

GREENPEACE RESPONDS TO THE BUSH/CHENEY NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY TASK FORCE

Greenpeace Response to the Bush Energy Plan – May 2001

The Bush/Cheney Task Force's National Energy Policy leads the nation down the wrong road. Though the Administration claims to have crafted a long-term solution, the shortsighted policy includes:

- No efforts to cut the nation's global warming pollution
- Massive electric power plant construction-1,300 new polluting fossil fuel and nuclear power plants are proposed
- New oil extraction in ecologically sensitive areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Rocky Mountains
- More oil refineries, pipelines and electric transmission lines
- Additional U.S. taxpayer subsidies for the fossil fuel and nuclear industries.

And in an effort to hide their true agenda, the Administration proposes:

- Minor efforts toward saving energy through energy efficiency and renewable energy sources

Bush Energy Plan Reality Check:

Top Ten Ripoffs, Sellouts And Industry Paybacks In The Bush Energy Plan

1. Global Warming Policy Is Secondary To Energy Production!

The Bush Administration, while claiming to have crafted a long-term plan, has failed to assess the plan's global warming implications.

Reality Check:

Energy Policy Is Global Warming Policy.

Scientists know that man-made greenhouse gas emissions are a leading cause of global climate change. Burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) are the leading source of these greenhouse gas emissions. Greenpeace has calculated the cumulative carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to the year 2100 that allow us to limit the magnitude of global warming to within defined ecological limits for the planet. This calculation can be seen as a global "carbon budget," which if exceeded means that many of the basic, interconnected environmental functions of the planet would meet serious, harmful damage.¹ A [Greenpeace report](#) found that we literally cannot burn more than one-quarter of the remaining known fossil reserves irreparably damaging the environment.²

In March 2001, President Bush announced that the U.S. would not negotiate the existing Kyoto Protocol, the product of over 10 years of work by hundreds of delegates from 180 nations of the world. The U.S. "alternative" to Kyoto will be released at some point before the next negotiating session in July. If the U.S. is to take a unilateral approach on climate, then U.S. domestic energy policy is the key point for review of climate policy. Nations of the world are now making plans to move forward on global warming solutions without the United States if necessary.

2. Energy Production First!

President Bush's plan focuses on energy production and energy infrastructure instead of energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy.

Reality Check:

A major report produced last year by the Department of Energy's Interlaboratory Working Group reviewing proposed policies supporting efficiency and clean energy concluded, "that policies exist that could significantly reduce inefficiencies, oil dependence, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions at essentially no net cost to the U.S. economy."³ Nonetheless, the Bush energy task force recommendations will increase pollution by supporting old (fossil fuels) or dying (nuclear) industries at taxpayer expense, while ignoring findings of the Department of Energy.

3. Renewables Cannot Help Us Now!

President Bush would like us to believe that solar and wind power are "pie in the sky" technologies and costs too much to be a central focus of a U.S. national energy policy.

Reality Check:

Renewable energy is the fastest growing energy market in the world. Wind, for example, is already cost competitive with fossil fuels and uniformly outperforms nuclear. For example, this year the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) covering the U.S. Northwest, solicited industry for wind generation project proposals. Twenty-five feasible proposals were submitted offering the equivalent of 2,600 megawatts of energy. If one includes expansion plans within the proposals, over 4,000 megawatts of wind power potential could be implemented.⁴ One study by the five major U.S. national energy laboratories commissioned by the Department of Energy concluded that fair competition coupled with \$160 million (the average cost of one nuclear power plant) a year for 20 years in research and development (R&D) budget would result in renewable energy providing power for three-fifths of current U.S. energy use.⁵

4. The Economy Will Suffer!

Bush claims that if U.S. national energy policy puts too much emphasis on renewable energy and efficiency, the economy will be harmed and that expanding existing energy sources and infrastructure is better for business, will create more jobs and will increase our national security.

Reality Check:

If aggressively pursued, least-cost conservation and renewables options could:

- Displace all oil imported from the Persian Gulf
- Require few, if any, federal government mandates
- Generate more jobs than traditional energy supply sources
- Push small businesses to the forefront
- Inherently require strong local decision-making
- Increase U.S. competitiveness in global energy markets⁶

We must eliminate all taxpayer-funded subsidies that artificially lower energy prices and cause consumers to waste energy and undervalue savings. At the same time we need to provide access to capital for emerging and competitive clean technologies.⁷

5. Fossil Fuels And Nukes Rule!

Bush claims that fossil fuel and nuclear energy are superior and cheaper than renewable energy options

and efficiency improvements.

