me just say I believe that the Department of the Interior can play some significant roles, first with respect to siting and secondly with respect to transmission. We obviously own 20 percent of the land mass, the United States, 1.75 billion of the outer continental shelf in acreage. There are huge renewable energy potentials in wind out in the Atlantic. A huge solar potential in the southwestern part of the state, and a whole host of other items that are on the portfolio of renewable energy.

And if ultimately, we get to 25 by 25 or 30 by 30, or as Vice President Gore might say maybe even beyond that, I think so much of it is dependent on transmission because it doesn't do any good for us to take the 85 percent of the land mass in Nevada where we have the sun shining almost every day in Nevada, and produce tremendous amount of solar power. I mean, some companies are talking about 200- and 300- and 350-megawatt solar power plants out in the desert. But there aren't a lot of people out there to consume that energy that's produced from that solar power.

And so our big question becomes how do we get the energy that is produced from those areas to the places where it's going to be consumed in Southern California and Los Angeles and North Albuquerque, wherever it is that we have to transmit that power.

So I think, just based on my work with Senator Bingaman, with Senator Dorgan and President Clinton and others over the years, that we can do a lot more than we have been doing. You know, the experts, the scientists, tell us that we can get to the point where we're producing 20 percent of our energy from wind alone by the year 2030. They tell us that by the year 2020 we could put another 10 percent of our energy as we harness the power of the sun. And that's not even beginning to tap the potential that we have with respect to geothermal or other sources of renewable energy.

But at the end of the day, unless we are able to solve this juggernaut that we are in and deal with the transmission issue, we simply are going to be standing in place five and 10 years from now. And so I think it is appropriate for this center and for the Congress and for President Obama to be absolutely focused like a laser beam on what we do to grapple with this issue of transmission.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Senator Salazar. And you certainly – Secretary Salazar. You certainly have an enormous jurisdiction. And for those of you who are watchers of this, if we can get the Law of the Sea Treaty ratified by the Senate, his jurisdiction is going to increase by just about double, I think, in size. Isn't that right? Another set of responsibilities.

As you mentioned wind, the home of probably the greatest wind opportunity are the Dakotas. Byron Dorgan has watched this very carefully; is also the lead appropriator for all of the issues that we're talking about.

Byron, how do all of these pieces fit together in an appropriations process? And how do you deal with wind and a large coal constituency at the same time? Senator Dorgan.

SENATOR BYRON DORGAN (D-ND): Well, I was just thinking that Secretary Salazar mentioned the REA, which was, of course, a government program that brought electricity to rural America and released an unbelievable amount of productivity across this country back in the 1930s, and was controversial at the time, but a very large government program. We used to have an old codger who said, if it weren't for the REA, we'd still be watching television by candlelight. (Laughter.)

It's interesting. I was thinking about wind and renewables and oil. In oil, the problem is the supply is over there and the need is over here. That's essentially the – and we're unbelievably dependent on a supply that exists elsewhere, under the sands. And so renewable have the same characteristics in our country.

I mean, North Dakota is, according to the Department of Energy, the Saudi Arabia of wind. We have greater wind potential than any place in our country. But we also have stranded capability because we don't need it. And when we produce it, we build the turbines and so on and put them up and gather the energy from that wind, we have to send it someplace where it's needed.

So the renewables are over there and the need is over here. That's what drives the requirement. If we're going to maximize the ability to produce renewable energy, there is an absolute requirement that we connect America. I mean, we're looking for terms here. There needs to be a connect America transmission system, and we don't have it. Some parts of the system are modernized. Some parts are not. There's no central plan.

And I think the key to giving us the opportunity to do all that we can do here is to build a modern interstate transmission system. And the keys are, as I said before this morning, three things. One is planning, the second is siting, and the third is pricing. And if you don't solve all three of those, it can't work and won't work.

If you can solve those three – and I believe we can, and I believe we will with this kind of an approach – then I think we'll build a system that allows us to produce energy where we can produce it, in the renewable energy category, and then move it where it's needed. And that's going to dramatically reduce our vulnerability on foreign oil and at the same time produce a lot of jobs and begin to protect this country's environment.

MR. WIRTH: All right, thank you very much.

I'm going to go to Denise Bode as head of the Wind Association and ask her to frame the issues faced by the opportunities for wind. And what challenges then does that raise for the

Department of Energy, and the third in our line of Nobel excellence over here on my left; Denise and then to Steve Chu.

DENISE BODE: Thank you so much. And again, I want to thank you all for putting this forum together. This is absolutely critical to our future as a country is getting this right, because every time anybody, any consumer, goes to their home, they've got something plugged in every single plug at home. So it's going to make such a huge difference not only to the smallest person out there but to the largest business.

I want to also give you some good news. We've been talking about all the problems. I want to tell you some good news. Last year we added 8,300 megawatts of wind power in the United States. We led the country in adding new capacity from wind, and that was doubling over the last three years. And we're fully prepared to double it over the next three years. We added 70 manufacturing facilities. We're talking about, you know, 85,000 jobs, 35,000 added last year. So the opportunity and the possibility out there is unbelievable. And we are prepared to move forward getting the job done.

I want to also thank everyone around this table, because everyone participated, from the president down to every member of Congress, the folks in this room. I want to thank you for what you've done to buy us some time in this near term in the stimulus package to keep this momentum going. It's so critical what you did, and our industry is so grateful for that work. And we are working right now to continue to manufacture those parts and to get the wind industry going in the near future.

But what we have to have is not just the near-term solutions. We have to have the long-term solutions. And that's what we're here talking about today. We're talking about the need to send a signal to the business community. And Senator Dorgan mentioned it at breakfast this morning – a long-term signal that will provide the kind of certainty that the business community, that members here like our utility folks, like Mike Morris at AEP need, that Glenn English will need, that the businesses that are manufacturing these parts, like Cardinal Fastener, who's one of our facilities that builds bolts, that built bolts for the Golden Gate Bridge and for the Statue of Liberty, is now building bolts for the wind industry.

Those kind of people need certainty to add people, to add jobs, to spend the billions of dollars that's going to be necessary to build out this infrastructure, to build the wind farms, to build the solar panels, and to build the transmission which, as a former state regulator, let me tell you, it's a million dollars a mile to build that transmission. And we have to have that certainty to make it done.

What's going to give us that certainty? We believe fundamentally it's critically important to ask for and to receive a renewable electricity standard that makes the difference. I think what President Obama has said is critically important. It provides that certainty, that signal, unlike what has happened in the past with the renewable industry where we provide a tax credit, then we don't renew it, then we provide it. I mean, it's like Lucy pulling the football away from Charlie Brown, you know. I mean, you just get going and then it stops. So we have to have that.

And we have to have an elimination to the policy barriers that are out there that are keeping us balkanized as an electric grid. I mean, I watched first-hand as each one – we have 115 balancing centers in the U.S. trying to keep the grid moving. We've got to have this interstate highway, this green interstate highway, to get the job done, to move forward the United States. It is critically important.

In terms of getting the transmission done, there are three things that we talk about in this report. One is making sure that the cost allocation, that the pay-for, is coordinated and managed more at the federal level. We have to work on getting the siting issues right. And that does mean you have to have state input. And as a state regulator, let me tell you, I did provide that kind of input in our region. But you also have to have the planning done. And the planning on an interconnection-wide basis is critically important, and getting it done quickly is essential.

Right now we have 300,000 megawatts of wind projects waiting to go online if we can build the transmission, if we can only get the transmission built. Now, we're still being able to build projects now, and we will for the next two or three years, but we've got to get hot now to get that transmission built. So I wanted to tell you – and this goes to Van Jones, who's always got the best sound bites, and I'm so glad that I had people between you and I when we spoke, but you were talking about repowering America. Well, repowering empowers. And that's what we have to do as a country is we have to empower this new green economy.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Denise.

