

Speech by Minister for the Environment Sharon Dijksma at California Conference, Wednesday 24 May 2017

*Locatie: California Academy of Sciences; U spreekt na het openingswoord van
dhr Rodriguez (secr for Environmental Protection Agency)*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me tell you about something that happened
18 years ago. Perhaps you still remember it.

'What is going on here?!' Steve Jobs shouted in
1999, at the unveiling of the first iBook with Wi-
Fi. [spreek uit WAAI-FAAI]

He passed the laptop through a hula hoop. There
were no wires. But it stayed connected.

The audience went wild. It was a magical
moment. Wireless internet was born...

But why am I telling this story?

Two years *earlier*, a Dúchman called Cees Links
had come to see Steve Jobs.

He proposed a standard to connect devices to one another wirelessly.

There was only one problem. He didn't have any products to use it on. But Apple did. So he asked Steve Jobs if he was interested.

He'd already been to lots of other computer companies. Apple was the only one that accepted straight away.

A new era had dawned. The one we're living in today.

This is only one of many examples of productive partnership between the Netherlands and California.

We enjoy long-standing ties. Many Californian farmers have Dutch roots. Their relatives came here to make their dreams a reality.

And it's that tradition of being pioneers, pushing boundaries and strengthening one another that unites us to this day.

That's why it's so great to be here. With many Dutch businesses and institutions and the ambition to make climate change our business.

I'm also here on behalf of my EU colleagues. The European Union feels great affinity with California's approach to climate change.

We're already benefiting from one another's knowledge and ideas:

- The first TESLA in Europe was driven on Dutch roads.
- The world's second Apple robot – Liam – is in the Dutch city of Breda, dismantling 1.2 million iPhones a year.
- Waterboxx, a Dutch invention, allows trees, tomatoes and vines to flourish in the Californian heat.

[Last year, Bill McNeese in Hemet harvested 30 kilos of tomatoes from one plant! Amazing!]

- And let's not forget that the best album of the Beach Boys is called: 'Holland' 😊

In his State of the State address at the start of the year, Governor Brown said:

'We can do much on our own and we can join with others – other states and provinces and even countries – to stop the dangerous rise in climate pollution.'

I wholeheartedly agree.

Time is of the essence.

We must act now.

We can't let Paris slip through our fingers.

And that's why we're here.

The Netherlands and the EU support the climate policy California has consistent pursued over the last decades. And you're staying the course, despite strong headwinds. I greatly admire your courage and determination.

You inspire us to step up our own efforts.

Together with businesses, cities, scientists and civil society organisations. In other words, with all of you!

You're connected to the issues, to the community and to the solutions.

Paris wasn't just about sending a political message that we must combat climate change. It was about showing that we can.

Many businesses don't think it's happening fast enough. Multinationals are pushing governments to do more.

In the US, where thousands of companies are asking for climate measures to be continued.

And in my country, where scientists and multinationals want clarity on climate policy; and fast. The fact that Shell is asking for higher carbon pricing speaks volumes.

I'd like to add two further points.

First, the idea of climate change as a business case is becoming more and more *attractive*. Look at the drop in clean energy prices. We're at a real turning point.

We're certainly seeing this in the Netherlands. Right now, we're building the world's biggest offshore windfarm. By 2023 it will power five million households.

A few years ago, we thought we'd need to subsidise this project with five billion euros. But in the current market, all we need is 0.3 billion.

And within seven years, we expect we'll need no more grants at all.

Second, climate change is a driving force for jobs. Climate policy creates employment.

In the Netherlands, according to McKinsey & Company, strong climate policy will create 45,000 new jobs.

In the US, there are 2.5 times more jobs in the sustainable sector than in the fossil fuel industry.

And that's vital. Because we must offer new prospects to people whose jobs are at stake. The concerns of miners and oil rig workers are justified. Climate policy must have a social component.

So I want to create the best conditions. Bring parties together, open doors through cooperation agreements, and make results more visible.

And it's working!

Six months ago I held a national climate conference, themed 'Bring Paris Home'.

Representatives of the private sector, government and civil society organisations agreed to reduce carbon emissions by 17.6 megatonnes.

That's equivalent to the emissions of 2.2 million households or 7 million private cars.

A broad collaborative approach is also having international success. As we can see here!

Since 2013, the Netherlands and California have been working together closely on the climate, the environment and zero-emission transport.

In fact, the world sees us as frontrunners in electric transportation.

Our partnership is also creating other tangible results.

For instance, California is interested in SolaRoad, Dutch technology that uses road surfaces to generate solar power. You certainly have enough sun!

And there's our new joint investment fund for sustainable startups. Together with the business community, we're going to invest tens of millions in this project.

This was one of the aims we set out in late 2013, and now it's already a reality.

We don't only talk the talk. We also walk the walk!

So I'm happy to reinforce and renew our partnership by signing our new cooperation agreement.

We're beginning a new chapter in our shared fight against climate change.

The Netherlands and California can support each other, as well as other states and countries, when it comes to climate issues.

We can do this by showing – in many different ways – that climate policy is big business.

So let's keep pushing boundaries and taking up opportunities, like true pioneers.

Maybe we'll have as much impact as when the Dutch Wi-Fi met the Californian Apple.

Maybe we'll shout out 'What is going on here?!' like Steve Jobs did 18 years ago.

There's one difference. We're not on the verge of a new era. We're already in it.

Thank you.