

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Phil Cooney (CN=Phil Cooney/OU=CEQ/O=EOP [CEQ])

CREATION DATE/TIME: 3-JUN-2002 13:09:06.00

SUBJECT:: NYT Times editorial on Administration incoherence on global warming

TO: Kameran L. Bailey (CN=Kameran L. Bailey/OU=CEQ/O=EOP@EOP [CEQ])

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TO: Samuel A. Thernstrom (CN=Samuel A. Thernstrom/OU=CEQ/O=EOP@EOP [CEQ])

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TEXT:

----- Forwarded by Phil Cooney/CEQ/EOP on 06/03/2002
01:17 PM -----

Robert C. McNally
06/03/2002 12:46:49 PM
Record Type: Record

To: Phil Cooney/CEQ/EOP@EOP, kknutson@ovp.eop.gov
cc:
Subject: NYT Times editorial on Administration incoherence on
global warming

Phil, any idea what he's talking about? Lawsuit?
Bob

----- Forwarded by Robert C. McNally/OPD/EOP on
06/03/2002 12:46 PM -----

Myron Ebell <mebell@cei.org>
06/03/2002 12:06:06 PM
Record Type: Record

To: Myron Ebell <mebell@cei.org>
cc:
Subject: NYT Times editorial on Administration incoherence on global
warming

[Revkin's front page news story is also attached. Our press release
bashing the administration will follow shortly. In brief, the
administration has ignored their settlement of our lawsuit and used the
National Assessment as the basis of their official submission on the
impacts of climate change on the U. S.]

June 3, 2002
New York Times
Crossroads on Global Warming

As it is required to do under international treaty, the Bush administration has sent to the United Nations a report on global warming that is much more pessimistic than its earlier calculations about the environmental damage that unchecked warming could cause. A White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, said the report is reason "to move forward on the president's strategies for addressing the challenge of climate change." There is only one thing wrong with this picture. President Bush has no serious strategies for climate change.

Indeed, Mr. Bush has essentially withdrawn from the field. He rejected the Kyoto accord on climate change and repudiated a campaign pledge to seek firm limits on carbon dioxide, the main contributor to the warming of the earth's atmosphere. He then proposed a voluntary scheme. It appears from the U.N. report to consist largely of finding ways to adapt to warming instead of preventing it. Congress has done no better.

The only encouraging news is on the state level. Massachusetts and New Hampshire have approved bills aimed at cutting power plant emissions of carbon dioxide. In New York, a commission appointed by Gov. George Pataki will shortly give him a set of aggressive recommendations to help the state reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases.

Encouraging as the state actions are, global warming requires a national response. There is one last chance to get the ball rolling in Congress this term and to send a positive signal to other countries. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will soon begin writing a comprehensive air pollution bill. The committee has before it a strong proposal framed by the chairman, James Jeffords, and a less ambitious but useful plan advanced by a few power companies that have at last faced up to their obligation to address the issue. There is no comparable Bush initiative on the table. The Jeffords and industry plans address the four major pollutants: mercury; nitrogen oxides that produce smog; sulfur dioxide, which causes acid rain; and carbon dioxide. Mr. Bush's sketchy "Clear Skies" proposal addresses only the first three.

To Mr. Jeffords, that makes the Bush plan a nonstarter. What's interesting is that some of the president's putative allies among the power companies - including Northeastern utilities like Consolidated Edison and Public Service Electric and Gas of New Jersey - see things the same way. The reason is summed up in what managers like to call "business certainty." They know that carbon dioxide will eventually be regulated, and they would like to begin now to tailor investment strategies to deal with all four pollutants at once. The technologies that work for mercury, sulfur and nitrogen oxide - so-called "end of pipe" controls like scrubbers - do virtually nothing to reduce carbon dioxide. But there are other strategies - switching to cleaner fuels, investing in "clean coal" technologies and alternative fuels, making existing plants more efficient - that could help utilities respond to clean air concerns in a more coordinated, cost-efficient way.

Unfortunately, the biggest and dirtiest utilities, which make the most noise in Congress and are also among Mr. Bush's biggest contributors, hate the four-pollutant approach because they rely almost entirely on coal and their cleanup costs are likely to be quite large. Senator Jeffords's task is to make sure that his bill commands a big enough majority in his committee to justify bringing it to the Senate floor, where a brutal battle awaits.

The Senate may be as far as any bill goes - the House has not been hospitable to imaginative thinking on energy and the environment. But it's important to get a good plan on the table before the fall elections, and to start moving the country along the right path. The choices could not be clearer. One is to continue to rely on older technologies that condemn us to a future of polluted cities and further warming. The other is to redesign our energy system so as to reduce America's dependence on carbon-based fuels and send a signal to the rest of the world that we are

finally getting serious about climate change.

June 3, 2002

Climate Changing, U.S. Says in Report

By ANDREW C. REVKIN

In a stark shift for the Bush administration, the United States has sent a climate report to the United Nations detailing specific and far-reaching effects that it says global warming will inflict on the American environment.