We're delighted to have Steve Chu joining us from the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.

Steve, thank you very much; as you all know, the Nobel laureate when he was at Bell Labs, and delighted to have that extraordinary vision now part of this.

What kind of problems technologically have to get solved, Steve?

STEVEN CHU: Thank you, Senator Wirth.

Let me start specifically with transmission and distribution. Siting problems are not a technical problem, but let me – it's not a science technology problem. It's a technical problem. And that's certainly the biggest bottleneck. But let me put a few science and technology problems on the table.

There is a technology of high-voltage DC transmission that the United States is just beginning to install. Europe is ahead of us. Asia is ahead of us. This is much more efficient transmission lines, going above the 765 kilovolt transmission lines we have today. They could be much more efficient. On hearing projects, that has to be thought of.

But when you transmit high-voltage DC, we actually need to develop better mechanisms for stepping up the voltage and stepping down the voltage. So you can actually have off-ramps as this power crosses over other states, so you can bring it down more easily. That's a technological problem and the Department of Energy fully intends to invest in that.

We talk about the great wind resources and the great solar resources of the United States, and the United States is blessed with enormous resources. But we also have to remember that renewable resources, like wind and solar, are transient – they go up and down. At the level of 2.8 percent – roughly, what we are today, that's okay. But, imagine a world of 15, 25, 30 percent renewable going up and down. That's a bigger problem, a much bigger problem.

Certainly that's why we need a long-distance transmission system to port the energy, because somewhere in the United States – whether it's the Great Lakes, North Dakota, the Pacific Northwest, Texas the wind will be blowing, but we don't have large-scale power storage yet. We should start to invest heavily in pumped hydro-storage, we should start to look at compressed air storage, so when the wind blows – because in the Dakotas there aren't hydro sources, but there is a capability of putting in compressed air storage, bringing that compressed air up, burning it with natural gas to create electricity much more efficiently.

The distribution system: Think about in the future where we have two-way flows. We have photovoltaics beginning on buildings and rooftops of homes and in warehouses. And you can imagine easily a day where you're going to have to have two-way flows, where you're suddenly giving back energy, and oops, a cloud goes over and it disappears, and then it comes back again. So, this is a much smarter grid that we need.

The electrical system we have today is essentially analogous to the water system: we put water in a water tower and it flows downhill into our homes and businesses. We put voltage – electrical energy at high voltage and it flows downhill. We have now presently a technology that can switch this electricity, but we need a very, very smart grid which is now sensitive to what the electricity is doing on a one-cycle basis – one-sixtieth of a second.

The biggest problem right there is the fact that American industry has not yet developed a standard. You imagine these very large power transformers, digital relays, and such, they have to be talking to each other. They're very, very high bandwidth so they can coordinate it. The American industry has not yet had a standard. It's been kind of stalled.

Somewhere in this I think we have an issue also and I've already begun to look into this. What we really need is to lock these people up in a room and say, come out with a standard in a few weeks, rather than trying to have one company and another company jockey for position. Time is wasted. And until there is a standard for this high-speed switching equipment, people will be afraid to install a smart grid. Boulder, Colorado, is starting this now. It's a great act of courage, because they know full well it may be – when that new standard is developed three years from now, or one year from now it may be obsolete. So, we've got to get a standard.

The Department of Energy has been entrusted with a lot of loan authority. And another thing that I've been looking at very hard in my first month in office is how to accelerate this loan authority so that America can make the right investments. And we have a plan, going forward, where we can reduce what could have been years, down to months. And we feel very strongly that this thing will work.

But, I'm beginning to look at the details – the need for a quick electrical standard, faster loan vetting and approval, all of these things. And that's – and I share with all of you around the room that we need to move with a sense of urgency, because – going back to the opening remarks of Vice President Gore, all the news on climate over the last half-dozen years has been essentially bad news.

The legacy we leave to our children and grandchildren, we – just imagine what it will be 50 years from now, 40 years from now, where if we don't act now and start acting with all seriousness, they can go back and say, what were these people thinking? So we've got to start acting.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

I'm going to go to the state of New York now, and ask first Governor Pataki, who's had an enormous amount of experience dealing with these potential opportunities, how, in fact, do they become a reality?

And then ask Robert Kennedy if he might talk about the kind of clean energy businesses that get spawned. That then moves us toward a more consumer orientation, and I would like to go to Lee Scott from there.

So, Governor Pataki, if you could – over to you, sir. Thank you very much for being here.

GEORGE PATAKI: Thank you very much, Senator Wirth, and it's an honor to be a part of this panel. And let me congratulate the leadership on the tremendous progress on energy that has been made thus far.

We all, I think, are aware of the needs, but what we haven't talked about is one of the biggest single impediments to achieving a national transmission system that allows us to access these renewables, and that is how do you permit the actual transmission line? And let me tell you, after 12 years as governor, there are a lot of contentious issues, but you try to run a wire through somebody's community and that becomes as contentious as you could possibly have.

You know, if you were to go to a community and do a poll on the stimulus bill, it might be 50/50, 70/30. But tell someone you're going to run wires through the community that come from one state and go through to another state, you don't have to take a poll. No one is going to be for it. And what is missing is the ability of those who desire to build this transmission system to actually get the approval and the permit to do it. It takes years, it takes hundreds of millions of dollars, and, at best, the outcome is uncertain.

So, I'm going to get in a little trouble in some quarters by agreeing with Majority Leader Reid, that I think the federal government has a critical role in this regard. Right now you have to get local approval, state approvals, but what we need is a federal permitting process. Not one that's authoritarian, one that works in partnership with the states so that the states see benefit to their constituencies when a national transmission system comes through their community.

Secretary Chu talked about on and off ramps. You know, when the highway system was built, at first everyone wanted it because they had that off ramp – they could get to work quicker, they could get their goods to market sooner, they could see their property values grow. We need to help states by having on and off ramps so states that want to raise their renewable standards can access them from areas that have those tremendous resources.

But ultimately, when it comes to permitting, if it's left to a state-by-state basis, for all of the money, for all the technology it is not going to happen. We have a model with natural gas pipelines where the FERC was authorized to do that. We need to work with the states, but ultimately grant that authority – and I'm reluctant to say it with the chairman sitting next to me – (laughter) – to the FERC so that these transmission lines that we all want, and we all know we need, in fact, ultimately get built.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Governor.

And we had quite a discussion of this earlier this morning with Jon Wellinghoff and Fred Butler, and if we have time we'll come back to some of that.

Robert, do you want to speak about some of the opportunities that are out there? And then I want to go to Lee Scott as to how those opportunities then get spread to a very broad American public.

Robert Kennedy?

ROBERT KENNEDY: I'd like to just start by saying, Senator Wirth, that during 25 years as an environmental advocate this is probably the most heartening morning that I've ever had – to hear all these national leaders talking about solving these issues in a way that I think a lot of us have been talking about a long time.

I want to – I'm on the board, in addition to working for NRDC and Waterkeepers, I'm on the board of one of the largest green-tech venture capital firms in the country. One of our companies – BrightSource on Thursday signed a contract with Southern California Edison to build a 1.3 gigawatt solar thermal plant in Southern California.

Eight months ago we signed another contract – the same company, with Pacific Gas and Electric for another gigawatt of solar thermal. So, that's 2.3 gigawatts of solar thermal that we're going to build – bring on-line within the next two years.

