

"Few challenges facing America—and the world—are more urgent than combating climate change. The science is beyond dispute and the facts are clear...delay is no longer an option. Denial is no longer an acceptable response. The stakes are too high. The consequences, too serious."

President Barack Obama

Issue 3, February 2009

44TH US PRESIDENT



OBAMA  
QUOTED



## GLOBAL HOPE: A NEW ENVIRONMENT WITH NEW APPOINTMENTS

IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS US PRESIDENT Barack Obama stated that the US will work tirelessly to 'roll back the spectre of a warming planet'. To achieve this goal Obama has assembled an energy and environment team that includes: Dr Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy; Lisa Jackson, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator and Carol Browner, Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change. Steven Chu is a Nobel Laureate and the former Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory which focused on clean energy research. He was also a member of the Copenhagen Climate Council. Just two days prior to his appointment Kinesis Director Nick Rowley facilitated the second meeting of the Council with Steve Chu in attendance at the Royal Institution in London.

Obama has also named John Holdren as his science advisor. Holdren was recently quoted by Tom Friedman on the risk of climate change stating that it is akin to 'driving in a car with bad brakes in a fog and heading for a cliff. We know for sure that the cliff is out there, we just don't know exactly where it is. Prudence would suggest that we should start putting on the brakes.' Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has appointed Todd Stern as Special Envoy for Climate Change. Stern will be the administration's top climate change negotiator. Stern was the Assistant to the President and Staff Secretary in the White House from 1993 to 1998 and was the senior White House negotiator during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations.

Obama has moved rapidly with regard to the climate problem. He has ordered the EPA to consider California's request to impose tighter vehicle fuel efficiency standards, reversing a decision by the Bush Administration to block California's request and signed a Presidential memorandum requesting that the Department of Energy set new efficiency standards for common household appliances. The stimulus package that has been put together by Democrats in both houses of Congress and is supported by Obama currently includes \$30 billion for research and development of a new 'smart' electricity grid and \$20+ billion in renewable energy tax cuts and a tax credit for research and development on energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and a multiyear extension of the renewable energy production tax credit. The Centre for American Progress has calculated the increase in energy investments included in the stimulus compared to past funding.

While the stimulus package is a significant first step, there are still a number of additional initiatives Obama intends to pursue. Senator Barbara Boxer, chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee has released her principles for Global Warming Legislation and stated that the United States will have a climate change bill that sets emissions reduction targets and establishes a market for carbon dioxide released prior to the start of international climate change negotiations at Copenhagen in December this year.

"These urgent dangers to our national and economic security are compounded by the long-term threat of climate change, which, if left unchecked, could result in violent conflict, terrible storms, shrinking coastlines, and irreversible catastrophe."

"It falls on us to choose whether to risk the peril that comes with our current course or to seize the promise of energy independence. And for the sake of our security, our economy and our planet, we must have the courage and commitment to change."

"Just as we work to reduce our own emissions, we must forge international solutions to ensure that every nation is doing its part. As we do so, America will lead not just at the negotiating table—we will lead, as we always have, through innovation and discovery; through hard work and the pursuit of a common purpose."

 WANT TO KNOW MORE?

★ For details on Obama's energy and environment team read the official announcement [here](#).

Read Sen. Barbara Boxer's *Principles for Global Warming Legislation*.

Todd Stern has published two articles with the Centre for American Progress. The first outlines his proposal for the formation of an E8; a compact forum of leaders from developed and developing countries devoting their full attention once a year to global ecological and resource challenges. Read [here](#). The second details the major climate change policy issues the US now needs to address. Read [here](#).

### Economics

## McKinsey Release New Cost Curves

Global strategy consulting firm *McKinsey & Company* have released a new greenhouse gas abatement cost curve that quantifies the potential global actions for reducing emissions. The analysis focuses on technical abatement opportunities that cost less than €60 (A\$118) per tonne of abated greenhouse gas emissions. The report shows that it is possible to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 35% from 1990 levels (70% compared to 2030 levels if the world follows its current business as usual path) which would limit the rise in global temperatures to less than 2°C. The report estimates that the global cost of achieving this reduction would be €200–350 billion (A\$390–\$687 billion) a year by 2030: less than 1% of global GDP.

 **WANT TO KNOW MORE?** Download the full report at [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com)

### STATS INSUFFICIENT EFFICIENCY

Estimated fuel efficiency of new Holden four cylinder car in Adelaide  
**26.5 miles per gallon**

**11.3 km/l**



Newly approved US vehicle fuel efficiency standard by 2020 (2016 for California)

**35.0 miles per gallon**

**14.9 km/l**

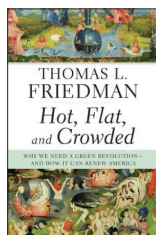
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### CLIMATE LIBRARY MONITOR

#### Hot, Flat and Crowded

THOMAS FRIEDMAN



In his latest book, author Thomas Friedman, who won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Earth is Flat*; his seminal work on globalisation, argues that the countries that take the lead in developing innovative green technology will gain competitive advantage over time. *Hot Flat and Crowded* focuses on the problems of the climate crisis; the resource demands of the growing middle class and the world's growing population. He argues that the battle over green technology will define the 21st century the same way the 20th century was defined by the battle between communism and capitalism.

#### Kyoto 2

OLIVER TICKELL

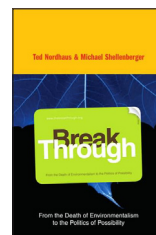


In *Kyoto 2* Oliver Tickell proposes a new global climate change agreement to supersede the current Kyoto Protocol. He argues that the current Kyoto Protocol has failed and that a new course of action is needed.

*Kyoto 2* outlines his proposal for a new system based on finite production rights for greenhouse gases which could be traded by organisations in a global auction. While outlining his proposed new global agreement Tickell examines the flaws in the current Protocol and provides a radical and fresh perspective on the debates and negotiation that must take place prior to the crucial UN meeting in Copenhagen this December.

#### Breakthrough

MICHAEL SHELLENBERGER TED NORDHAUS



Close to the new Obama administration and both one of TIME magazine's Heroes of the Environment in 2008, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus prompted controversy with their 2004 essay 'The Death of Environmentalism'. In this article they argued that the prevailing politics of environmentalism could not address climate change. They point to the effects of Martin Luther King stating that he had a 'nightmare' rather a dream. It is the nightmare that environmental politics has focussed on. For the authors fear will never succeed in achieving the required level of public, political and business commitment to the changes required to reduce our current reliance on fossil fuels. In *Breakthrough* they build upon their challenge to environmentalism and propose a new politics that shifts the paradigm beyond 'limits' and embraces pro-growth through the development of breakthrough green technologies.

 **LISTEN, READ REVIEW, PURCHASE**

[www.thomasfriedman.com](http://www.thomasfriedman.com)

[www.kyoto2.org](http://www.kyoto2.org)

[www.thebreakthrough.org](http://www.thebreakthrough.org)



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