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Letter to President Bush

US Senators Hagel, Craig, Helms and Roberts

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

6 March 2001

President George W. Bush

The White House

Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to seek clarification of your Administration's policy on climate change.

We are aware that your Administration has recently begun a formal interagency review of climate change policies. Yet on Tuesday, February 27, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman testified on this subject before the Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Control, and Risk Assessment of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Administrator Whitman stated at this hearing that the Administration would seek to make the Kyoto Protocol workable. She went on to advocate the regulation of carbon dioxide under the Clean Air Act. She called for "putting [carbon dioxide] into the process and recognizing that we have to deal with it, which would be to put a cap of some sort, a target anyway."

The United States Senate is on record regarding the Kyoto Protocol. In July 1997, the Senate voted 95-0 for S. Res. 98, a resolution that called on the President not to sign any climate change treaty that would: 1) cause serious harm to the U.S. economy, or 2) that did not include all countries of the world. The Kyoto Protocol does not meet either condition. President Clinton, in signing the Kyoto Protocol in November 1998, chose to ignore the unanimous advice of the Senate on these minimum conditions for a ratifiable climate change treaty.

In a CNN interview Monday February 26, Administrator Whitman stated that during the campaign you were "very clear that the science is good on global warming." We note that in the October 11, 2000 Presidential debate you acknowledged that "global warming needs to be taken very seriously," a sentiment with which we agree. However, you then expressed your view that the science is far from clear, when you asked former Vice President Gore whether he knew that "some of the scientists" are "changing their opinion a little bit on global warming." One of the scientists you may have been thinking of is Dr. James Hansen, Director NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, who was one of the early proponents of the catastrophic global warming scenario. In August 2000, Dr. Hansen issued a new analysis which said that the emphasis on carbon dioxide may be misplaced. In his new report, he stated that other greenhouse gases -- such as methane, black soot, CFCs, and the compounds that create smog -- may be causing more damage than carbon dioxide and efforts to affect climate change should focus on these other gases. "The prospects for having a modest climate impact instead of a disastrous one are quite good, I think," Dr. Hansen was quoted as saying in the *New York Times*.

We look forward to working with you and your Administration on the development of a comprehensive national energy strategy that is environmentally and economically sound, and a common sense, scientifically sound climate change policy. However, we need to have a clear understanding of your Administration's position on climate change, in particular the Kyoto Protocol, and the regulation of carbon dioxide under the Clean Air Act.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


CHUCK HAGEL
United States Senator


LARRY CRAIG
United States Senator


JESSE HELMS
United States Senator


PAT ROBERTS
United States Senator