Reality Check:

In the energy industry, the market is not "free." Fossil fuel and nuclear energy have been sustained with billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars through unfair, uneven subsidies and tax breaks for years. If these industries had to compete on a more level playing field with renewables and efficiency, there would be a very different story to tell about U.S. National Energy Policy. Consider these facts:

- According to the Green Scissors Campaign, between 1948 and 1998, the federal government spent \$111.5 billion on energy research and development programs. Of this amount, 60 percent, or \$66 billion was dedicated to civilian nuclear energy research, and 23 percent, or \$26 billion, was directed to fossil fuel energy research.⁸
- As of the year 2000, the U.S. provides subsidies to the fossil fuel industries to the tune of an estimated \$20 billion a year.⁹ The government favors mature, conventional, supply-side energy resources-fossil fuels, fission-nuclear and hydroelectric-by more than eight to one (\$32.3 billion to \$3.8 billion) over clean, emerging energy resources with more global marketplace potential such as solar or wind technologies.
- Since 1947, according to the Renewable Energy Policy Project, cumulative \$150 billion in federal subsidies have gone to nuclear, solar and wind power-96.3 percent of that total went to nuclear.¹⁰

6. A "Balanced" Plan!

The Bush Administration claims to have consulted with leading energy experts, leading to a balanced, unbiased plan.

Reality Check:

The Cheney task force held its membership and inputs so closely that even an attempt to find out who the task force has consulted with the Freedom of Information Act was rejected.¹¹ The Administration has a direct background and ties to fossil fuel and nuclear multinational corporations.

There was no representation on the Task Force of renewable energy or energy efficiency experts. The Task Force was never open to official public comment and kept all of its deliberations secret to the public.

The Task Force can be seen as a payback by the Bush Administration for election year 2000 campaign finance contributions. In the year 2000 elections, fossil fuel interests alone gave over \$25.5 million to the Republicans in soft money & individual donations-78 percent of total donations by the industry. Electric utilities were close behind giving \$6 million in soft money to the Republican Party. Some of the largest donors were Enron Corporation, British Petroleum/Amoco, El Paso Energy Corporation, Lockheed Martin, Dominion Resources, Exxon/Mobil and the Chevron Corporation.¹²

7. "Clean" Coal Is The Answer!

President Bush claims that if the U.S. moves away from a reliance on coal, economic disaster for coal miners will follow, while pointing to the merits of the so-called emerging "clean" coal technologies.

Reality Check:

Coal miners are portrayed as the victims of any move toward cleaner fuels. The national payroll for U.S. coal miners is \$5 billion per year. This payroll total equals about one percent of our yearly total energy bills. If the U.S. cut its coal-for-energy consumption by 50 percent, U.S. consumers could still have the ability via associated savings to provide miners' lost pay, plus there would be an extra \$10 billion a year for other benefits to the U.S. economy.¹³

Cutting back on U.S. coal-for-energy consumption poses less threat to coal miners' than does the coal mining industry itself. The reality is that as coal industry production increases, the number of jobs for coal miners decreases. From 1980-1994, production increased by 25 percent, but industry bosses cut 55 percent of coal jobs at the same time. Industry is cutting coal jobs at a rate of 8,000 jobs per year.¹⁴

Coal mining causes a variety of harmful environmental impacts. It can cause severe erosion, results in the leaching of toxic chemicals into nearby streams and aquifers, and destroys habitat.

U.S. manufacturers and energy utilities consume and burn nearly one billion tons of coal each year, producing 115 million tons of waste. These companies dump 70 percent of the waste with few restrictions and environmental controls.¹⁵ Many states have no safeguards for this waste. Thus environmental cleanup costs must be considered to know the true cost of coal as an energy source.

So-called "clean coal" refers to technology that allows coal to be burnt cleanly. Even the best of these modern technologies are much dirtier than natural gas for example. Any increase in coal fired power is a move backward for the environment.

8. Drilling In The Arctic = U.S. Oil Independence!

President Bush insists that drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will decrease U.S. reliance on countries in the Persian Gulf.

Reality Check:

According to the Department of Energy, the best place to drill for oil is under Detroit. Improving the 19 miles per gallon of the average car by just three miles per gallon could replace all oil import needs from Iraq and Kuwait.¹⁶ Improving performance by another nine miles per gallon could cut off the need for any U.S. oil imports from the entire Persian Gulf. Totaling up all the innovations in efficiency we currently have available (i.e. increasing airplane efficiency, technical refinements to trucks, buses and ships, insulation measures, hot-water savings in large buildings, better windows, etc), we could save twice as much fuel as the U.S. gets from Alaska every year.¹⁷

9. Nukes Are The Solution!

President Bush is trying to keep the dying nuclear energy industry viable, suggesting that nuclear energy could be the answer to all our energy problems.

