The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2009

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

As a coalition of residents, business owners, scholars, students and advocates in the Southeast coastal region, we are writing to express our support for strong and prudent legislation to address climate and energy issues facing our nation. We are concerned about the consequences that changes in our climate will cause to our small-businesses, the environment, and our quality of life along the Southeast coastline. Our nation has an unprecedented opportunity to address the root causes of climate change and the impacts to our communities while protecting the health and productivity of Southeastern coastal economies now and for future generations. We urge you to work with your colleagues, our Congressional Representatives from the Southeast, to enact comprehensive climate legislation that includes a cap on global warming pollution with targets based on science, research and planning.

The Southeast U.S. is home to more than 16 million residents with property totaling $2.2 trillion. We rely on the more than 2,000 miles of beautiful coastline as an economic engine that attracts diverse visitors and outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy the region's coastal marshes, barrier islands and other unique natural and historic features. Coastal tourism activity creates thousands of jobs and generates billions of dollars in revenue across the region. However, the most popular coastal tourism activities involve outdoor recreation and resources that are threatened by climate change impacts.

The Southeast coastline is one of the most vulnerable ecosystems in the United States to the threats of climate change. Sea levels are projected to rise at least 3 feet by the end of this century. While this statistic might be challenging to visualize, the slope of the land in the Southeast is such that a 1-foot rise in sea level can flood land a half of a mile inland. Even with less than a foot of sea level rise, many civic services such as sewer and water and gas lines would be in danger, not to mention homes, schools, churches and businesses. The projection of stronger storms and associated surges coupled with rising seas spells disaster for our low-lying communities. We have no time to delay.

Leading scientists warn that we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25-40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. We can meet the first goal with existing technology, but we will need new policies and innovative solutions to meet long-term goals. It is up to Congress to establish science-based targets that cap our nation's global warming pollution and create market incentives needed to drive a new green economy.

We cannot overlook the economic and environmental imperative of addressing climate change. Our region has much to gain by taking advantage of new economic opportunities as we transition to a low-carbon economy. From our abundant and untapped resources such as energy efficiency and renewable energy options like solar and offshore wind energy, the Southeast coastal region will be a valuable source of clean energy solutions, innovation and jobs. With an average of 10% unemployment in our region – it would be a disservice to our citizens not to unleash legislation that can retool our workforce and reinvigorate our slumping economies. Additionally, any bill passed by Congress should rebate a significant portion of the cap proceeds to American citizens in a way that is fair, progressive and can help rebuild communities.

Please do not delay in taking action to address one of our nation's greatest challenges. We look forward to working with you to develop and implement effective solutions to climate change.

Sincerely,
Community leaders, businesspeople and citizens who support strong climate and energy policy for the Southeast and the nation from:

Florida
Joseph Naroditsky and Jessie Glickstein, Faiths United for Sustainable Energy, Co-founders, Miami
Deb and Arne Arnason, Alva
Advanced Green Technologies, Ft. Lauderdale
George Cavros, Broward County Climate Change Task Force, Hollywood
Barry N Heimlich, Fla. Atlantic University, Center for Urban and Envtl. Solutions, Sr. Fellow, Hollywood
Doug Young, South Florida Audubon Society, President, Tamarac
John Wark, Florida Media Strategies, President, Sarasota
Florida Voices for Animals, Tampa
Andrea & Martyn Barlow, Seminole
Marilyn Weaver, Owner, Advanced Driving Skills Institute, Tarpon Springs
Jamie Trahan, Tampa
Joseph Siry, Ph.D., Board Member, Fla. Defenders of the Envt, Envt. Studies Dept., Prof, Rollins College
Rachel Walsh, FSU Environmental Service Program, Director, Tallahassee
John H. Parker, Fla. International Univ., Emeritus Prof. of Environmental Science and Chemistry, Miami
Kristen Watson, Sunovia Energy Technologies, Inc., Marketing and Public Relations Manager, Sarasota
Kimberly Gronemeyer, Tampa
Andres Mejides, Miami-Dade Coll., Org. Horticulture Instr., Elfin Acres Org. Farm Owner, Homestead
Dianne Rhodes, Naples Network for Climate Action, Co-coordinator, Naples
Karin Sanders, Fort Lauderdale
Rhonda Roff, Save It Now, Glades!, President, Clewiston
Jennifer Preston, FSU Environmental Service Program, Delray Beach
Jane Gilbert, High Impact, Integrated Solutions, Miami
Jim Walker, NONUKESNOW, Tallahassee
Harry & Irene Patterson, High Springs Gardens, Co-owners, Alachua
Mike McNicholas, Enviro Mechanical, President, Hialeah
Barbara Neeld, Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville, Member, Jacksonville
Richard Furman, New Energy Technology, Consulting Engineer, Miami
Sara E. Fain, National Parks Conservation Assoc., Everglades Restoration Program Manager, Hollywood
Brian Paradise, Ponte Vedra Beach
John H. Fitch, PhD., Florida Gulf Coast University, Sustaining Tomorrow Today, Director, Ft. Myers