We're building the plant cheaper than you can build. It's bigger than most nuke plants. We're building it cheaper than a nuke plant. We're building it cheaper than a coal plant. We're building it cheaper than a gas plant. We're building it a lot faster.

Once we build it, as Vice President Gore said, the energy is free forever. You don't have to go to Saudi Arabia and punch holes in the ground, bring the oil up, refine it, ship it across the Atlantic with a military escort, get in periodic wars in Mesopotamia and other places, and then deliver it across the country. The electrons are hitting our country for free every day. If we build this infrastructure to pick them up, we can put them into the lines.

If we were to build this out across the country we could provide 100 percent of the energy needs in this country for about $750 billion. This is theoretical. You know, I'm not saying you could do solar thermal for the whole country, but you'd mix it with wind and others. $750 billion, that's less than we spend on oil every year, on foreign oil than we send – than we export out of this country for foreign oil every year.

We gave that $700 billion to Wall Street and people say, well, it'll take generations to pay it back. Actually, it'll only just take one year without foreign oil. What we need is a marketplace, and that's what everybody's saying, that's what Vice President Gore said. We need an open marketplace that does what a market is supposed to do, which is the reward good behavior – which is efficiency, and to punish bad behavior – which is inefficiency and waste.

Right now we have a marketplace that is rigged to favor the dirtiest, filthiest, poisonous, most expensive fuels from hell. We need to design a marketplace that rewards the clean, cheap fuels from heaven. Now, we can do this very quickly and I want to give you a couple of examples: We built a national grid, a national backbone for the Internet in 1979 called the ARPANET. And in 1980, a year later, there were fewer than 500 PCs in this country and IBM was saying it was a dead-end technology. Well, now every American has a PC, because we had a marketplace. And what happened to the cost of information of bits and bytes? It plummeted to almost nothing. That's the same thing that will happen to electrons if we build a national grid for electricity in the country.

In 1996, President Clinton signed the Telecommunications Act, which opened up the telecommunications grid. It spawned a telecommunications revolution in this country. That's why we have an iPod. This morning, before I came down here, I saw on TV an advertisement for a company that provides unlimited long distance and local calling for $18 a year. That's what's going to happen to the cost of energy if we build a national marketplace that operates the way that a marketplace is supposed to do.

Now, it may not be one whole grid system, because really, there are three grids in this country: there's an eastern grid, there's a western grid and there's a Texas grid. All of them are big enough. All of them have adequate wind and solar resources to split among each other and that may be a more sensible way to do it; I'm not sure.

But what we need to do is to make sure that the market rules are aligned with our national interests and with the global interests of saving our planet. We need to make sure that utilities can make money by getting their consumers to conserve energy and that their profits are not dependent on them selling as much energy as possible.

And then we need to open up the grid so that everybody can get on it. If you have a solar panel on your roof and you're not home for one part of the day and your house is generating more energy than it's using, you ought to be able to sell that back to the grid and get market rates for it. There's no state where you can do that today. Thirty-six states will buy it back from you, but all of them limit how much and none of them will give you market rates.

If we do that, we will make every American into an energy entrepreneur, every home into a power plant and we can power this country from American initiative and entrepreneurship and energy rather than Saudi oil.

MR. WIRTH: Robert, thank you very much.

Lee, if you could hang on just a minute. There was one comment in this theme running through this, which is changing the rules in energy and how that – how we have learned about changing the rules from telecommunications. Nobody has done that more in the last decade-and-a-half than Ed Markey, who now has the energy responsibility.

But, Ed, what's the parallel between what we learned just very recently and what we have to do now? Then I'm going to go to Lee Scott and Andy Stern as to how all of this relates to consumers and individuals.

But Ed Markey.

REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD MARKEY (D-MA): I think that's the perfect analogy, Tim. You and I and Al joined the Telecommunications Committee when people wanted to be on the Appropriations or the Ways and Means Committee. And that's now 32, 34 years ago when we joined that committee.

But just – let's just fast forward to 1996. President Clinton, Vice President Gore have a vision. And that vision is to create a broadband network across our country. In 1996, not one home in America had broadband – not one.

Now, after the Telecommunications Act passed, by creating a new marketplace – and Al and I used to talk about this on a weekly basis – we now have a revolution. This created a new vocabulary in the United States. It's called eBay, Amazon, YouTube, Google – thousands and thousands of companies – because we got the marketplace right and it unleashed this venture capital revolution.

Now, all across America there's a generation of Sergey Brin's and Larry Page's waiting for us to get the marketplace right. They're waiting in their venture capital firms; they're waiting in their master's degree program at Caltech and MIT, but schools all across America – they're ready to go. The green generation is ready to unleash this second revolution.

And so I think that we should be optimistic that 10 years from now, we'll look back at this year and next as that pivotal point where we created the equivalent to the broadband revolution. And by the way, that revolution created 3 million new jobs in the United States.

And I think 3 million is a conservative estimate as to what we could create if we got this marketplace correct.

But we have to make sure that we create these bridges so that they're not bridges to nowhere. We can't be creating transmission systems out to coal country. We've got to make sure they're going out to where the renewables are being created. And we have to also make sure that if the electricity is being created from renewables, that it has a place to get in.

So as Byron was saying, back in the 1930s, urban America decided that they were going to fund the construction of electric lines to bring it out to rural America. Now we have to decide how to get it in from the prairies into the cities, in from the desert and off of the rooftops of Americans into the electricity grid.

So if we think – as this analogy to the telecom act, as you have pointed out, Tim, very wisely – we found a way of empowering the ends of the networks so that we weren't tied to these centralized decisions that were made in the telecommunications industry for 100 years. And that's pretty much where we are right now, although there already was a prodigy. There already was an early iteration of AOL out in the system, but they were just waiting to be unleashed. So Denise already pointed it out – they've already had great progress, but the potential is unlimited.

And I'll tell you why we're at this critical point. Nancy Pelosi has made it her flagship issue. Kerry has given this tremendous leadership to it. The president, before the bank collapse, when he was asked what was his number-one issue he said, climate change and energy policy. So we're at this tremendous point.

And all you have to know is that Denise came from the American Petroleum Association to the American Wind Association – (laughter) – and that I can make – and this is a statement I thought I'd never make – that I can end my statement by saying I agree with every thing that Boone Pickens said and I never thought I'd say that! (Laughter.) So thank you, Tim. I appreciate it.

(Applause.)

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Congressman. And I think you've really laid out in summary what we're talking about here in terms of the transmission issue is in a way a case study of the overall shift in rules and shift that we have to take on in the country, not dissimilar from models we've had over the last 150 years, most recently in telecommunications.

Nobody in the retail world has taken more advantage of – understood the opportunities of this very significant change in the telecommunications area: Lee, if you could talk about that from the Wal-Mart point of view, and then we can go to Randy Stern and Rick Fadreesy (sp), if we could do that. But first, let's start with you Andy – oh, Lee. Thank you very much for being here.

LEE SCOTT: Well, thank you for inviting Wal-Mart to participate.

It is interesting for us to be here, because we do feel like we represent the consumer, average-working people in the United States.

When we embarked on sustainability back in 2005, it was a very interesting discussion, because the number one thing that was discussed on one side was that our customers really don't care. And on the other side was that none of the NGOs would even come and visit with us because they didn't trust us. So it has been an interesting journey.

And what we have found out is that average working people in America do care, but they cannot afford to pay more. And if you look at the current environment that we are in, if we legislate solutions to these issues that cause people who have to stretch every dollar every week to pay more to sacrifice, they just cannot do it.

