CEQ 19

Phil Cooney
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Subject: Climate/WSSD Q&As submitted for the Senate EPW/Foreign Relations hearing record

FYI, PHIL

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08/16/2002 07:34:13 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Shannon heyck-williams@epw.senate.gov @ inet

cc: Phil Cooney/CEQ/EOP@EOP
Subject: Q&A submitted for the record

The attached document is in reponse to your request dated August 2, 2002. The questions relate to the hearing before the Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) and the Committee on Foreign Relations on July 24. A faxed copy was also submitted. Please submit these for the record.

Kameran Bailey

jlcanswers8.16.02 (final).doc

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, 7/24/02 JOINT HEARING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL TREATIES

To Mr. James Connaughton, Chair,
White House Council on Environmental Quality

From Senator Jeffords:

1) What measures should we look at to determine whether U.S. programs and resources are achieving the goals of Agenda 21?

One measure of accomplishment is the ratification and implementation of new multilateral environmental agreements. The Bush Administration has submitted the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and implementing legislation is to the Senate for its advice and consent. This convention seeks the ultimate world-wide elimination of certain persistent organic pollutants. Implementing legislation on two related international agreements have also be sent to the Congress: 1) The Protocol to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants, an earlier agreement similar to POPs which covers a slightly different set of chemicals already controlled in the U.S., and therefore applies only to the U.S., Europe and Canada; and 2) The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, which requires exporters to obtain the prior informed consent of importing countries and to provide safety information on health effects of hazardous substances and pesticides. Another important treaty concluded and ratified by the United States since Rio is the Deserts Convention (which deals with dry land management and desertification).

The international community has also developed a number of programs and other implementation measures to be undertaken by governments, the private sector and NGOs. These include the U.S.-led international Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), which now has a large number of participating countries, the UN Forum on Forests , which has made significant progress in developing a set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of the world's most endangered forest resources, and the Arctic Council, which as a group has identified and implemented measures to reduce toxic chemicals which pose a particular bioaccumulation risk in animals and humans in polar regions.

Programs implemented by U.S. industry often in partnership with government and NGO's, such as the Energy Star program for energy efficient appliances and the adoption of clean production technologies and methods have also contributed significantly toward achieving the goals set out in Agenda 21.

Sustainable development criteria related to Agenda 21 are being utilized in the reporting of program performance by U.S. Government departments and agencies. Goals for particular programs are drawn from specific chapters and sections of Agenda 21. An example is the goal

of USAID's protected area work in Latin America, which addresses Section 15.5g of Agenda 21 by seeking to preserve biological diversity. Agenda 21 will continue to provide a broad framework as the U.S. executes targeted results-oriented programs that are designed to address local situations.

2) We understand that earlier this year 41 American environmental leaders, including the heads of almost all of the major U.S. environmental groups, wrote to President Bush urging him to commit to attending the Johannesburg Summit and to reasserting American leadership on a range of critical global environmental issues. Their letter sets out a number of recommended actions. Has the Administration considered these recommendations and taken concrete actions on any of them?

The Bush Administration greatly appreciates having heard from this group. I have met with many of the NGO leaders who signed the letter to discuss these and other issues. The Administration is also working with many NGOs in preparing our deliverables for the World Summit. We have taken actions on implementing several international environmental agreements (as described above) At the recently completed talks for replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) the U.S. pledged a significant increase in funding to help developing countries mitigate environmental problems with potential global impact. The United States pledged $500 million over the next four years for the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The commitment is a 16% increase over its contribution to the previous replenishment. This in turn will help leverage about $2.2 billion in total new donor contributions. My office and other agencies discussed the importance of this funding with several groups who I understand are complimentary of our ultimate decision and leadership.

3) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change commits the United States to working to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gases at concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Please provide the Administration's definition of what phenomena would indicate or constitute "dangerous anthropogenic interference." (For example, does that mean more frequent and more destructive hurricanes, excessive wildfires, anomalous droughts, etc.?)

The objective of the Framework Convention, set out in Article 2, does not impose commitments on Parties. It does provide that the long term stabilization level "should be achieved within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change notes in its Third Assessment Report that the question of what would constitute dangerous anthropogenic interference is one that it cannot answer, because danger is a function of the degree to which effects are negative and the degree to which those effects are unacceptable. The latter, as noted in the Third Assessment Report, is a value judgment. (IPCC Working Group II Third Assessment Report, page 917).

