

SSR32

*The New Republic*SJR 32 *Sen. Coats*

mond hunted around his desk for a note card, then read his response: "I support the president's plan to reduce income tax rates," he said. "It is the right remedy to strengthen economic expansion...." Episodes like this have grown frequent enough that last month *The Hill*, an inside-Congress weekly, called upon Thurmond to retire, saying it was impossible to know "whether the senator is running his staff, or his staff is running him."

But Thurmond's office insists he won't resign before his planned retirement when his term ends next year. It's one topic, in fact, on which Thurmond himself still speaks robustly. Though the senator's office turns down interview requests from all but local South Carolina media, a CBS News reporter recently confronted Thurmond with questions about his health. "They got me one foot in the grave," he replied. "They're all wrong... I'll outlive all of them."

The White House isn't as confident. George W. Bush already be racing to pass his tax cut before his honeymoon expires, but the Strom factor only adds to the urgency. "Right now," GOP Representative Steve Largent recently told *National Journal's CongressDaily*, "I can tell you that the Bush administration is looking at tax cuts, filling federal judicial slots, and doing everything that they... need Senate approval on—as quickly as they possibly can, while we still have Strom Thurmond with us."

Consider, for example, the effect of Thurmond's departure on Bush's \$1.6 trillion tax cut proposal. Suddenly, Democrats would have a majority on the Senate Finance Committee, which will shape the details of any tax plan. Daschle could refuse to bring a cut to the floor at all. And, even if a Bush-friendly tax bill did make it out of committee, Democrats could undo a GOP-passed resolution that currently insulates it from a filibuster—meaning a mere 40 Democratic votes would kill the measure.

YET, BLEAK AS things may seem for Thurmond, the Strom Watch could well end up lasting until his retirement. As *Slate.com's* Jacob Weisberg has noted, actuarial data suggests a man his age has a 50 percent chance of living two more years. And Thurmond still shows occasional bursts of energy and lucidity. When a heckler interrupted Attorney General John Ashcroft's confirmation hearing in January, Thurmond snapped out of his usual daze and shouted, "Get him out and keep him out!"

Or consider this bizarre expression of vigor from that late-night budget debate in the Senate a couple of weeks ago. After sitting nearly motionless and silent for most of the evening, Thurmond suddenly rose from his chair. He placed his hands on his desk, settled his body at a 45-degree angle, and commenced a series of small push-ups. He looked precariously, and never did his arm bend more than 30 degrees or so, but he did about 25 of them all the same.

His aides just smiled, as if they had seen this before. And they may well have—Thurmond has always been known as a physical-fitness buff. But his staffers aren't taking any chances. As soon as Thurmond sat down again, one of them handed him a glass of water and watched patiently to make sure he finished it. These days, one can't be too careful. ■

W. the environmentalist. Health Nut

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

HERE'S A FRONT-PAGE story from the *Alternate Universe Tribune*: "BUSH ADMINISTRATION MAKES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION EARLY THEME." Ridiculous, right? We all know the new administration is engaged in "the most alarming rollbacks in environmental efforts that we have ever seen" (Richard Gephardt). Or, as Hearst newspaper columnist Helen Thomas "asked" at Bush's most recent press conference: "[Y]ou have rolled back health and safety and environmental measures. This has been widely interpreted as a payback time to your corporate donors. Are they more important than the American people's health and safety?"

Yet the *Alternate Universe Tribune* has it right. On almost every environmental issue, Bush has upheld the Clinton-Gore position. The new president is guilty of a few missteps, which are getting reams of attention, and has accomplished important advances, which are being ignored. Journalists and liberal commentators have had so much success in recent years pillorying conservatives as foes of the environment that it's become a kind of reflex. But this time the evidence isn't there.

