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SUBJECT:: AP on AG's climate letter, FYI

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TEXT:

States Push Bush on Global Warming
Wed Jul 17,10:45 AM ET

By JENNIFER PETER, Associated Press Writer

BOSTON (AP) - Attorneys general from 11 states sent a letter Wednesday to President Bush (news - web sites) calling on him to end the administration's "regulatory void" and address the growing threat of global warming (news - web sites).

The letter from the 11 Democrats criticizes the Republican president for failing to create a national policy to curb carbon dioxide emissions from automobiles and power plants that contribute to global warming.

The four-page letter applauds the administration for a May report detailing the seriousness of the global warming problem, but argues that the administration "has yet to propose a credible plan that is consistent with the dire findings and conclusions being reported."

"What we're asking the administration to do is to deal with it and to deal with it now," Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly said in an interview Wednesday. "There is a consensus with the issuance of the report that we have a serious environmental and public health problem caused by global warming."

Although all the signers are Democrats, Reilly said it was not about politics.

"This is about our environment and it's about our future," Reilly said.

"By acting now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Bush Administration can provide regulatory certainty to the business community, can spur private sector investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency, and can lay the groundwork to avoid the potentially disastrous environmental, public health and economic impacts of global warming," said New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer (news, bio, voting record).

Many scientists say global warming already is under way, increasing average temperatures by a couple of degrees in some places.

"Far from proposing solutions to the climate change problem, the administration has been adopting energy policies that would actually increase greenhouse gas emissions," said the letter, first reported in Wednesday editions of The New York Times.

States have been left to create a patchwork of inconsistent regulations, the attorneys general charged in the letter.

They called the issue "the most pressing environmental challenge of the 21st century."

Other attorneys general who signed the letter are from Alaska, California, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont.

The group is pushing for a cap on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants as well as requirements to increase the average fuel mileage standards for automobiles.

"The president is working on a bipartisan common-sense approach" to the issue, said White House spokeswoman Claire Buchan. She told the Times that Bush's Clear Skies initiative would led to the largest reduction in power plant emissions on record.

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The U.S. Climate Action Report 2002, released in May, said that average temperatures have increased 1 degree Fahrenheit over the past century, while the sea levels have risen four to eight inches. It projects an increase of 5 to 9 degrees over the next hundred years.