At this point, it not possible to make such a judgment. There remain substantial uncertainties in critical areas with respect to climate behavior, as well as natural and socio-economic impacts. These include, among other things:

- feedbacks in the climate system that determine the magnitude and rate of future increases; future usage of fossil fuels and future emissions of methane;
- how much carbon is sequestered by oceans and other sinks and how much remains in the atmosphere;
- the details of regional climate change resulting from global climate change;
- the nature and causes of the natural variability of climate, its interactions with forced changes, and the direct and indirect effects of aerosols;
- the ability of humans and ecosystems to adapt to changing climate conditions.

The Administration is taking measured and serious steps to respond to the challenge of climate change, by taking significant short-term measures to reduce the projected growth in global emissions, both through enhanced domestic policies and technology transfer to developing countries, and by substantially increasing our nation's investment in science and technology. By so doing, we can both reduce remaining uncertainties and prepare ourselves to address climate change in a manner that also ensures our continuing prosperity. We believe that these steps are fully consistent with the United States' commitments under the Framework Convention.

The President committed the nation to an immediate goal of reducing America's greenhouse gas emissions relative to the size of our economy by 18% in the next ten years. This will set America on a path to slow the growth of our greenhouse gas emissions and, if science justifies, to stop and then reverse the growth of emissions. To achieve this goal, the Administration is actively engaged and moving forward on many fronts, looking at every sector of our economy, with the recognition that meaningful progress depends on the development and deployment of new technology. With the continued support of Congress, we are advancing climate science, developing and promoting energy efficiency, conservation, and sequestration technologies and practices, pursuing near term greenhouse gas mitigation programs and expanding international cooperation.

The President has called for nearly $700 million in additional funding for the federal government's commitment to climate change in Fiscal Year '03 – a 17 percent increase from last year -- to support a $4.5 billion program of research on climate science and energy technology, mitigation incentives and programs, and international technology transfer and outreach. This commitment is unmatched in the world. The President's recent Report to Congress on Federal Climate Change Expenditures details the numerous programs that this funding will support

Importantly, the President's request includes $555 million in clean energy tax incentives, the first part of a $4.6 billion commitment over the next five years, reaching $7.1 billion over the next 10 years. These incentives will spur investments in and purchases of renewable energy -- including solar, wind, and biomass – as well as advanced hybrid and fuel cell vehicles, cogeneration, and landfill gas conversion. We also are promoting clean coal technology, as well as nuclear power – which produces no greenhouse gas emissions – and are working to safely improve fuel economy for our cars and trucks.

4) Please identify the early warning system that the Administration supports domestically and internationally that is designed to detect when "dangerous anthropogenic interference" (as defined in response to the previous question) has begun to occur.

The United States is involved in a variety of research activities designed to enhance our understanding of the climate system. Together, these will help reduce the significant remaining uncertainties identified last year by the National Academy of Science's in *Climate Change Science: An Analysis of Some Key Questions,* and provide better understanding of potential impacts associated with greenhouse gas emissions.

The Administration has requested $1.7 billion in basic scientific research, under the U.S Global Change Research Program and the President's Climate Change Research Initiative in FY 2203, which is roughly half of the world's research budget, and more than Japan and the 15 member states of the European Union combined. This includes funding for the Climate Change Research Initiative, which is designed to focus on information that can be developed within 2 to 5 years to assist the nation's evaluation of optimal strategies to address global change risks.

In addition, the Administration is leading the way in the revitalization of a comprehensive global observation system, which is critical to understanding climate change. This includes greater emphasis on climate observation and monitoring systems here and abroad. As part of his climate change policy, the President committed $25 million to improve observing and monitoring capability in developing countries. These investments will help to better understand current conditions as well as improve future projections at the global level.

5) The Framework Convention commits the United States and all the parties to reporting "detailed information on its policies and measures...with the aim of returning individually or jointly to their 1990 levels these anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases." When will the United States comply with that commitment?

The United States submitted detailed information on our policies and measures, in accordance with the procedures under the Convention. Most recently, policies and measures are detailed in the Climate Action Report submitted as the third National Communication from the United States to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, submitted in May 2002.

