

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR
JOHN F. KERRY**

**HEARING ON U.S. CLIMATE
POLICY**

July 11, 2002

First, I want to thank Chairman Hollings and Ranking Member McCain for their continued interest in this subject and their support for holding this hearing.

Today we will hear from key representatives of the Bush Administration regarding who is “in charge” of climate policy, their views on global climate change and their proposed strategy for dealing with this important environmental issue. We are pleased that you are able to join us today to discuss the Administration’s plans.

It was precisely one year and one day ago that this Committee last convened

a hearing to consider the issue of global climate change. At that time, we requested that the Bush Administration share its views on climate change and offer some insights into the technologies and policies that it would advocate as means of addressing increasing global temperatures. I noted, in opening that hearing, that it was time to shift our focus from the science to the solutions of climate change.

Unfortunately, at that time, the Administration was reluctant to join in that policy discussion. This was despite the Administration's "unprecedented Cabinet level attention" to the issue. Now, after months of cabinet level meetings and staff discussions, the Administration's policy appear to have taken several steps backwards, away from real solutions.

Last year, in lieu of presenting the policy, the Administration sent Dr.

David Evans, a respected scientist and head of NOAA Research to speak about the state of scientific knowledge on climate change. Dr. Evans, presented compelling evidence that reaffirmed the steady growth in atmospheric CO₂ -- “increasing by more than 30 percent over the industrial era compared with the preceding 750 years”. Dr. Evans summarized his assessment of the science in this way, “[E]missions of greenhouse gases and aerosols due to

human activities continue to alter the atmosphere in ways that are expected to affect the climate.” He also said “stabilizing concentrations means that we must ultimately end up with much lower net emissions.”

Since Dr. Evans testimony before this Committee a year ago, the scientific evidence of increasing global temperatures associated with increasing atmospheric levels of CO₂, and the associated threats to our people and our

environment, has continued to grow.

Its own report, *U.S. Climate Action Report – 2002*, only adds to the volume of evidence.

But the Administration continues to emphasize the uncertainty, promote delay and limit near-term “action” to additional research.

Today, the Bush Administration will explain its “action plan” for global climate change: reducing “greenhouse gas intensity” through voluntary

measures. I must say, gentlemen, given that reducing intensity corresponds to increasing emissions, and 10 years of voluntary action has failed to decrease our aggregate emissions, many of us have little confidence that this Administration will assert responsible global environmental leadership on climate change.

While the United States is responsible for 25 percent of all the greenhouse gases produced globally, the Bush

Administration refuses to commit to the Kyoto Protocol, or advance a serious alternative to this international accord.

By my own assessment of this new proposal, it really offers very little that is new. It is founded on the notion that the science of climate change remains in doubt and that more research is needed. It also relies on voluntary action and “adaptation” as the primary response.

First, let me say, that there are many of us in the Congress – Democrats, Republicans, and Independents – who were very disappointed that the President turned his back on his campaign commitment to address the problem of CO₂ emissions when he took office. The United States is the largest producer of CO₂ in the world -- utilities and transportation account for two-thirds of our emissions. Yet, this Administration fails, repeatedly, to acknowledge the threat of increasing

CO₂ emissions or to present to the Congress any real policies, programs, or strategies to deal with this threat. To their credit, states have leapt into the void – Massachusetts adopted the first CO₂ cap and trade program, and now California has passed a law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles.

The impacts threatened by climate change may be “projected” but they are based on observations that are

increasingly real and support the model projections. I know my friend Senator Stevens will also want to talk about this. There will always be some “uncertainty” in science -- but it is not an excuse for no action in the face of risk.

I'd like to point out a very powerful graph that brings home the reality of the threat – [**CHART OF OCEAN TEMPS**]. It shows the rising world ocean temperatures measured by

NOAA since the 1950s. The ocean has absorbed 90% of the heat resulting from human-induced temperature rise since 1950. Scientists tell us that, at some point, the ocean will be able to absorb no more. At that point we can expect “climate surprises” beyond those we have modeled. Gentlemen, these risks and costs are real, not imagined. We cannot delay.

But it’s worse than delay - we are slipping backward. The

Administration's Energy Policy sought to promote national energy security by simply increasing the development of oil, gas, coal, and other fossil fuels for energy production, but opposed a plan that Chairman Hollings, Senator McCain and I co-sponsored to seek to ensure real reductions in the automotive sector. And while to this point there has been no approval to open ANWR to energy development, the Administration is now proceeding

with efforts to exploit oil and gas resources in the lower 48 states.

The Climate Report acknowledges that energy-related CO₂ emissions -- even WITHOUT the proposals in the National Energy Plan -- are projected to increase by 33.6 percent from 2000 to 2020!! How is this to aid in our efforts to reduce the primary cause of global climate change?

I know that the Bush Administration has touted its “commitment” to renewable energy resources. But the fact of the matter is that the President’s National Energy Policy provided only passing reference to renewable energy resource opportunities in comparison to the development of new oil and gas resources.

I could go on. But, my point, gentlemen, is that your Administration’s commitment to

addressing global climate change to date, is all promise and very little substance . Critics have dubbed it “smoke and mirrors” and a “faith-based initiative” and I certainly see why.

I look forward to your explanation of how **greenhouse gas intensity** could possibly be a more meaningful measure of progress than reducing actual emissions to the atmosphere.

I certainly believe markets can be used to achieve such actual reductions -- the SO2 cap and trade program was a huge success. But I believe a purely voluntary system such as the one offered here can't be effective – and Dr. Hubbard's testimony is succinct on this point as to WHY: “ *because the program is voluntary, no one is compelled to do anything*” (page 11, Hubbard testimony).

Voluntary action and new ways of measuring our performance in achieving emissions reductions are meaningless unless they generate real reductions in CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions. Unless the concept of greenhouse gas intensity can be clearly documented and result in measured and verifiable reductions in emissions it has as much integrity as an Arthur Anderson audit.

My fear, gentleman, is that for all that this Administration says it wants to improve the *science* of global climate change, your commitment to real policies, real programs and real results to achieve real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions is nothing more than *science fiction*. The science demonstrates a need for action, but you choose delay, and sideline those who speak of the need for action -- including scientists of the IPCC.

I want to summarize this morning, by simply stating that we have put off for far too long, a clear commitment on the part of the United States to participating in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change.

On the matter of global climate change, the United States should be leading efforts to find solutions based on the lessons of the past, not looking for ways to avoid action.

Again, I welcome the Administration witnesses before us today. I now want to turn to my close friend and colleague, Senator McCain, for his opening statement.