In the report, the administration for the first time mostly blames human actions for recent global warming. It says the main culprit is the burning of fossil fuels that send heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

But while the report says the United States will be substantially changed in the next few decades - "very likely" seeing the disruption of snow-fed water supplies, more stifling heat waves and the permanent disappearance of Rocky Mountain meadows and coastal marshes, for example - it does not propose any major shift in the administration's policy on greenhouse gases. It recommends adapting to inevitable changes. It does not recommend making rapid reductions in greenhouse gases to limit warming, the approach favored by many environmental groups and countries that have accepted the Kyoto Protocol, a climate treaty written in the Clinton administration that was rejected by Mr. Bush.

The new document, "U.S. Climate Action Report 2002," strongly concludes that no matter what is done to cut emissions in the future, nothing can be done about the environmental consequences of several decades' worth of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases already in the atmosphere. Its emphasis on adapting to the inevitable fits in neatly with the climate plan Mr. Bush announced in February. He called for voluntary measures that would allow gas emissions to continue to rise, with the goal of slowing the rate of growth.

Yet the new report's predictions present a sharp contrast to previous statements on climate change by the administration, which has always spoken in generalities and emphasized the need for much more research to resolve scientific questions.

The report, in fact, puts a substantial distance between the administration and companies that produce or, like automakers, depend on fossil fuels. Many companies and trade groups have continued to run publicity and lobbying campaigns questioning the validity of the science pointing to damaging results of global warming.

The distancing could be an effort to rebuild Mr. Bush's environmental credentials after a bruising stretch of defeats on stances that favor energy production over conservation, notably the failure to win a Senate vote opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to exploratory oil drilling.

But the report has alienated environmentalists, too. Late last week, after it was posted on the Web site of the Environmental Protection Agency, private environmental groups pounced on it, saying it pointed to a jarring disconnect between the administration's findings on the climate problem and its proposed solutions.

"The Bush administration now admits that global warming will change America's most unique wild places and wildlife forever," said Mark Van Putten, the president of the National Wildlife Federation, a private environmental group. "How can it acknowledge global warming is a disaster in the making and then refuse to help solve the problem, especially when solutions are so clear?"

Scott McClellan, a White House spokesman, said, "It is important to move forward on the president's strategies for addressing the challenge of climate change, and that's what we're continuing to do."

Many companies and trade groups had sought last year to tone down parts of the report, the third prepared by the United States under the requirements of a 1992 climate treaty but the first under President Bush.

For the most part, the document does not reflect industry's wishes, which were conveyed in letters during a period of public comment on a draft last year.

The report emphasizes that global warming carries potential benefits for the nation, including increased agricultural and forest growth from longer growing seasons, and from more rainfall and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis.

But it says environmental havoc is coming as well. "Some of the goods and services lost through the disappearance or fragmentation of natural ecosystems are likely to be costly or impossible to replace," the report says.

The report also warns of the substantial disruption of snow-fed water supplies, the loss of coastal and mountain ecosystems and more frequent heat waves. "A few ecosystems, such as alpine meadows in the Rocky Mountains and some barrier islands, are likely to disappear entirely in some areas," it says. "Other ecosystems, such as Southeastern forests, are likely to experience major species shifts or break up into a mosaic of grasslands, woodlands and forests."

Despite arguments by oil industry groups that the evidence is not yet clear, the report unambiguously states that humans are the likely cause of most of the recent warming. Phrases were adopted wholesale from a National Academy of Sciences climate study, which was requested last spring by the White House and concluded that the warming was a serious problem.

A government official familiar with the new report said that it had been under review at the White House from January until mid-April, but that few substantive changes were made.

Without a news release or announcement, the new report was shipped last week to the United Nations offices that administer the treaty and posted on the Web ([www.epa.gov/globalwarming/publications /car/](http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/publications/car/)).

A senior administration official involved in climate policy played down the significance of the report, explaining that policies on emissions or international treaties would not change as a result.

Global warming has become a significant, if second-tier, political issue recently, particularly since James M. Jeffords, the Vermont independent, became chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee last year. Mr. Jeffords has criticized the president's policy.

The new report is the latest in a series on greenhouse gases, climate research, energy policies and related matters that are required of signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was signed by Mr. Bush's father and ratified by the Senate.

The convention lacks binding obligations to reduce gas emissions like those in the Kyoto Protocol.

Mr. Bush and administration officials had previously been careful to avoid specifics and couch their views on coming climate shifts with substantial caveats. The president and his aides often described climate change as a "serious issue," but rarely as a serious problem.

The report contains some caveats of its own, but states that the warming trend has been under way for several decades and is likely to continue.

"Because of the momentum in the climate system and natural climate variability, adapting to a changing climate is inevitable," the report says. "The question is whether we adapt poorly or well."

Several industry groups said the qualifications in parts of the report were welcome, but added that the overall message was still more dire than the facts justified and would confuse policy makers.

Dr. Russell O. Jones, a senior economist for the American Petroleum Institute who wrote a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency a year ago seeking to purge projections of specific environmental impacts from

the report, said it was "frustrating" to see that they remained.
"Adding the caveats is useful, but the results are still as meaningless,"
Dr. Jones said.