You mention as a "commitment" the Framework Convention's aim of returning to 1990 levels by the end of the last decade. This is not an obligation under the Convention, but rather is stated as a general objective. The last Administration ultimately found this general aim unachievable, as did virtually all of the developed country parties of the Convention. Article 4 of the Convention does, however, contain a number of specific commitments, with which the United States has fully complied. This includes the requirement for us to develop methodologies for assessing our greenhouse gas emissions and making that information publicly available. It includes the adoption of policies specifically aimed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to develop programs to adapt to climate change that may occur, whether natural or human influenced. It commits us to develop and disseminate new technologies to reduce or prevent emissions, looking at all sectors. It commits us to promote the effective management and

conservation of sinks in the agricultural and forestry sectors. It commits developed nations to provide assistance to developing nations to help them comply with their own obligations under the Convention. Finally, it commits all nations to report periodically to the United Nations on their compliance with these obligations, which the Bush Administration did recently through its Climate Action Report.

6) Has the United States or any of its representatives, officially or unofficially discouraged countries from bringing climate change initiatives or issues to the World Summit for consideration?

No. The United States delegation has engaged constructively on a substantial amount of text on a variety of climate change issues occurring in the Johannesburg Plan of Action. Most of the climate change-related text in the draft Johannesburg Plan of Action has been agreed upon. In addition the partnerships the U.S. will discuss in the areas of energy, agriculture and forests will also be quite consequential to the issue of greenhouse gas mitigation, even as they are directed at near-term poverty reduction and human health imperatives.

Several delegations have put forward textual proposals that have the effect of asking the United States to endorse the Kyoto Protocol, or to take on new climate-related commitments in the WSSD. The United States will not be a Party to the Kyoto Protocol, and we have indicated to those delegations that we cannot support text that is contrary to our national position. The United States does not intend to agree to additional climate change commitments at WSSD. The internationally agreed forum for negotiating climate change commitments is the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP-8) will take place October 23-November 1, 2002, in New Delhi, India.

7) The Canadian government has put forward a Type I partnership entitled "Health and Environment: Moving from Knowledge and Experience to Action." The purpose of this initiative is to synthesize existing information on environmental health linkages and build on the capacity of developing countries to apply this knowledge, in a manner consistent with local conditions, to planning and policy-making at the national level. Will the U.S. support the Canadian initiative and if so, what resources is the U.S. planning to offer to ensure its success?

The United States is currently considering the Canadian proposal. In general, the proposal parallels work that is supported by the Health and Environment Ministerial of the Americas, which was agreed to by the United States and all the governments of the Western Hemisphere. Further, the Canadian proposal supports the data sharing initiatives underway through the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

One key issue that remains to be resolved is whether this should be categorized as a Type I or Type II initiative. As a Type II initiative, the United States may support the initiative. Type II partnership does not require the consensus of each nation participating in the WSSD. If the Canadian proposal were to become a Type II partnership, current United States Government funding levels could support this activity. The United States will continue to work with the Canadian Government with a goal to coming to agreement in support of the proposal.

8) I have heard that EPA and other agencies are in the process of developing a number of Type II partnership proposals that the U.S. delegation in Johannesburg will announce. Specifically, I understand that EPA is developing initiatives on drinking water/sanitation, clean air, and children's environmental health. What can you tell us about the status of these proposals? Will new financial resources be earmarked in future budgets to ensure that these initiatives add value to existing development assistance and make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the WSSD process?

We are in the final stages of designing partnerships proposals which we will announce in Johannesburg and discussed with prospective additional partners. All the partnerships will be based on current appropriated funding and are within the budget targets for FY 04. The Administration will brief appropriators in Congress on the proposals before the World Summit. EPA and other agencies have participated in preparing the partnerships, especially in water. Specifically regarding children's health, EPA is exploring with U.S.AID and the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a proposal for children's environmental health indicators. EPA is also consulting with the World Health Organization on possible collaboration.

9) Given that EPA is a lead agency on a number of initiatives and proposals, will EPA Administrator Whitman participate personally in the WSSD and if so, what will her role be?

EPA Administrator Whitman is scheduled to participate in the WSSD. She and several other high-level delegates from her agency will actively engage with their counterparts, work to forge lasting partnerships on U.S. development priorities, and identify opportunities for collaboration beyond the WSSD.

10) How is the United States affected by the fact that we don't have a true environment minister?

The Bush Administration has accorded Cabinet Rank status to the Administrator of the EPA. The U.S. EPA Administrator is recognized as a peer among her international ministerial colleagues.