

Michigan League of Conservation Voters
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President Obama Visits Michigan To Talk About America's Energy Future

Warren, MI. –President Obama will be visiting Michigan today to give a speech about education and innovation, on the eve of what appears to be an intense debate about energy and climate change legislation that is likely to hit the floor of the United States Senate in coming weeks.

Members of President Obama's cabinet have been visiting Michigan over the last few weeks to discuss the future of energy policy in the United States. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu recently spoke at an event in Battle Creek, and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack was here in Michigan yesterday with Congressman Mark Schauer and Senator Debbie Stabenow.

All of this attention from Washington highlights what most Michiganders already know: it is critical for the Congressional delegation from Michigan to strengthen and support the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act of 2009. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a narrow margin, and will move to the Senate shortly.

“It's encouraging to see advocates from the Obama administration and the President himself dedicate time to talking about this issue here in Michigan,” said Mark Neisler, Global Climate Change Specialist with the Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. “The citizens of Michigan understand the tremendous opportunity for our State to lead the way in the manufacturing sector of the renewable energy industry. We must make sure that Senators Levin and Stabenow recognize this opportunity, as well, and act on it by supporting the President's vision for a progressive energy policy in the United States. No matter how you look at it, this is the best way forward for Michigan's economy.”

Public support for a drastic change in the national energy policy is high, and momentum is building. Michigan is uniquely poised to take advantage of the opportunities that the ACES legislation is seeking to enact. The existing manufacturing workforce and infrastructure with which we are endowed would need minimal retraining and retooling to become the nationwide leader in sectors like wind and solar development. There are examples of successful utilization of this concept with companies like Hemlock Semiconductor in Hemlock, MI and Mariah Wind Power in Manistee, MI.

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