

Expert: [William J. Antholis](#), Managing Director, The Brookings Institution  
 Compiled by: Lauren Fine, Katie Short and Evie Zambetakis



## Candidates on Climate Change

Compiled by Brookings Institution experts, this chart is part of a series of issue indices to be published during the 2008 Presidential election cycle. The policy issues included in this series were chosen by Brookings staff and represent the most critical topics facing America's next President.

### CANDIDATES



**Barack Obama (D)**  
 Senator from Illinois



**John McCain (R)**  
 Senator from Arizona

Published 1/30/2008. Updated 10/17/08. The index displays the top candidates from both major parties. Opportunity 08, a Brookings project in partnership with ABC News, aims to help presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues facing the nation, providing ideas, policy forums, and information on a broad range of domestic and foreign policy questions. Brookings is an independent think tank (501c3) that does not support or oppose any candidate for public office. Voters should learn all they can about the candidates on a range of issues and should not rely on any single source of information before making their decision.

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>Addresses global warming as a concern</b>	<p>"The issue of climate change is one that we ignore at our own peril. There may still be disputes about exactly how much we're contributing to the warming of the earth's atmosphere and how much is naturally occurring, but what we can be scientifically certain of is that our continued use of fossil fuels is pushing us to a point of no return."                      – ThinkProgress.org</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>"Climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution. But we know America has both an obligation and a compelling national interest in fulfilling our historic leadership role."                      – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Pursues energy independence</b>	<p>"Obama's plan will reduce oil consumption by at least 35 percent, or 10 million barrels per day, by 2030. This will more than offset the equivalent of the oil we would import from OPEC nations in 2030."                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>"Save more oil than we currently import from the Middle East and Venezuela combined."                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>"In recent days I have set before the American people an energy plan, the Lexington Project -- named for the town where Americans asserted their independence once before. And let it begin today with this commitment: In a world of hostile and unstable suppliers of oil, this nation will achieve strategic independence by 2025." McCain will commit the US to expanding domestic oil exploration and believes in promoting and expanding the use of US domestic supplies of natural gas.                      –JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Plans to explore renewable energy</b>	<p>"Obama will invest \$150 billion over 10 years to advance the next generation of biofuels ... establish a 25 percent federal Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to require that 25 percent of electricity consumed in the U.S. is derived from clean, sustainable energy sources by 2025."                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>Will require 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels to be included in the fuel supply by 2022 ... and ... at least 60 billion gallons of advanced biofuels like cellulosic ethanol by 2030.                      –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>"Ensure 10 percent of our electricity comes from renewable sources by 2012, and 25 percent by 2025."                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Believes in an even-handed system of tax credits that will remain in place until the market transforms sufficiently to the point where renewable energy no longer merits the taxpayers' dollars.                      – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

Published 1/30/2008. Updated 10/17/08. The index displays the top candidates from both major parties. Opportunity 08, a Brookings project in partnership with ABC News, aims to help presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues facing the nation, providing ideas, policy forums, and information on a broad range of domestic and foreign policy questions. Brookings is an independent think tank (501c3) that does not support or oppose any candidate for public office. Voters should learn all they can about the candidates on a range of issues and should not rely on any single source of information before making their decision.

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>View on nuclear power</b>	<p>Co-sponsored <a href="#">Lieberman's and McCain's Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act of 2007</a> which includes a provision for up to \$200 million to be spent on each in nuclear plant for development and renovation.</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a> (see pg. 106)</p> <p>Safe and secure nuclear energy [must address] four key issues: public right-to-know, security of nuclear fuel and waste, waste storage, and proliferation. Introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate to establish guidelines for tracking, controlling and accounting for spent fuel at nuclear power plants. To prevent international nuclear material from falling into terrorist hands abroad, Obama worked closely with Sen. Dick Lugar (R – IN) to strengthen international efforts to identify and stop the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction. He will also lead federal efforts to look for a safe, long-term disposal solution based on objective, scientific analysis. Yucca Mountain is not an option. –BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Lead sponsor of the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act of 2007 which includes provision for up to \$200 million for development and renovation of nuclear plants.</p> <p>"If France can produce 80 percent of its electricity with nuclear power, why can't we?" – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p>"Other countries, such as France and Japan, already recycle spent fuel. We should do the same. " – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a> and <a href="#">read more</a> (see pg. 106)</p> <p>Plans to construct 45 new nuclear power plants by 2030 with the ultimate goal of eventually constructing 100 new plants. – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Goals for greenhouse gas emissions</b>	<p>"... supports implementation of a market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions by ... 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.... cap-and-trade system will require all pollution credits to be auctioned .... Some of the revenue ... will be used to support the development of clean energy." – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Will implement a cap-and-trade system that would set limits on greenhouse gas emissions [with allotments] while encouraging the development of low-cost compliance options.</p> <p>Greenhouse Gas Emission Targets And Timetables:</p> <p>2012: Return Emissions To 2005 Levels (18 Percent Above 1990 Levels) 2020: Return Emissions To 1990 Levels (15 Percent Below 2005 Levels) 2030: 22 Percent Below 1990 Levels (34 Percent Below 2005 Levels) 2050: 60 Percent Below 1990 Levels (66 Percent Below 2005 Levels) – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>

Candidates	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
<b>Additional programs or goals</b>	<p>"Obama will create a Global Energy Forum — that includes all G-8 members plus Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa —the largest energy consuming nations from both the developed and developing world. The forum would focus exclusively on global energy and environmental issues."                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>Create a Clean Technologies Venture Capital Fund to fill a critical gap in U.S. technology development and invest \$10 billion per year into this fund for five years; invest in a digital smart grid; mandate that all new vehicles are flexible fuel vehicles; build biofuel distribution Infrastructure; transfer American technology to the developing world to fight climate change.                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Will commit \$2 billion annually to advancing clean coal technologies; establish a permanent tax credit equal to 10% of wages spent on R&amp;D; support flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) and their playing a greater role in our transportation sector; propose a \$300 million prize to improve battery technology for full commercial development of plug-in hybrid and fully electric automobiles; issue a Clean Car Challenge to the automakers of America, in the form of a single and substantial tax credit for the consumer based on the reduction of carbon emissions.                      – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>CAFE standards</b>	<p>Will double fuel economy standards within 18 years ... will provide retooling tax credits and loan guarantees for domestic auto plants and parts manufacturers, so that they can build new fuel-efficient cars rather than overseas companies. Will also invest in advanced vehicle technology such as advanced lightweight materials and new engines.                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p>"Put 1 million plug-in hybrid cars—cars that can get 150 miles per gallon—on the road by 2015..."                      – BarackObama.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p>Has long supported and will effectively enforce existing CAFE Standards; believes that the penalties for not following these standards must be effective enough to compel all carmakers to produce fuel-efficient vehicles.                      – JohnMcCain.com</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>
<b>Proposed Legislation</b>	<p>Co-authored Fuel Economy Reform Act of 2007 with Senators Lugar and Biden; co-sponsor of Climate Stewardship Act of 2007; passed legislation with Senator Talent to give gas stations tax credit for installing E85 ethanol refueling pumps; sponsored amendment that became law providing \$40 million for commercialization of combined flexible fuel vehicle/hybrid car within 5 years.</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a> and <a href="#">read more</a></p>	<p>Lead sponsor of the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act of 2003 and the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act of 2007.</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>