

Groups launch attack on cap and trade

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Two of the most powerful business associations in the country launched a multimillion-dollar campaign against climate and energy legislation on Thursday, targeting key senators in Rust Belt and Southern states.

The National Association of Manufacturers and the National Federation of Independent Business are targeting moderate Democrats who have voiced skepticism about the legislation, which is still under consideration in the Senate. The cap-and-trade bill passed the House in June on a 219-212 vote.

Television, radio and Internet ads will run statewide through Sept. 4 in Alaska, Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia.

The ads urge senators to vote against the bill, arguing that the legislation will raise energy costs on small businesses and consumers. A study by NAM says that the legislation would cost 2.4 million jobs and raise electricity prices as much as 50 percent by 2030, statistics contested by environmental groups and government studies.

"Our message to senators is that the Waxman-Markey bill is an 'anti-jobs, anti-energy' piece of legislation," said NAM Executive Vice President Jay Timmons.

NAM has been a consistent adversary of the climate bill, even as others in the business community support the legislation. Utilities companies, auto manufacturers and consumer companies like Nike and Starbucks supported the House bill.

Senate Majority leader Harry Reid set a late-September deadline for six committees to finish work on the energy and climate bill.

Environment and Public Works Committee Chairwoman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) is expected to release a draft of the climate bill in early September, soon after Congress returns from the August recess. She is modeling her legislation after the House bill, with the centerpiece expected to be a cap and trade system that will curb greenhouse gas emissions. Five other committees will also review.

The bill narrowly passed the House in June, with 44 Democrats largely from rural, coal-dependent and manufacturing states voting against the legislation. It quickly became a political hot button for both sides. Republicans have run attack ads against moderate Democrats who voted for the legislation. And on Tuesday, four liberal and environmental groups launched a more than \$1 million advertising campaign targeting House Republicans who voted against the bill.