What we have found at Wal-Mart, though, is that where we give a choice that allows people – working people – to both save money and to do things that are good for the environment, they pick the things that will save money and are good for the environment – compacted fluorescent light bulbs, new packaging. Just because they don't have money doesn't mean they don't care. They do care. They just can't afford to be as aggressive as the people in this room in reflecting that care in their purchases.

So we have built a better relationship with our customers by embarking on this. We have, at the same time, improved our image among those people who typically are not our customers, but seem to have a great deal of power. We have created a better business and we are operating for less dollars.

We have a new store in Henderson, Nevada, that is using 40 percent electricity than our current stores and we're very excited about that what is going to mean to us. In our truck fleet we improved our fuel mileage by 25 percent. By using individualized systems, we also were able to reduce our mileage driven by 90 million miles. And by reducing packaging saved another 7 percent for almost a little short of a 40-percent savings in total fuel used for the same number of cases.

So those kinds of things, President Clinton, that you talked about that are here today, I think, are important for us as businesses to embrace. We have on March the 1st, thanks to Boone and his ability to twist an arm, the delivery of our first LNG trucks. Boone, so please don't call me anymore. (Laughter.)

We have on the road today five hybrid-assisted trucks. And on a test track today, we actually have a hybrid truck that below 40 miles an hour runs on the batteries. And then one of the great synergies we have is we have five trucks coming on this next month, which will actually run on the brown grease, the oils that we fry the chicken in, in the deli. We have five trucks that will be running on that. And we're looking at taking the remainder of that grease and running an 80/20 blend with diesel fuel. So actually, Vice President Gore –

SEN. REID (?): It sounds to me like you're using too much grease in that cafeteria.

(Laughter.)

MR. SCOTT: Well, I was going to say it is going to be an opportunity. You'll be able to eat fried chicken and save the environment. And we'll be working on our marketing on that. (Laughter.)

But I do think – I want to say two last things. First of all, Speaker Pelosi talked about vision. Business has freedoms that government doesn't have. I understand that. But to me, if I look back to 2005, what we had was a vision. We had a crystal-clear vision of where we wanted to go, but we did not have a crystal-clear vision of the route we would have to take to get there. And I think that's critical in this discussion.

We know where we want to go, and we cannot wait until we have every absolutely turn figured out before we start the journey. And it does take courage, and it does take some capacity to be criticized. So I think, you know, I'm excited about this. I think, ultimately, this is good for our customers.

And the last thing I would say is as we think about these things and you're in a meeting and somebody says, but this is only going to cost $5 a week more, remember that there are people that if it costs them $5 a week more, that means that they're not going to buy something for their children or they're not going to buy medication or they're not going to participate in the wealth of this American life that we all enjoy. So we also have to do this in a way that somehow protects those people who make up the bulk of this country and make this country what it is.

MR. WIRTH: Lee, thank you very much. I'd say Lee has just announced his retirement at Wal-Mart, but let me say that we're not going to let you get away. You know, it's absolutely essential that you remain as deeply engaged in this as possible. And we look forward to working with you, and thank you for coming.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Andy Stern has thought deeply about the issues of justice and how the opportunities of this new economy deal and relate to an American workforce that's certainly threatened or under pressure today as perhaps never before.

Andy, thank you for being with us.

ANDREW STERN: Thank you. And as an organization that's somewhat of a latecomer to this, I just want to say, to have all these people who were out there before this was popular, who got challenged about the science or their integrity, it really is an honor to be here. And for Senator Reid and Speaker Pelosi and President Obama, to sort of see this now all come together with this opportunity, we owe all of you an incredible debt of gratitude.

Let me just say that for all of us in this room, I think we do appreciate, and I think it's said up on the sign, that this is a huge opportunity to not only create jobs we desperately need right now but really to think about building a new economy. And I would say we're not quite yet there with the American people understanding the opportunities that are here.

So I think, first of all, we just need to be thoughtful that we have, at times, oversold things. I think we oversold high-tech jobs. We oversold trade as kind of the answer. And I think what it means is that if we really want to maximize the opportunity here, we have to think about how we're going to create American jobs and how we're going to benefit this country very specifically. And so for that, I think it's very simple. We need a plan.

And we need to appreciate, particularly when we get to weatherization and retrofitting and some of the lower-end parts of this job creation, you know, what John Podesta and another study at CAP showed, that when you look at procurement in the federal government, and Vice President Gore and President Clinton tried to deal with this when they were in office, 80 percent of the jobs that are provided from our current procurement are low-wage jobs. Twenty percent, one of every five jobs, are poverty jobs provided by procurement from the federal government. Most of them have virtually no significant healthcare benefits. And so good intentions are not enough here. We have to be intentional.

And so, just for me, there are three things we need to think about for the legislators. You know, one is, as we do in defense contracting, how do we consider these really investments in critical industries so that we guarantee there's a certain amount of domestic base of production and a domestic workforce? And I'm not simply trying to be protectionist, but I do think we understand what a critical industry is. And what is more critical than our own energy security here?

Two is we need to build on the green jobs act and all the issues about hiring and training and workforce development. But we have to be thoughtful of not accepting sort of anecdotal, one-off solutions as something we can do on scale. And I think we have a tremendous obligation and responsibility right now with all the money that Congress has appropriated to really be serious about, you know, not highlighting one thing here and another thing there but building, as Lee Scott knows, a system, you know, that actually creates the good jobs, the training, the career advancement we need.

And three is I think we're going to have to set some meaningful standards so they are good jobs, whether it's what Maryland does about living wages, whether it's what we do about prevailing wages in Davis-Bacon or predetermined wages or project-labor agreements or community benefits. If we are not purposeful and intentional, the idea that these will be good jobs, particularly in certain parts of this job creation, is not necessarily going to be true. And we cannot afford to sell the American people something that turns out not to be true.

This is the opportunity to create a new economy. It really is a chance to create the jobs that our kids and our grandkids can live the American dream. And I think we have the opportunity to do it. And I'm glad to be here.

MR. WIRTH: Andy, thank you very much. Andy is our landlord at the U.N. Foundation and we are privileged to be in a LEED gold-standard building. And Rick Fedrizzi from the U.S.

Building Council is here. Rick, do you want to give us your window on how rapidly the building stock is changing and how rapidly it can change?

RICK FEDRIZZI: Sure, thank you very much. It's really a pleasure to be here with all of you. The U.S. Green Building Council really – part of the discussion that I've heard over and over again this morning really gets to the fact of, how do you take this big macro idea and get it into the hearts and soul of the American people so that they can understand it?

And in our opinion, there really is no better way than get it right into their living rooms. People have to understand it. You have to get it into the schools. You have to get it into the places where we work. People need to know that there's a connection between the world that we live in, what we use as far as energy and how it's produced and where it's produced.

And I think when we talk about a future with a smart grid and we talk about a future where we have energy-efficient, green and smart buildings all connected together, what we've done there is we've produced a great story that will in fact translate down to the American people, when you start talking to the folks that can't afford $5 more.

But right now within their homes and in the world that they live in, they have embedded probably another 100 (dollars) to $200 a month in savings that doesn't appear because their houses, their homes, their businesses, whatever it is, are inefficient. Right now, the McKenzie study that came out not too long ago says there's about $160 billion just sitting on the table that we could grab by the year 2030 just by making the smallest improvements to the energy efficiency of these buildings.

So I think we have a tremendous opportunity in front of us. I think the communications of this whole opportunity is going to be paramount because when you talk about the grid, the average homeowner doesn't get it, I'm not sure they care. What they care about is food on the table, sending their kids to college. And when they start to realize that it's not just about them doing with less but maybe some intelligent decisions about how their homes are operated, constructed, weatherized and anything that has to do with improving that performance, puts food on their table. I think that's one of the best messages we could sell.

