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New Ad Campaign Promotes Climate Legislation

By ANNE C. MULKERN of
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A newly formed alliance pushing for passage of climate legislation used President Obama's prime-time speech on health care yesterday to launch an advertising campaign that asks people to lobby lawmakers for action on global warming.

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Clean Energy Works -- a coalition of environmental, labor, veteran and hunting and fishing advocacy groups -- is footing the bill for the campaign that will run for a week on broadcast and cable television stations. The ad appeared during breaks in coverage of Obama's speech and on NBC's "Tonight Show." [Click here](#) to see it on Youtube.

"We want to remind people that while health care is important, clean energy also is on the agenda," said Josh Dorner, spokesman for Clean Energy Works. "It's an issue that's of equal if not greater concern to the American people than health care reform."

The campaign launches as the Senate gets back to work after its August recess, with energy legislation on its plate along with health care.

The ads mark the latest salvo in a series of efforts to sway public opinion and Congress on climate legislation. The National Association of Manufacturers and the National Federation of Independent Businesses teamed up for ads that ran in late August in Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Virginia. Those were intended to drive opposition to climate legislation. Last month, coal's biggest lobbying group launched a television ad campaign featuring ordinary people talking about the importance of low-cost electricity.

The Clean Energy ads target the exact points that polls show people respond to on energy, said Mark Mellman, president of the Mellman Group, a Democratic polling firm.

"People see energy as a serious problem," Mellman said. "Overwhelming numbers want to move to clean energy," Mellman said, and see that as reducing dependence on foreign oil, increasing national security and creating jobs.

In polls as recently as 10 days ago, he said, those arguments win out over competing

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arguments by a margin of 20 percentage points.

But Jerry Taylor, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, said he is "somewhat skeptical" that the ads "have much impact. Informing the public enough to actually build a groundswell for or against a piece of legislation is very difficult."

However, if the ads cause 300 people to write or e-mail a lawmaker, even though that is a very small percentage of voters, that could influence that lawmaker's vote.

"It's the perception more than the reality here," Taylor said. "Maybe these ads can change perceptions."

Dorner declined to reveal the cost of the Clean Energy Works' campaign but said it was "significant." The 30-second spot mentions national security, gas prices and jobs.

"When we spend a billion dollars a day buying foreign oil, we don't just waste our money," the ad says. "We put our economy in the hands of hostile nations. We let Big Oil make record profits, while we struggle. And we lose new energy jobs that go overseas."

The ad promotes "strong" energy legislation as the solution, saying it will create 1.7 million new jobs. The source of that statistic is a June report from the Center for American Progress, a liberal policy group headed by John Podesta, who was chief of staff for President Clinton and led President Obama's transition team.

At the end of the ad there are the words "call Congress," with a phone number for the U.S. Capitol switchboard. The ad was produced by GMMB, which worked on Obama's presidential campaign.

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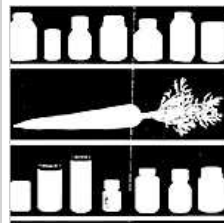
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