

Testimony of John Fetterman
Mayor of Braddock, Pennsylvania
Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
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Chairman Boxer, Mr. Inhofe, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today. I am John Fetterman, and I'm the mayor of Braddock, Pennsylvania-Allegheny County's poorest community.

My testimony this afternoon will be short and straight to the point. I don't pretend to be an expert in economics or energy policy – but I do know what I've seen with my own eyes: The path we are on has failed. In my part of Pennsylvania, we've lost a quarter of a million jobs in the steel industry in the last several decades. Braddock, a once thriving steel town of over 20,000, is now a shattered community of under 3,000 residents today. Ninety percent of our community is gone. Communities and families face desperate times. We need change – and we need it now.

For decades we've watched jobs leave America. For decades we've heard about the danger of America's oil addiction. For decades we've see real change blocked by those who profit from the status quo. If there is a silver lining in the current economic crisis – and from where I sit it is awfully hard to find one – it is that America may now finally be ready to find a new path...and to face the tough questions we've ignored for so long.

I believe that new path starts with cap on carbon pollution. By driving massive new private investment into clean energy industries, a cap offers us the chance to create jobs. And not just high tech positions making solar cells and exotic technology, but the kind of blue collar jobs that could revive towns like Braddock – or Akron or Detroit. Jobs making the 250 tons of steel or 8,000 parts it takes to build a wind turbine. Jobs making new windows, like they do in the old factory in Vandergrift, Pennsylvania – a factory that shut down until it was revived to make energy efficient windows. Or LED lights, like they make in North Carolina and export to China. Or one of the thousands of other products it will take to build this new energy economy.

The government investment in clean energy in the Recovery Act was a good start, but we will not truly transform this economy until we spur the private sector to action. This nation is full of entrepreneurs, investors, inventors – and Steelworkers – prepared to jump start a true energy revolution. And that will only happen once you pass a cap on carbon pollution. To win the most jobs, and the most economic opportunity, we must be a market leader in these new products and technologies - and a cap on carbon in the US will spur our companies to be early mover in these new markets, supplying solutions at home and then selling these solutions across the globe.

Two weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (ACES). This legislation was supported by the United Steelworkers, the UAW, the AFL-CIO, and the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, which includes the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters; and the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association. These workers of America recognize that a cap on greenhouse gas pollution is the surest way to create the jobs of the clean economy.

So I respectfully ask the Senate to be as bold as the House has been. To overhaul our economy and free us from our addiction to imported oil. I ask you to ignore the scare tactics of the well funded interests – and answer the call of Braddock to build a new energy future, and a New American Century, with the ready hands of America's workers.

Thank you.