

November Commentary and Newsletter

With just 3 weeks to go before the long-awaited UN Climate Conference begins in Copenhagen, it would be a very opportune time to take stock and examine the prospects for meaningful agreement being reached. It would seem that we have dodged the bullet and have avoided a catastrophic meltdown of the global financial system, thanks in large part to China and other resilient economies in Asia, but very little progress has occurred on the climate front. The Waxman-Markey bill has managed to find its way out of the House of Representatives, but the real test will come with the Senate, where every single vote will be needed for passage of the Kerry-Boxer bill. With just a few short weeks before the world descends on Copenhagen, the clock has literally run-out for passage of the energy and climate legislation that we hoped President Obama would take with him. Informed sources are telling us that if the new law is not forthcoming by Spring, it stands very little chance of passing next year, period. And who knows what can happen after that. In the meantime, the developing world is watching these political shenanigans with great interest, as the likes of China and India will still have the United States to hide behind and continue sitting on their hands. We are not holding our breath for any real breakthrough in Copenhagen and the best that we can hope for is some sort of agreement on forestry through REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) and perhaps a meeting of the minds on funding the clean technology that is so crucial to mitigating climate change and adaptation for what will unavoidably be a warmer world. Despite the lack of progress on the international front in climate change, we at the EcoLinx Foundation have continued our activities at break-neck speed with no less than 4 trips to China, Singapore, DC and other points across the U.S. The most exciting latest developments include working with The Climate Registry (US) and the Beijing-based Innovation Center for Energy and Transportation to establish the first Energy and Climate Registry in China and the signing of the California-Jiangsu Agreement for Cooperation on Energy and the Environment, the first of its kind to address climate change at the sub-national level. Regardless of what happens at the national/international levels, we will continue to promote energy efficiency and climate mitigation action at the provincial and local levels.