Georgia
Lance Orchid, Alliance for Climate Protection, Georgia State Director, Savannah
Dave Kyler, Center for a Sustainable Coast, Executive Director, St. Simons Island
Sharon Foxworthy, Clean Air Campaign of Georgia, Northwest Georgia Representative, Rome
Paul Wolff, Georgia City Councilman, Tybee Island
Tom Ferguson, Foundation for Global Community, Atlanta
S. Glenn Farris, Biomass Gas & Electric, LLC, President and CEO, Norcross
Gordon Rogers, Satilla RIVERKEEPER, Executive Director, Waynesville
Joseph F. Meucci, Steam Turbine Generators, LLC, Owner, Woodstock

Louisiana
The Gulf Restoration Network, New Orleans

Maryland
Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Takoma Park
Ken Bossong, SUN DAY Campaign, Executive Director, Takoma Park

North Carolina
Orrin Pilkey, PhD., Duke University, James B. Duke Professor of Earth Science Emeritus, Durham
Carolyn Prior, Coastal Water Watch, Co-Director, Southport
Lee and William Ahern, Raleigh
Susan Tompkins, Charlotte
Glenn Mauney, Wind Energy Consulting and Contracting, Inc., Dir. of Business Development, Charlotte
Roberta Dees, Charlotte
Veronica Butler, NC Conservation Network, 1Sky NC Organizer, Raleigh
Carrie Clark, Conservation Council of North Carolina, Executive Director, Raleigh
Representative Pricey Harrison, North Carolina House of Representatives, District 57

South Carolina
Toni Reale, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Southeast Coastal Organizer, Charleston
The South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Charleston
Christine Ellis, Waccamaw Riverkeeper, Founder, Conway
Ann Shahid, Audubon South Carolina, Climate and Energy Outreach Coordinator, Harleyville
Jane Lareau, Mt. Pleasant
Nancy Cave, Georgetown
Azure MacConnell, R.N., James Island
Susan Corbett, South Carolina Sierra Club, Chair, Columbia
Frank Knapp, Jr., South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce, President and CEO, Columbia
Michael and Megan Desrosiers, James Island
Mary Edna Fraser, Environmental Artist, Charleston
Adam MacConnell, GEL Engineering, Hydrogeologist, Charleston
Chris Marsh, Port Royal
Siobhan O'Reilly-Green, James Island
Nicholas C. Rigas, PhD., Clemson University Restoration Institute, North Charleston
Ian Sanchez, James Island

Virginia
Benjamin Sovacool, *PhD.,* Virginia Tech, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Asst. Prof., Blacksburg
Dale Stovall, CoolSystems , Owner, Williamsburg
Scott & Jenny French, SUNRNR of Virginia, Vice President & Treasurer, Harrisonburg

National Organizations
Greenpeace