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Sunny Day for Warner Climate Bill

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WASHINGTON-Sen. John Warner acknowledged Wednesday that he still has much work ahead in persuading fellow Republicans to back his climate change bill. He argued it's a matter of national and economic security.

Global energy issues pose national security challenges to the United States, Warner said at a news conference with a coalition of local government officials who support his energy efficiency legislation.

"We'll see water wars. We'll see drought wars," Virginia's senior senator said, holding up reports from the armed forces. "It just isn't a lot of wonderful green people or mossy people, as we refer to them -- this is America's national security structure."

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., chairman of the environment committee, said the Climate Security Act would be brought to the Senate floor June 2.

The bill aims to reduce carbon emissions enough between now and 2050 to "avert the catastrophic impacts of global climate change" without harming the U.S. economy.

"I was the only Republican who voted for it in the committee, which means I've got extra work to do," said Warner.

Standing with Boxer and Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., Warner said he will sell his plan by talking about constituent concerns of rising home heating and fuel costs.

"Get right down to the consumer level and that's big votes," Warner said.

A major component of the bill is a cap-and-trade system, which would cap industrial carbon emissions. Companies could buy or trade permits, which would allow certain amounts of excess emissions. Government revenue from such a system could be used to invest in clean energy technologies.

"We're an ideal vehicle in this cap-and-trade system to receive some of the resources and translate it into reductions in energy use," said John J. McGlennon of the James City County, Va., Board of Supervisors.

Lieberman said setting aside funds for the local governments was an "open page" in the bill.

"We think we're in the range of the 60 votes we need to get this passed. Your support today is a tremendous boost," Lieberman said to roughly 40 local government leaders before they fanned out to lobby Congress.

The **Climate Communities** coalition seeks federal block grants for local energy-conserving projects.

"We need that money to help," said James Burrell, chairman of the New Kent County, Va., Board of Supervisors. "We can't depend on the government to do it, but the government needs to be in the initiation process."