So that's it, Tim. Just a very quick comment on what we have in front of us.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Rick.

And I want to ask Carl Pope and Rose McKinney-James the question that you asked to begin with. Do people understand the connection between the energy they use and the world in which they live?

Carl and Rose.

Carl.

CARL POPE: People understand it a lot better than they did even 24 months ago. And people like Boone Pickens and Al Gore and Bill Clinton get a lot of the credit for that. I was really struck as I went around in 2006, when I went around campaigning, I could get an audience to talk about how green energy was a big part of the American economic future if I went to places like the Cleveland City Club. That was news. I mean, prior to 2006, those of us who talked about this issue were by and large relegated to the free-speech zone at national conventions. (Laughter.) We weren't really a part of the mainstream dialogue.

And in 2006, you started getting this serious hearing. This fall, I went out and I went to northeastern Ohio. And I went door to door with canvassers for Working America in communities where steel jobs had gone away 20 years earlier. And I found that people at the door who had been waiting for 20 years for something to happen finally thought something was going to happen. And they thought the something that was going to happen was wind turbines on Lake Erie. And they said to me at the door, look, we get it. If it can be made in Shanghai, it will be.

But you can't harvest the wind on Lake Erie from Shanghai. If we're going to make my house more efficient, we're not going to do it in a back-room office in Bangalore. We're going to do it in Canton, Ohio, where I live.

I think the American people are now way, way ahead of where their leaders were a year ago. But I think there is still a serious risk. And Secretary Chu talking about it. It's easy to talk about how government is bureaucratic, government slows things down, government's inefficient. When we're talking about connectivity, markets can be just as bad. They can sit forever, maneuvering for advantage. They can sit forever, arguing about standards.

We can either build this new, connected, green-energy world the way we built the Interstate Highway System which I think is the right model. Or we can build it the way we built the railroads. Now, eventually, after the way we built the railroads, we've got a pretty big railroad system, but it took an awfully long time and it was very, very wasteful and inefficient. There was no plan. We didn't plan the railroad system. I think we need to plan the new energy future.

MR. WIRTH: Great, Carl. Thank you very much.

Rose, you've been a state regulator and an energy consultant and part of the Energy Foundation Board. Is the constituency there? And then we're going to go to Jeff Bingaman. Is the constituency being built there that's going to help Jeff Bingaman pass the energy legislation that's so critically needed? Thank you for being here.

ROSE MCKINNEY-JAMES: Thank you, Senator.

And on behalf of a variety of advocates in this room from the state of Nevada, Senator Reid, before I begin, we certainly have to extend our appreciation for your extraordinary leadership in this regard. And for those of us who have been on the ground, literally for now a couple of decades, this is indeed an extraordinary opportunity.

I think that we have, through the work over the last couple of decades, built for you a very strong network of advocates who understand these issues, who feel the pulse of the communities in which they work and understand the challenges that we face with this current economy, looking forward to what they believe are the tremendous opportunities coming out of this technology.

You know, I've been focusing on policies at the state level for a number of years. And we've put together what we think is a very strong framework. But it has become increasingly clear over time that what we really need is the federal leadership to make this happen. We absolutely need to have a plan, and we absolutely need to know that people on the ground are interested in the economic development opportunities for them.

My colleagues at the Energy Foundation, as an example, have told me that if we can move toward serious planning for transmission, planning that will allow us on a regional basis to cooperate and bring together this network of advocates, just in the state of Nevada alone with two transmission lines, we could talk about up to 2,000 megawatts of renewable development which would translate into 16,000 construction jobs, 1,000 of those in transmission alone, and then potentially 3,500 permanent jobs. That is meaningful.

And the advocacy network that we have developed, in large measure through philanthropy, could serve as a strong partner for you in terms of making the advances that we need to achieve our long-term goal which is outlined, once again, around the words on this table – clean energy, an abundant resource. And clearly, in the state of Nevada, we have it all. We have geothermal, we have solar, we have, you know, a tremendous opportunity for biomass which we've not discussed here in any large measure. But we have it, and we are ready and prepared to assist you in this regard.

MR. WIRTH: Senator Bingaman, you've been listening to a lot of inputs and a lot of advice here. I hope this is helpful for your chore. And do you have the public support for doing what you have to do?

SENATOR JEFF BINGAMAN (D-NM): Well, I think there's great public support and a great opportunity, obviously, to move toward a much more efficient system for use of energy, a much more clean system for production of energy and transmission of energy. And we need to sort through the difficult questions of jurisdiction between the states and the federal government. We need to be sure that the necessary authority exists at the national level to do some of this planning that we've been talking about as so essential and that Carl referred to.

And then I think we do have to be sure that we do it in a way that helps us use the grid in the smartest possible way because the great, as everyone recognizes and many have said around here, President Clinton said it very well, the greatest near-term opportunity is in saving energy. We can become much more efficient in the way we use energy, and the smart grid will allow us to do that if we just have the wit to figure out what the elements are that will get us to a smart grid.

So I congratulate you on this conference and everyone who has participated. I think there's a strong consensus to move ahead aggressively, and I hope we're able to do that.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Senator. And that is a good summary for a momentary pause. We had promised our good secretaries a noon-time witching hour. And I know that Secretary Salazar and Secretary Chu have another session that they have to go to for a lunch. And we promised our senators as well a similar timeframe.

So let me see if I can just sort of set the engagement for the remaining time together. We would like to get Michael Thaman from Owens Corning to talk some about some of the technologies that are available. And ask Nat Simons (sp) to give us a bit of a view on his perspective of the role of outside philanthropy and advocacy to get this to happen – and then close with Vice President Gore and Boone Pickens and finally John Podesta.

So, with that, let me thank our special guests for being here, our political leadership. Jeff, thank you very much. Ed, thank you for being with us. Secretary Salazar, thank you, sir. Always a delight to see you. Steve, thank you for joining us. And we will look forward to working with you all.

Michael Thaman.

MICHAEL THAMAN: Thank you, Senator Wirth. And thank you for having us join this wonderful event and this great coalition.

It's been an interesting morning. I think we've talked about some fascinating technologies on both the fuel-source side as well as the grid and the infrastructure side. I guess I'd like to take us further down the grid all the way to the home and to the office building, you know, the place where we sit and the place where we live.

We do believe the American people get it, but we also know from our research that less than 25 percent of Americans understand that the single biggest user of energy in our country is residential commercial buildings. Forty percent of the energy in our country is used in homes and buildings, 74 percent of the electricity. So if we're really going to take on the issue of the grid, I guess I would echo President Clinton's comments. The first thing we need to do is start working today on the energy efficiency of the places where we work and live.

For most of us, unless we're wealthy enough to hire an architect to build us a home or we're a big enough corporation or government to be involved in the design phase of our building, we inherit that infrastructure that we live in. And this is an important part of the infrastructure of our country. And really, I don't think our policy generally deals with construction as though it's a part of our nation's infrastructure. And in fact, it is. I think there's an opportunity through this coalition and through new policy to establish a public-private partnership between good government regulation that establishes performance standards in construction, that encourage us to get to higher levels of efficiency, that give incentives in existing buildings to get them to higher levels of efficiency. We'll see that with weatherization.

We are eager to get in the game of trying to figure out how to get the weatherization money into the marketplace, to get our economy to be more energy efficient. We believe with the size of this challenge, that has to be a critical and visible element of any solution. And we believe this coalition is up to that challenge. Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Great, thank you very much. And we appreciate that, Michael. And Owens Corning has certainly been a leader along with your sort of sister company, I guess, Corning in terms of the revolution that they existed before in fiber optics.