Reality Check:

Nuclear power cannot economically compete with either efficiency or renewables. It has unsolvable waste problems and a history of unavoidable health and safety problems. The worst outcome would be extending the life of existing nuclear reactors that are scheduled to be shut down. We cannot risk a system of aging Three Mile Island era reactors across the country. One government study estimates that over \$1 trillion in taxpayer money has gone into trying to sustain the nuclear industry. Because devices now on the market can save more electricity than all U.S. nuclear power plants generate at roughly 15

percent of the cost of just running the plants or five percent of building such plants, it is cheaper to write off new nuclear power plants and provide customers with more efficient types of power.

Nuclear power is the world's slowest growing energy source. Unless supported by overwhelming U.S. subsidization, at least one-third of U.S. nuclear plants can expect to be retired because their operational costs render them non-competitive. In the United States, the nuclear industry has already eaten up over \$1 trillion of our dollars even though wood delivers more electricity.¹⁸

10. Efficiency Measures Will Make Americans Suffer!

The Bush Administration has tried to scare the American public into believing energy efficiency means austerity and inconvenience.

Reality Check:

Energy efficiency means using advanced technologies that cut waste and provide improved services at lower costs to the consumer. It means improving the U.S. standard of living, saving money and protecting the environment at the same time.¹⁹

Already, energy efficiency measures implemented in the U.S. are saving more than \$130 billion a year compared to a baseline of 1973 practices. If America were as efficient as some of our Western European and Japanese competitors, we would save an additional \$210 billion a year on our energy bills and costs.²⁰

Notes

1. Greenpeace defines the ecological limits for this century as follows with respect to greenhouse gas emissions:
 - i. Limit the long-term increase of temperature to less than 1°C above pre-industrial levels.
 - ii. Bring the rate of climate change to below 0.1°C/decade as fast as possible, within a few decades at the most. Warming rates over the next century are projected to be in the range 0.2-0.3°C/decade.
 - iii. Limit long term global average sea-level rise to less than 20 cm. A sea-level rise of this extent would still lead to some damage for low lying islands and coastal areas, however higher levels would lead to rapidly rising risk. A warming limit of 20 cm by 2100 would entail an ultimate sea-level rise of 40-60 cm if there were no surprises in, for example, the behavior of the large Greenland and West Antarctic Ice sheets. There is a high degree of inertia in relation to sea-level rise. It seems likely, for example that around 10 cm of sea-level rise is already committed over the next century as a consequence of historic greenhouse gas emissions.
 - iv. Bring the rate of sea-level rise to below 20mm/decade. This would permit the vast majority of vulnerable ecosystems, such as natural wetlands and coral reefs to adapt.
2. Id.
3. See e.g., Letter from Senator Harkin to President Bush, April 2001.

4. BPA News, "Astonishing Number Of Wind Generation Proposals Blows Into BPA," April 26, 200.
5. SERI 1990
6. L. Hunter Lovins, Amory B. Lovins & H. Richard Heede, "The Citizens Transition Project" 1992.
7. Id.
8. Friends of the Earth, US Public Interest Research Group and Taxpayers for Common Sense, "Paying for Pollution" 2000.
9. Footnote 43 of Hotspot, Climate Network Europe, May 2000
10. Marshall Goldberg, Renewable Energy & Policy Project, "Federal Energy Subsidies: Not All Technologies Are Created Equal." 2000.
11. [Natural Resources Defense Council](#)
12. [Common Cause](#)
13. Amory B. Lovins & L. Hunter Lovins: "Climate: Making Sense and Making Money." Rocky Mountain Institute, June 1998.
14. Id. at page 24-25.
15. [Citizens Coal Council](#)
16. See e.g., Amory B. Lovins & L. Hunter Lovins, "Make Fuel Efficiency Our Gulf Strategy," New York Times, December 3, 1990 at page A15; and Amory B. Lovins: "Drill Rigs and Battleships Are the Answer (But What Is the Question?)," from The Oil Market In the 1990s: Challenges For A New Era, edited by Reed and Fesharaki.
17. See e.g., Amory B. Lovins & L. Hunter Lovins, "The Alaskan Threat to National Energy Security" Rocky Mountain Institute 2001.
18. Amory B. Lovins & L. Hunter Lovins: "Climate: Making Sense and Making Money." Rocky Mountain Institute, June 1998.
19. L. Hunter Lovins, Amory B. Lovins & H. Richard Heede, "The Citizens Transition Project" 1992