

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR:Myron Ebell <mebell@cei.org> (Myron Ebell <mebell@cei.org> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME: 4-MAY-2003 18:26:18.00

SUBJECT:: Article on Senate global warming follies

TO:Myron Ebell <mebell@cei.org> (Myron Ebell <mebell@cei.org> [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

BCC:Debbie S. Fiddelke (CN=Debbie S. Fiddelke/OU=CEQ/O=EOP [CEQ])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Human Events, May 5, 2003

Global Warming Bills Could Sneak Through Congress

By Myron Ebell

The scientific case for global warming alarmism grows ever weaker, and President Bush has long since announced he will not submit the Kyoto global-warming treaty to the Senate for ratification, but congressional liberals are still making mighty efforts to revive this dead horse.

In the next few weeks they will try to saddle several pieces of legislation with global-warming amendments.

Four of the Senate's leading global-warming grandstanders, John McCain (R.-Ariz.), Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), John Kerry (D.-Mass.), and James Jeffords (I-Vt.) are likely to play prominent roles in the follies on the Senate floor. But so far the real action has been in two committees.

In March, Senate Energy Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R.-N.M.) released a draft of comprehensive energy legislation for comment. The draft included a climate title that would create a White House climate czar, require the administration to produce a strategy to "stabilize and over time reduce net U. S. emissions of greenhouse gases," and give companies incentives for producing less energy.

Limiting greenhouse gas emissions, which is also the goal of the Kyoto treaty, would require Americans' using much less coal, oil, and natural gas, since these three fuels now provide most of America's energy. Switching to alternatives would raise prices dramatically for American consumers, in the process weakening the U.S. economy.

Domenici's plan was to give the global warming alarmists half a loaf and hope that they would be satisfied. Alas, appeasement doesn't work when dealing with environmental pressure groups. Good conservatives on the committee asked that the climate title be removed. A coalition of conservative and free-market groups (led by my own Competitive Enterprise Institute) kicked up a ruckus in public. Domenici listened and proceeded to pass his energy bill out of committee on April 30 without any climate provisions.

Let it Die

But that is not the end of the story. When the energy bill comes to the Senate floor, probably in the next week or two, global warming amendments will be offered by the usual grandstanders and may pass. The energy bill passed by the House on April 11 contains nothing on global warming. So it will be up to a House-Senate conference committee to work out the differences if the Senate puts something in.

Turning to the Foreign Relations Committee, on April 9 Chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) accepted Ranking Member Joe Biden's (D.-Del.) "sense of Congress on climate change" amendment without a vote. Biden's amendment proclaims global warming alarmism as established scientific fact and then calls for Kyoto-style rationing policies to cut greenhouse gas emissions. To top everything, it then calls on the administration to negotiate a new

climate change treaty with binding commitments to cut emissions. This is so goofy it's hard to believe. The answer to a disastrous treaty is to let it die, not clone it.

The House International Relations Committee is expected to take up the issue May 7. Last year, Rep. Robert Menendez (D.-N. J.) attached an amendment similar to Biden's on a 23-to-20 vote. Four Republicans missed the vote, and moderate Republican Chris Smith (R.-N.J.) voted with the Democrats.

Menendez is expected to offer his amendment again, but the result could be different because this time the Republicans are prepared. Chairman Henry Hyde (R.-Ill.) is assembling the votes to defeat it. The House Republican leadership is adamantly opposed. And a coalition of conservative and free-market groups has formed to apply public pressure. So it's the same old story: conservatives must count on House Republicans to save the day. Mr. Ebell is director of global warming policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. He can be contacted at mebell@cei.org.