First, take Bush's much-mocked decision to postpone a reduction in the maximum allowable arsenic in drinking water. This was indeed a mistake, as the scientific case for tighter rules is strong. But Bush has not acted to "allow more arsenic in drinking water," as commentary has erroneously asserted, nor to force Americans to consume "poisoned drinking water," as a *New York Times* editorial claimed. All he's done is delay the date on which trace levels of arsenic are cut. This is *precisely* what Bill Clinton and Al Gore did for almost eight years—postponing any tightening of the standard until just before leaving the White House, because new rules are stridently opposed by a few localities where arsenic naturally occurs in water, such as Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the mayor is a Democrat. Clinton's delay was unfortunate, as was Bush's, but not catastrophic, since arsenic is not one of America's leading environmental problems. It occurs in drinking water at worrisome levels in only a few areas of the country, and public health estimates show at worst a 1 percent increase in the odds of late-life cancer for someone who consumes such water for decades.

Contrast the media furor over Bush's arsenic decision with the near silence regarding his action on diesel-fuel reformulation. One of the president's first actions was to uphold a sweeping, expensive regulation that requires petroleum companies to remove most pollutants from diesel fuel. Unlike the arsenic standards, which would have benefited a tiny percentage of the population, the diesel-fuel rule has broad environmental and public-health consequences. Recent research has shown that the "particulates" in diesel

exhaust lead to 20,000 or more premature deaths per year and contribute to the rise of asthma in cities. Bush's strict new diesel rules will spare many lives and reduce urban haze; in fact, they represent the most important anti-air-pollution advance in a decade. The reform will also cost billions of dollars, and it came over the howls of the petroleum industry, whose pocket Bush supposedly is in. Yet W.'s move has received virtually no recognition—after all, the diesel-fuel decision interrupts the doomsday script.

Consider another act for which Bush has been damned: his request that Congress suspend for one year the filing of lawsuits demanding that more plants and animals be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). On its front page, *The New York Times* portrayed this as a horrifying step backward. Yet the Clinton administration did almost exactly the same thing: Last year Clinton suspended the classification of plants and animals as endangered, saying the Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers the ESA, was so snowed under by frivolous or dilatory lawsuits that it couldn't get its work done. The *Times* account was craftily written to depict the Bush decision as an unprecedented departure, not mentioning Clinton's similar policy until the fourteenth paragraph, and then only obliquely.

Bush has also been attacked for merely *considering* overturning regulations requiring big increases in the energy efficiency of air conditioners, washers, dryers, and other appliances. But when he announced that the appliance standard would be upheld and the air-conditioner standard only mildly loosened, less attention was paid. He's been similarly scolded in the *Times* and other papers for *considering* reversing Clinton's eleventh-hour decision to reduce logging in national forests; but when Bush then appointed, as head of the Forest Service, a man instrumental in drawing up the less-logging policy, the *Times* buried the article on page A15. Bush also won little praise for upholding most of Clinton's eleventh-hour designations of new national wilderness areas, set-asides that were highly unpopular in much of the West. Bush decided this week to keep strict new limits on construction in wetlands—angering developers, another natural Bush constituency, who hate wetlands rules with a white passion—and also to impose strict standards regarding lead emissions. These moves were widely depicted as puzzling departures from form. But it only seemed that way because the media had misconstrued so many of Bush's other decisions.

Then there is Bush's abandonment of the Kyoto global-warming treaty, for which he's been hammered as an antediluvian. Yet the president might plausibly have said, "I have decided to continue the Clinton-Gore approach to global warming," since the previous administration took no binding action on Kyoto either. Clinton never submitted the Kyoto agreement to the Senate because he knew it stood no chance of ratification. In a 1997 test ballot, the Senate went on record 95 to zero against a Kyoto resolution; it didn't get a single Democratic vote.

In other words, the deal was history well before Bush took office. Any lingering hope ended last fall, when the European Union essentially rejected America's attempt to add to the agreement an international "carbon trading" system, which economists almost unanimously view as the best hope for near-term, affordable greenhouse-gas reduction. Canada's environment minister, David Anderson, has said the European Union rejected carbon trading specifically to make Kyoto fail: "Europe adopted a position they knew would force the United States to pull out." Why? Because Europe didn't want to do anything about the greenhouse effect but wanted the United States to take the blame. American commentators have happily parroted Europe's line.