Nat Simons, do you want to give us a window on your perspective of how philanthropy and organized philanthropy is helping to engage the public and keep the standard as high as possible?

NAT SIMONS: Thank you, Senator Wirth. I don't have anything really prepared to say today because I really was thinking about everything that everybody was saying around the room. But in thinking about the conversation today, I have been struck with a couple of things. I've only been working on this issue, and the issue of climate change and energy is really what we're focused on entirely at this point, for a short time. I don't have the perspective of many of the people in this room.

And it is interesting because I remember talking to many people. And the first really large thing I got involved with was with the Energy Foundation – and I see Rose McKinney-Jones and Eric Heitz (ph) in the back there – on the issue of renewable portfolio standard, renewable energy standard and also CAFE standard and tried to push that through in '07, and we didn't get the RES through, as people all around this table know. We did get the CAFE through, and that was very exciting. And to me it was like, well, okay, well, that was good, now let's keep going.

And to see the reaction of everybody in the environmental community, in this energy community, as to how dramatic that was, I didn't feel that. I'm, like, okay, well, that's just the first step. We have many things to do, obviously. And I think that to see a group of people around the table and to see the consensus that's around this table that we have to get moving is obviously very exciting, but as Governor Pataki so eloquently said, when the rubber hits the road, or I suppose when the electrons hit the grid, I suppose, is a better way of saying it, then it's a different game.

And I think that the role of philanthropy is more than anything to just facilitate the process. There are many different stakeholders, and they all have to be brought together. The grid is perhaps the best example that we can think of, I think, where there are many disparate interests. And to get it done quickly is going to take a herculean effort from all sides, because it's not really a question of whether we move to a low-carbon economy. I think it's clear that we're moving there and it's clear that we're going there. I think there's probably complete consensus around the room that that's going to happen. The question is how quickly.

So the role of philanthropy is really to facilitate that process in every respect, because it's not going to be ramming something down the throats of certain people. We know that that's not going to work. We've seen that. We've watched that movie before, and we know it's not going to happen. And we can't take this momentum and let it stall.

So philanthropists, foundations have a huge responsibility. They can't put the steel in the ground. They can't build the windmills. We can't build the new generation of efficient cars. We can help to facilitate the process. We don't have any stakeholders that we have to represent. We can represent the United States. We can represent humanity. We can do the things that need to happen to bring people together, to find common ground and to move the ball forward. And I think that that's really the role that philanthropy needs to continue to do.

And I – just last note. You know, again, there are many great work – much great work has been done by philanthropists, and certainly by NGOs in working with Carl Pope's Sierra Club and many, many others. But there does need to be more capital to move in from philanthropy. There need to be more funders. And I think that foundations are starting to understand that, but they have many legacy positions. Some of them are constrained by their mandate.

But everything which they do is going to be jeopardized by climate change. All the good work that they do – feeding people, clothing people, educating people, trying to raise up the world from poverty – is all jeopardized by climate change. So it's in everybody's interest that this happens. And I certainly hope that more capital comes in from existing foundations and from new foundations. And hopefully we can – because it's needed. It's clearly needed.

MR. WIRTH: Nat, thank you very much. And that's certainly reflective of earlier comments from President Clinton. We're going to hear from him in closing in just a minute. Before getting to closing, let me ask John Wellinghoff from FERC or Fred Butler from NARUC. Both of them had been part of the discussion earlier this morning. Both of them are in these critical regulatory positions from the federal authority and the state regulatory authorities; if either of them have closing summary comments they might like to add to the discussion.

John?

JOHN WELLINGHOFF: Thank you, Senator Wirth. And, again, I want to thank Senator Reid and John Podesta for putting this together and having me here with this great group of people and the topics we're addressing here.

In summary, I think what we have to remember here is certainly what Congressman Markey and Robert Kennedy said, and that is that the framework of the markets has to be gotten right. And taking up President Clinton's theme of not forgetting about energy efficiency, in framing those markets right – which FERC has the responsibility over the wholesale electric markets – we need to ensure that consumers can understand their part and can be part of those markets; that, in fact, they can play a part in being an integral part of the grid, with demand response, with what I call dispatchable conservation.

And so hopefully a good portion of the $11 billion we have in the stimulus package will be used for augmenting and encouraging this dispatchable conservation so consumers, in essence, can participate in the grid. Once they can participate, once they can see how they can control their loads – you can control the load in this building; you can control the load in a residential building in a way that can help the grid – ultimately that will have the effect of making consumers know that what we're doing overall with siting transmission and putting renewables in is integral to what they're doing as well on their grid side.

And we talked about earlier needing storage. I think we have plenty of storage in this country. The thermal mass in the buildings in this country has more storage than we need. We just need to know how to control it. We have the way to control it from a standpoint of technology, but we need the infrastructure and we need the communication standards. And I think there was a discussion about communication standards, and FERC has responsibility to do the standards for the smart grid, working with NIST on that. It has to be done, as Dr. Chu said, faster. We need to get moving on that faster. If we can do that, though, consumers then can understand how they're part of this grid process. And being part of that grid process, I think we'll all move ahead much faster.

Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Great. Thank you, John.

Fred Butler. Then I'm going to come back to Boone Pickens, if I might.

FRED BUTLER: Thank you, Senator.

And let me once again thank the organizations of this group. It reinforces, in my mind, that we are living in an extraordinary time that we can sit around this table and have this discussion that we need to have. I've repeatedly said that the times we live in remind me of the opening lines from "A Tale of Two Cities." "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." It was a time of reason. It was a time of insanity.

We all know why it's the worst of times; the economy and what we're dealing with. But it's the best of times because we're focusing on some issues that we have not been able to focus on for a long, long time. And that is a good thing.

Now, we isolated three components of this, which was planning, siting and cost allocation. Let me focus on the planning aspect and talk about the position of the states, which I represent from the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, in addition to being a regulator in my own state of New Jersey.

The members of Congress know how difficult it is to get consensus among the 50 states. I have my own little congress of 230-some-odd utility commissioners, and it's very difficult to get consensus from them. And the consensus has been for the last number of years that we are opposed to federal takeover of the siting responsibility, and that continues to be the position.

However, there has been a discussion that has ensued among those states that is leading to consideration of perhaps a shared responsibility, but that the planning process needs to start with the states and the state plans and the state perspectives and then go into a sort of more regional approach. Then we can talk some more about who has the ultimate siting authority, because if you have involvement in the planning process, when the line is drawn and you can say, yes, we realize that that level of transmission needs to be built, that that amount of transmission needs to be built, and it needs to be built here in general, here," then states can get more involved and can get on board.

I also think that it helps explain to the public at large, who are going to be impacted by that transmission line – and believe me, I've sited transmission lines and I've sited gas pipelines, and the transmission lines are the ones that get in people's face and the ones where they get upset about it and they come to state capitols and state commissions. They don't necessarily come to Washington.

So the states are moving. The states are thinking about this and discussing it. I'm here to tell you that we're willing to work, and work to a solution that we can all live with.

Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Fred. You certainly point to two of the major issues that Senator Reid in his legislation are going to have to grapple with on the regulatory jurisdictional issue and the siting issue overlapping, and very complicated and very difficult, but absolutely critical.

Boone Pickens, as we have had this discussion, if I were sitting where you were, I would have a certain amount of, from time to time, discomfort as some of the fuels that have been responsible for driving our society have been perhaps a little bit maligned from time to time. Others have been encouraged from time to time. There have to be ways in which we can deal technically with so many of these to bring more natural gas online where that's possible, to engage, as Steve Chu was suggesting, many of the problems that exist in the coal world.

