## CCS Link Turns

#### Climate action key to Obama win

O’Konski 6/13

“Campaign 2012: Climate Change and Energy,” Climate Science Watch, http://www.climatesciencewatch.org/2012/06/13/campaign-2012-climate-change-and-energy/

On this point I note an interesting recent post at Daily Kos. The article addresses climate change as a weapon for the upcoming election: “The public already is awake to the realities of climate change, and the Republicans deny and lie about those realities. By elevating the profile of climate change as a political issue, the Democrats can devastate the Republicans politically. And by politically devastating the greatest enemies of responsible action on climate change, the Democrats can thus make it not only politically possible but politically imminent for responsible action on climate change to happen.” The Daily Kos post suggests that we “elevate the profile of climate change as a political issue.” Yet Obama has thus far avoided talking about climate change because he clearly doesn’t see it as a vote-winning opportunity – the criterion that now appears to be driving everything he does. The Obama re-election campign website doesn’t even mention climate change on its “The President’s Record on Energy and the Environment” page. Even the thus-far successful grassroots effort to delay the approval of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline is used as a GOP weapon against the President, without a significant response from the White House beyond Obama's 'all of the above' energy stance. It is true that the opposition to progressive climate policy, which has adherents in both parties, has thrown up obstacle after obstacle to effective policy action. But a large part of why so little has been accomplished is that Obama and the Democrats have failed to articulate communication on climate change in such a way as to make it a political winner. Unless a combination of pressure from the climate movement and high-level leadership can change that, climate change will not be a significant issue in this year’s election – or maybe even the next.

#### **Plan causes Obama win in key swing states**

Joseph 6/20 (Cameron, The Hill, “Discontent with Obama in coal country grows”, <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/house-races/233727-dem-rep-critz-wont-attend-democratic-national-convention>)

Obama has long been unpopular in West Virginia. In the 2008 Democratic primary he was trounced by Hillary Clinton and in 2012 a prison inmate took more than 40 percent of the vote against Obama. The president isn't expected to defeat Mitt Romney in the state this year, but the problems for Obama could grow if the discontent in coal country spreads through Ohio and Pennsylvania, two states Obama needs to win. Critz said his decision to skip the convention, where Democrats will formally nominate Obama for reelection, is because he is focused on his district and not the national party's agenda. "Since I was elected, my focus has been on creating jobs for people here, rather than focusing on the agendas of the political parties in Washington," Critz told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review on Tuesday. But polls also suggest being close to Obama won't help Critz. Critz spokesman Mike Mikus told the paper that their polling showed Obama trailing Mitt Romney by double digits in the southwestern Pennsylvania district, not an unsurprising number since Obama would have lost the newly redrawn district by 9 percentage points in 2008. Mikus said that made the decision to skip the convention "pretty easy," and that it was "fair to say" Critz wouldn't ask Obama to campaign for him. This is the second time in a week Critz has sought to publicly distance himself from Obama. After the president gave a speech in Cleveland last week, Critz blasted his policies. "President Obama and others in Washington need to realize that we cannot spend our way to prosperity and that ... in order to create jobs, we need to address unfair trade deals that ship jobs overseas and enact policies that allow us to take advantage of our vast natural resources such as coal and natural gas in a safe and responsible manner which will lower energy costs and create jobs," Critz said in a statement in response to Obama's speech. "Approving the Keystone XL pipeline would be a good first step." Democrats' — and other voters' — unhappiness with Obama in coal country could badly hurt him in the swing states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, as well as in Virginia.

