

One Big Thing

U.S. Embassy Stockholm

February 2009 Newsletter

Ambassador Wood – Parting Thoughts

On the day of President Obama's inauguration, Ambassador Michael Wood departed Sweden. He was driven to the airport not in his limousine but in his personal car, a Saab 9-5 BioPower running on ethanol. The Saab was featured in the first issues of this Newsletter, in February 2007. http://www.usemb.se/Environment/Newsletter_February_2007.pdf

In initiating the One Big Thing, Ambassador Wood set an agenda that took him to all parts of



Sweden, from government offices to academic laboratories and, above all, to the Swedish businesses large and small that are leading the world in developing alternative energy technologies. The Embassy staff joins his many Swedish friends and colleagues in wishing him and Judy well as they return to private life and their family in Washington, DC.

On January 16, Minister for Enterprise and Energy Maud Olofsson hosted a farewell seminar for the Ambassador where he was asked to list the top 12 greatest achievements. He singled out the Ambassador's List of interesting Swedish clean tech companies. He also highlighted the Bilateral Agreement on Alternative Energy Cooperation, signed on June 28, 2007. The Ambassador estimated that the One Big Thing has led to \$150-\$200 million in business opportunities between the U.S. and Sweden. The complete list of Top Twelve accomplishments is available here:

http://www.usemb.se/newsflash/pressrelease_16_jan_09.html

Ambassador Wood receiving phone calls as he was preparing to depart Sweden. U.S. Embassy Stockholm photo

Special Envoy on Climate Change Appointed

In a step proving the new Administration's commitment to combating climate change, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced on January 27 the appointment of Todd Stern to be Special Envoy for Climate Change.

Todd Stern previously worked as a senior advisor in the Clinton White House, where he coordinated the administration's overall efforts on climate change, and was the senior White House representative at the United Nations climate negotiations in Kyoto and Buenos Aires. Since leaving government, he has been actively engaged in domestic and international climate and energy issues as a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and a frequent writer and speaker on this subject.



Announcing the appointment Secretary of State Clinton said:

"With the appointment today of a Special Envoy, we are sending an unequivocal message that the United States will be energetic, focused, strategic and serious about addressing global climate change and the corollary issue of clean energy."

Revisiting California EPA Waiver

Starting off his second week in office, President Obama on January 26 requested newly appointed Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lisa Jackson to revisit and possibly change a decision by her predecessor. Under the Clean Air Act EPA sets emissions standards for new motor vehicles. California may also adopt standards for new motor vehicles if the Administrator of the EPA, based on criteria set out in the statute, waives the general prohibition on State adoption or enforcement of emissions standards. For decades, the EPA has granted the State of California such waivers, but on March 6, 2008 a waiver request from California to the EPA was denied.

The regulations in question were developed under California's 2002 landmark vehicle greenhouse gas emissions reduction law, and adopted by the California Air Resources Board in 2005. To date, 13 states have also adopted, and three others are in the process of adopting, those same regulations. Together, California and these 16 states constitute close to half of the nation's new vehicle sales. The intent of the program is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles 30 percent by 2016, among other goals.

American Chamber of Commerce Committed to Green



During a meeting last year, the American Chamber of Commerce in Stockholm and Ambassador Wood discussed ways to keep the One Big Thing alive after his departure. Chamber members suggested creating a Green Committee to bring together clean tech businesses and investors on both sides of the Atlantic. During its first session, hosted by Chargé d'Affaires Robert Silverman, the Committee selected André Heinz of the Sustainable Technologies Fund, as Chair. The Committee also discussed broadening the spectrum beyond renewable energies to look at all varieties of clean tech, and discussed the importance of helping consumers make green choices.

New Scholarship to be Named after Ambassador Wood

Stig Holm, CEO of Tekniska Verken/Swedish Biogas in Linköping, has proposed the establishment of the "Ambassador Michael Wood Scholarship in Swedish Clean Technology." This scholarship, tentatively valued at worth 40,000 SEK (\$4,700) annually, will bring an American student to Sweden for an internship with a company on the Ambassador's List to study green innovations. Ambassador Wood was honored by Mr. Holm's proposal and asked the Embassy staff to facilitate the creation of the scholarship. Further details will be forthcoming from Tekniska Verken.

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