Maybe you could close with a view on looking at those fuels and how terribly important it is for us not only to understand how to deal with these fuels, but also how we can do that in a way that makes us more secure as a country. And again, from all of us, thank you for helping to get us all together here and launching this major effort.

MR. PICKENS: Senator, I would like to say that – and I'm going to go back to at the end of my sophomore year in college – but we must have a plan. We've got to have a plan to solve the problem. And I keep harping, I know; no plan in 40 years. But my dad said at the end of my sophomore year, he said, a fool with a plan can beat a genius with no plan. And I'm afraid that I have a fool with no plan.

And, you know, I see us here. Let's don't let this opportunity get away from us. We've got to have a plan. The natural gas – there's no question, it's the only thing that's going to replace diesel. So we have to use it, and it's abundant, it's cheap and it's ours. That is a key. The light duty goes to the battery, and that's the way it should go.

Natural gas will be the bridge to the next generation of transportation fuels. How long does it last? Twenty to 30 years. If the solution comes quicker – natural gas is so valuable to our country, it can be used in so many other ways. It doesn't have to be used for transportation. But here it's going to have to fill that void of no other fuel that we have that'll move a big vehicle.

So 40 years we have been caught in the same trap – cheap oil, cheap oil – but I can tell you that's over with. They've told you. NAEM (ph) told you on the "60 Minutes" show that they have to have $70 to $75 for the oil. Listen to them – listen to them, because they are telling you the truth. They do have to have that. And you're going to get it. You're going to have it by the end of the year. Now, I'll say that in two years you're going to be back up to 140 (dollars) is where you're going to go.

So we need to move as quickly as we can to solve the problem. This is the time for leadership. It's the time for leadership. And I – you know, around this table what a great day it's been for me to see the comments that are made, an effort here that has nothing to do with politics. It's clearly a bipartisan issue. The energy problem for America is going to be solved.

But don't be stopped – and I'll close with this story – don't be stopped by that 10 percent that are – I don't care what it is – they're opposed. And I want to – we had an old gentleman in my county where I live and where my ranch is in Roberts County, Texas. He was 90 years old. He was born in that county and he lived there for 90 years. Really didn't enjoy leaving the county. It was good enough for him; he liked it.

We got together at the county seat at the gymnasium and passed through and shook hands with him. And the person in front of me said, Mr. White, he said, this is remarkable. He said, you were born in this county; you've lived here 90 years. He said, in that 90 years you saw a lot of changes, didn't you?

And he said, yeah, and I was against every damn one of them!

(Laughter.)

That's the 10 percent that we can't let stop us! Thank you.

MR. WIRTH: Boone, thank you very much. And I know all of us will join together and come to Stillwater to the Pickens arena and award you the collective Nobel in planning and effective activity when all of this legislation gets passed. You'll be one of the key –

MR. PICKENS: Thank you. I'll be ready.

MR. WIRTH: – out front.

MR. PICKENS: Okay, thanks.

(Applause.)

MR. WIRTH: Albert Gore.

MR. GORE: Thank you again, Tim, for your great leadership. And I'm struck by the tone of this meeting and the sense of purpose. There's a real inspiration here and I'm really happy about it.

One time when I was working as a newspaper reporter, my wife Tipper and I got a puppy for our youngest children. And a woman that worked in advertising had a sideline as a dog trainer. And we got her to come over and help us with the training. And she sat us down first and she said, okay, before we begin: What is this puppy's purpose?

I said, well, it's going to be a puppy. And she said, no. Is it going to be a hunting dog; is it going to be a watchdog; is it going to fetch? And then she said something that really stuck with me. She said, a puppy has to have a purpose.

And if that's true, so do we! (Laughter.) And I think our generation's purpose is to save the habitability of the Earth. And, again, that sounds like a – that sounds like language that's quite unfamiliar. But Fred Butler referred to "A Tale of Two Cities". Here's a tale of two planets: Earth and Venus are exactly the same size. They have exactly the same amount of carbon. The difference is, here on Earth the miracle of life and the unique processes on Earth have pulled the carbon out of the atmosphere and left it buried in the ground and on Venus, it's still in the atmosphere.

So what difference does that make? Well, here the average annual temperature's 59 degrees Fahrenheit and on Venus it's 855 degrees Fahrenheit and it rains sulfuric acid. And the whole difference is – virtually the whole difference is – the distribution of the carbon in the planetary system and it's relative to our current global civilizational strategy of taking as much carbon out of the ground as quickly as we can and putting it in the atmosphere. So our purpose is to quit doing that and to shift over to renewable sources.

The second thing that hit me: Rick Fedrizzi referred to the McKenzie study. Now, there hasn't been too much jargon in this session here today. It's been great. It's been really accessible to me and I think that, everybody, it's been a great discussion. But I want to highlight what Rick's referring to there, because I think it's a really important body of knowledge that we sometimes easily overlook.

That study he's referring to was done for a Swedish company called Vattenfall, and many people here have seen the graph that resulted. Graphs can be confusing, but this one's been around so much and here's what it shows: A great deal of the most effective things we can do to save energy, to save money and to reduce CO_2 do not have a price tag. They have an economic benefit.

Amory Lovins, who's been right about a lot of things for a long time, is so smart whenever he's talking it's like drinking from several fire hoses at the same time. And he was going on and on one time and he said, we've got the sign wrong. And I'm thinking, okay, this is Amory. He's talking about cosign, tangent, calculus. And I went back and I said, explain that to me. He said, no, when I said sign, I meant plus sign and minus sign. We're putting a plus sign to say this is going to cost a lot of money, and the truth is a lot of it has a minus sign. It saves us money!

So several have made the point that getting the economic incentives right – and as Bobby said, getting a marketplace that unleashes all this ingenuity and innovation, is really the key in a lot of respects, because presently, sometimes the incentives for the builder of a building, for example, drive the builder to get the lowest first purchase price. But the incentive for the person that's paying the lease or buying and operating that building are to get or to pay attention to the lowest operating cost.

But because those incentives are out of whack, the market does not help us as well as it should and could if we reach out and get that low-hanging fruit, as they call it, and get the economic savings that can come from reducing CO_2 right away.

Now, finally, the unified national smart grid – whatever it ends up being called – has a gestalt about it. When it's all together, it gives us the ability to put that cost-saving incentive into it and make clearly and plainly visible, easy to understand for all of us exactly where the savings can be made. Secondly, it gives us the opportunity to link the rooftop – this has been said – the rooftop installations and eventually shift to a widely distributed energy-production system. In the beginning, we're going to have to have these utility scale in the central station plants, because that's – we can't shift everything overnight. But, eventually, with a unified national smart grid, it'll be flung out to the periphery and we'll have this widely distributed energy-generation capacity.

And, finally, it will also help us solve the battery problem because batteries are not only devices that sit in cars or in machines. They can also be – we can also have a widely distributed battery. And Secretary Chu said earlier, it solves the intermittency problem because someplace the wind's blowing, some place the sun's shining and we can move it around. But we can also use it to have stored electricity in cars while people are at work, in cars while people are asleep, in millions of smart devices that are connected with one another on the part of the Internet that we as people don't use that are constantly balancing this and the consumption goes down and down.

Electrifying the auto fleet, using natural gas for the 18-wheelers and the heavy vehicles as a transition – then we can get off of all those imported liquid fuels that come from foreign oil and foreign products and solve the security and economic problem and put people to work in the process.

So I really think – there have been very few meetings of this kind that I've gone to over the years that had as much consensus and good spirit as this one. And I just think keeping the momentum going and getting this thing really over the top – I'm really optimistic and hopeful.

