

SE C05 38

GEORGE C.
Marshall
I N S T I T U T E

FOR RELEASE

February 12, 2003

**O'KEEFE APPLAUDS INDUSTRY ACTIONS TO CHECK
EMISSIONS**

In a statement released today, William O'Keefe, President of the George Marshall Institute, praised the Administration's announcement of new voluntary industry programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas intensity. Urging caution in the face of scientific uncertainty, O'Keefe praised the President's program for striking an appropriate balance between sustaining economic growth and addressing the risks of climate change.

O'Keefe said:

"Today the Bush Administration announces voluntary industry programs to address the risk of human induced global warming. The focus of these programs will be actions that will help to achieve the President's goal of an 18% reduction in greenhouse gas intensity—a ratio of greenhouse gas emissions to economic output—by 2012.

Reminiscent of the criticisms of the State of the Union before it was delivered, there are already complaints that voluntary actions are insufficient and that more is needed to reduce emissions, not just their growth. Stripped of its rhetoric, that means a government mandate putting a cap on energy use which is the lifeblood of a healthy, growing economy. With U.S. population rising, maintaining and improving our standard of living requires faster rates of economic growth and inevitably increased energy use.

The President's global warming policy is designed to strike a balance between economic growth and actions to address the climate change risk. In the rush to judgment, critics would do well to remember that the state of knowledge about the climate system does not justify the suppression of energy use and economic growth reflected in the Kyoto Protocol.

The conclusions about past temperature changes and projections about the future, which are the basis for Kyoto, are built on computer simulations which are based on

assumptions, not demonstrated scientific facts. As recently as last December, a Department of Commerce climate workshop reaffirmed, as had the National Academy of Sciences, that we do not know enough to distinguish natural variability from human influence and we do not adequately understand important climate processes involving clouds, water vapor, ocean currents, and solar activity. These elements of uncertainty are not acknowledged in the policy conclusions drawn from these computer models.

Wise policy is based on facts and a good understanding of what science does and does not tell us. In spite of all the advances in knowledge over the past decade, we do not know enough to put our economy in jeopardy.”

The George Marshall Institute (GMI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1984 to encourage the use of sound science in making public policy.

George Marshall Institute
1625 K Street, NW
Suite 1050
Washington, D.C. 20006
202/296-9655
202/296-9714
<http://www.marshall.org>