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## Dodd speaks at Merrimack house party

By JIM KOZUBEK

MERRIMACK – Presidential candidate Christopher Dodd began his talk yesterday at a house party by introducing the piece de resistance of his campaign, an energy plan that calls for an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050.

The plan calls for minimum standards of 50 miles per gallon for vehicles, a cap and trade system and corporate tax on carbon fuel use that he says will generate \$50 billion annually for the research and development of alternative energy sources.

"The corporate tax is costly," the Democratic senator from Connecticut said during his visit to the home of Peter and Jacqueline Flood. "But the status quo is a lot more expensive if you count the \$300 billion to buy fossil fuels from offshore, and \$60 to \$100 billion of this is going to countries that are very hostile, and we are subsidizing their activities."

Dodd expounded on a variety of plans for policy changes that were driven by changes to the incentive structure of industries. The carbon tax, for example, could be an economic driver for the creation of jobs in a budding alternative energy industry.

The primacy of older forms of industry, and their weight on the actions of policy makers, was a concern that kept coming up at the noontime meet-and-greet.

Elaine Thomas of Nashua, who remembers the service of President Eisenhower, asked Dodd to explain the necessity of the military industrial complex and redundant military spending that the former leader had famously warned about in his farewell address.

"Technology was in the Cold War Era emerging for commercial use, and we don't do enough of that now," Dodd said. "That development has become self contained." Dodd said that he wanted to transform the military industry to be prepared for different threat structures, reactivate the Nunn-Lugar program to disarm nuclear weapons, but that military spending was necessary and could be exploited for commercial use.

"We can do research without military spending," said an unconvinced Elaine Thomas.

Frank Zito of Bedford, who has a son with cystic fibrosis, asked Dodd what he would do to reform the \$2.2 billion medical insurance industry that he says claims 31 to 34 percent of revenue for administrative

costs compared to Medicare that uses less than 4 percent for such costs.

Dodd said that the changing incentive structure was once again the skeleton key for transforming the operations of industry.

"The medical industry makes money on the number of patients they bring in and the amount of prescription drugs that they sell," he said. "My plan would shift the focus to preventative medicine."