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. And you, as ever, have given us an overall framework and the purpose of this puppy. (Laughter.) And we're going to drive it and train it and make sure that it stays in the right room and does what it's supposed to do as well.

Mr. President, you began with a wonderful view of the world. And maybe you could reflect on what you've heard here this morning. And, you know, what message would you like us to take away as well?

PRES. CLINTON: Well, I'm going home thinking about the puppy with a purpose and a 90-year-old man who was against every change he ever met. It really is the portrait that Al painted of Venus and Earth is pretty graphic, but it's something that ought to be burned in our minds.

Let me just make a couple of comments here. First of all, I agree that this has been very, very moving because we've all held together – the ups and downs and finally, it's – we've got a consensus to move. The details matter. That's the first thing Al said. It's really true.

When Robert Kennedy and Congressman Markey were talking about the Telecommunications Act and what a good job we did to create jobs, I owe a lot of that to my vice president, who was involved in this for a long time. We had lunch once a week for eight years, and we started talking about all this stuff. And I'm grateful to him for the work he did on that issue, and we both care a lot about this energy thing.

But, I would like to just make a couple of comments: We all know that no matter what we do we're going to have to have national cap-and-trade legislation; we're going to have to have a standard for electricity generation – and Al wants a higher one, and, you know, I think we can be a lot higher than we think; and we all know we're going to have to have a global agreement.

Hillary just got back from China and she – Todd Stern went with her, he's going to be the negotiator for the president, and I just wanted to say one thing without kind of getting beyond her report. She said, you know, if you look, there's a lot of interesting things going on in China; and they get this – they know this is a problem. They just don't know how to get from where we are to a 50-percent reduction.

Now, the rest of us don't get to make this deal with China. We can advocate, but – or with India, or with anybody else – (chuckles) – so I will say again, I think the rest of us should focus on what we can do that is right in front of us that will make a difference. I'll just give you three or four examples and then close:

I don't see how we can create the kind of market for entrepreneurial people and their homes and buildings that Robert Kennedy advocated unless we mandate decoupling and stop favoring the financing of big, expensive centralized power plants over the financing of small, totally clean energy investments. That will put more money into what the U.S. Green Building Council is trying to do. There are only two or three states in the whole country that have the authority to do it, absent state legislation, and only California has done it comprehensively for electricity. I don't know, 11 or 12 have for natural gas. So, I think we have to do that.

There are on the books now, just waiting to be implemented, increased efficiency standards for about 15 well-known household appliances, with very good technology that's well-established. We ought to do that – more jobs and more savings.

The third thing I had an idea for – when Lee Scott was talking about this, something we had a gazillion conversations of this over the years, and Wal-Mart really has done a marvelous job of being more efficient, but they're a big company with smart people who can figure stuff out like this. In the Depression, when we were trying to figure out how to save small farmers, the Agricultural Extension Service was set up. The Energy Department, SBA, everybody – we need a "virtual Energy Extension Service" that can go into every home and every small business in the United States, that gives as much information as the rest of you are willing to share about what you did, as it might be applied to smaller units.

And finally, let me just say one thing nobody has talked about, that I think is important: If you watched the Oscars last night, "Slumdog Millionaire" won eight Oscars. And those of us who saw it probably liked it that they won those – I did, anyway. But, if you know the opening scene in the movie, these kids are playing stickball on the airport in Bombay or Mumbai. And the police come up because they're about to get killed, and crash some planes besides, and they run them off.

And they start chasing them, and before they get back to their slum, they run across the Mumbai landfill. And they might as well be sprinting across the Sahara Desert. And you see people there making a living, scrounging in the landfill. We're trying to help them close that, and one in Lagos, Nigeria. And we've negotiated with Mexico City and other places.

Look, this is really hard but the only thing I want to say is Van Jones is trying to make poor people a part of this equation. The poorest congressional district in America is the South Bronx in New York City. The governor used to get grief for bringing garbage to the South Bronx, right. The mayor gets grief for – oh, it's the dumping ground of New York City.

We can close all these landfills, recycle the metal and glass and compress the organic material; and my favorite use is to use it as biomass fuel for generating electricity, either into the grid or for cogeneration for some business. You can also compost it for fertilizer; you can use it as a biofuel to drive – for biodiesel or ethanol.

But, my point is, this is economical now. We need to set up a system where we close every big landfill in America because we have the – while we're depending on the president, and his Cabinet, and others to figure out how to get us a new post-Kyoto climate change deal. While we hope and pray the Congress won't get pressured out of giving us a really tough cap-and-trade system; the rest of us need to show that this can work.

All we can do – the rest of us, we're not – if you don't have a vote in Congress, and you're not in this government, your job is to prove that this can work. Because I can tell you that, you know, the Chinese, the Indians, even – I was in Lagos, Nigeria the other night. And these guys come up to me – the mayor and all these people, they're excited about closing their landfills.

I mean, the general awareness of this is greater than you think it is. But, people still don't believe we can really do it. And so a picture is worth a thousand words. And it's – and we got to get the market right in America. I don't think we're going to do the equivalent of what happened to telecommunications until you stop favoring one form of utility financing over another, and that means you got to get to decoupling around the country. That's what I believe, anyway.

(Applause.)

MR. WIRTH: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And part of that, again, is changing the rules, changing the rules, changing the rules, and that has to be done in a coalition of people who can then help Senator Reid get done what has to be done.

And, Mr. Majority Leader, this has not only been a meeting that you called, but a meeting that you designed and a meeting that you stayed through for the whole of the session – all three very unusual and a reflection of your very deep commitment to getting this to happen.

(Applause.)

SEN. REID: Everyone, thank you very much for being here.

This is inspirational. But, I always think about 60 votes. (Chuckles.) So Senator Bingaman has left. We're going to do an energy bill real soon. I hope that we can focus on a renewable portfolio in that legislation. I hope we can focus on beginning the work that needs to be done on the highway to move this electricity where it needs to be done. We can do it.

But the reason I was happy to hear what Boone said, you know, this is not a political meeting. The problems facing America today with our energy problem is not anything that affects Democrats more than Republicans or vice versa. We have a problem. We are not a secure nation – importing 70 percent of our oil. We have to do something to clean up our environment. We must do that.

And I would say, with Vice President Gore and President Clinton here, they proved during their eight years you can have a good environment and have a good economy. And that's what this is all about. So I so appreciate everyone's cooperation, their involvement in this. We've got a lot more to do.

And, as President Clinton said, those of us in government have a tremendous burden but we can't do it without you. And we all have a burden.

And for Al Gore – to listen to the facts that he's been giving us, I can remember his talking about this when we were both in the House together. He had that crazy chart in his office, it was – it kept going higher and higher and higher. This is something that I so admire and appreciate – the work that you've done. This is something that certainly the world has recognized, with the giving to you of that Nobel Prize. And you certainly deserved it. You deserve an Emmy, you deserve the Oscar. Thank you very much, everybody, for being here.

(Applause.)

MR. WIRTH: Senator Reid, thank you very much. And I'll ask John Podesta for closing words for the good of the order. John?

MR. PODESTA: Just extremely quickly, I think this has been a great morning. I want to thank Tim for the great job he did moderating this session.

(Applause.)

I think we've been treated to a lot of bad news lately. I think this has been a very optimistic session about what can happen if we really do – in empowering and enabling consumers, and train and employ workers for this new economy. So, I'm very excited coming off of this.

I would just say, we're going to leave, but you're going to stay in your chairs, I hope, because I think Stan has a little bit of work for you to do on the dial-meters. But, we'll have version 2.0 of our paper out for Senator Bingaman. And, hopefully, as I said, we put wind at the back of the change that we need. So, thank you all for being here.

(Applause.)

(END)