#### **Romney will win key swing states now because of clean coal attacks on Obama – plan is key to revive Obama’s popularity with these voters and give him the win**

Politico 12 (“Republicans look to bury Obama on coal issues”, 5/21, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0512/76597.html)

Anger over coal helped an imprisoned felon defeat President Barack Obama this month in several West Virginia counties. Now Republicans hope Mitt Romney can squeeze an electoral diamond out of coal country in battleground states such as Ohio, Virginia and Pennsylvania. The GOP has stoked the fires by accusing Obama’s Environmental Protection Agency of making it more difficult to mine or burn coal, and Republicans made hay when a “clean coal” section quietly turned up on the president’s campaign website after the West Virginia drubbing. During Vice President Joe Biden’s visit to Ohio last week, Republicans made sure coal turned up seemingly everywhere in protests, GOP email blasts, Web videos and even a chance restaurant encounter with a Romney campaign flack. This isn’t a new playbook for Republicans: A similar strategy in 2010 torpedoed more than two dozen Hill lawmakers who had voted for the cap-and-trade climate bill, helping flip control of the House to the GOP. And coal country stretches across states that are crucial to Obama’s hopes for reelection. One of the fallen Democrats from 2010, former 14-term Virginia Rep. Rick Boucher, said the president’s campaign team has reason to worry about how coal-minded voters will react. “I think it is a perilous issue politically,” Boucher said, adding that Obama needs to present a “positive” response to concerns about lost mining jobs and rising energy costs resulting from EPA’s actions. “There is real concern in our coal-producing communities. The concern is well founded.” Boucher said Obama is no enemy of coal and, in fact, championed policies that would have helped fund a new generation of carbon-capturing “clean coal” power plants. Boucher played a big role in spreading a similar message to voters in 2008. The Obama camp also delights in pointing out Romney’s own vulnerabilities on the issue — for example, a 2003 speech in which he said an aging coal-burning plant in Massachusetts “kills people.” But the GOP is doing all it can to make the “war on coal” message stick against Obama. “This is a president and an administration that has shown disdain towards coal and coal jobs,” said Romney spokesman Ryan Williams. He cited a 2007 television appearance in which Biden — at the time, a rival to Obama in the primaries — called coal-driven air pollution a deadlier danger to average Americans than terrorism. Williams ran into Biden in an Italian restaurant in Steubenville, Ohio, last week and seized on the occasion to quiz the veep about the administration’s coal policies. The media complained that Biden’s staff had moved journalists away from the rope line at one stop after a Columbus Dispatch reporter tried to ask him about coal. Coal was a major theme in Republican National Committee video and email blasts that greeted the vice president’s Ohio visit, reviving footage of a much-debated 2008 exchange in which Biden said, “No coal plants here in America.” Earlier this month, the Obama campaign took flak for quietly adding a section on clean coal to its energy website. That occurred shortly after the surprisingly successful showing of prison inmate Keith Judd in West Virginia’s Democratic presidential primary. The coal industry is weighing in as well. The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity unveiled video attacks on Obama’s coal record in the past week, and workers from a Murray Energy Corp.-owned coal mine in Beallsville, Ohio, turned out for a protest Thursday against Biden’s trip. Through March 31, donations tied to the coal industry totaled $187,750 for Romney, versus just $1,000 for Obama, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Robert Murray of Murray Energy even held a private fundraiser for Romney on May 3 in Wheeling, W.Va. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin cited coal last month as one reason for being uncertain about whether he’ll vote for Obama or Romney. EPA regulations have been a constant target of congressional Republicans on Capitol Hill since the GOP captured the House. “This administration needs to come clean about how its war on coal — how it’s planning the systematic destruction of the coal industry, thus taking thousands of American jobs with it and taking affordable energy off the market,” Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.) said at a news conference Friday. Of course, as with much of Obama’s environmental and energy policies, his relationship with coal is complicated. Obama spoke glowingly of the potential of clean coal during the 2008 campaign. Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Chris Redfern said his actions as president back that up — in contrast with Romney’s record as Massachusetts governor. Boucher said the coal industry indeed faces a threat from EPA regulations, including proposed limits on greenhouse gas emissions from new power plants — but he pointed out that the agency enacted many of those rules as a result of court orders. He said the Obama-backed cap-and-trade legislation would have allowed the industry more room to continue burning coal, and would have given the industry $10 billion to further develop technologies to capture and store carbon pollution. Now, Boucher said, the administration would be wise to continue pushing for clean-coal funding, and to reconsider the EPA’s limits on coal plants’ mercury emissions to make sure companies can meet the standards using existing technology.