Bush's father harmed himself when he turned from pro-environmental (backer of the 1990 Clean Air Act) to anti-environmental (snarling about spotted owls) as the 1992 campaign began; Newt Gingrich and the 1995 House Republicans saw their popularity sink in part because of their efforts to repeal environmental laws. From these episodes, Democrats, enviros, and reporters seeking an instant-doomsday slant have grown adept at bashing Republicans with preposterous overstatements and phony claims of ecological crises. The White House's inability to see this coming is bad politics. For example, the current legal maximum for arsenic in drinking water is 50 parts per billion; the proposed rule Bush delayed would have made it ten parts per billion, a level some studies suggest is regulatory overkill. Bush could have split the difference and announced a new standard of 25 parts per billion, saying he was making the rule twice as strict.

But bad p.r. and bad policy aren't the same thing. With the exception of oil exploration in Alaska, so far there are no meaningful differences between Bush's environmental goals and those of Clinton and Gore. This is surprising and to Bush's credit. It's time the press started giving him some. ■



ROBERT NEUBECKER

<http://www.rollcall.com/pages/news/00/2001/05/news0510d.html>

May 10, 2001

GOP Centrists Vent Frustration to Cheney

By John Bresnahan

House GOP moderates are warning President Bush and other top White House officials that they risk alienating key suburban voters and endangering the party's majority on Capitol Hill if the administration doesn't soften its stance on environmental issues.

The warning was delivered in a private meeting Tuesday between key Republican moderates and Vice President Cheney in Cheney's office in the Capitol.

Moderates who attended the meeting include GOP Reps. Nancy Johnson (Conn.), Michael Castle (Del.), Sherwood Boehlert (N.Y.), Vernon Ehlers (Mich.), Wayne Gilchrest (Md.) and James Greenwood (Pa.).

The tone of the gathering was described as cordial by several participants. But Johnson also pointedly warned Cheney that Bush's environmental policies threaten to "shrivel the Republican Party" by antagonizing the green vote - a key constituency in swing districts such as hers.

Johnson, who refused to comment for this story, also questioned what the White House has done to attract new centrist voters to the GOP, noting that Bush has spent the vast majority of his time since taking office in January shoring up his conservative base.

To help remedy the situation, moderates asked for a bigger role in crafting the administration's environmental policy, particularly since they have repeatedly been called upon to defend it once the White House unveils its legislative and regulatory initiatives.

"Our message was that we need to have more consultation and input on the administration's environmental policy," Greenwood said. "If you want us to support your positions, we need to have more consultations ... so we don't get blindsided."

The lawmakers, all of whom belong to the Mainstream Coalition added that they understand that former President Bill Clinton had laid several political traps for Bush by issuing sweeping environmental regulations in his final days in office.

The moderates acknowledged that Clinton's moves forced Bush to overturn the new rules in his first days in the White House in order to mollify conservatives and industry groups. But the lawmakers also believe that the White House didn't manage the spin war surrounding those decisions very well.

"We understand the previous administration purposely tried to make the next administration's life difficult by issuing these decisions on their way out the door," Castle said. "But some of the [Bush] decisions weren't handled correctly."

Juleanna Glover Weiss, Cheney's press secretary, declined to comment on what was discussed at Tuesday's meeting, but did insist that the Bush energy plan will be environment-friendly.

She added that the California energy crisis, combined with the possibility that the Northeast will face a similar problem, as well as rising gas prices, require a new approach to the U.S. energy policy as a whole.

"Our objective is to make sure every source of power is a clean source of power," said Glover Weiss.

All of the Members who met with Cheney described themselves as pleased with Bush's overall performance as president.

According to a top aide to one of the lawmakers, they also wanted to remind Cheney that moderate Republicans are an important part of the GOP's razor-thin majority in Congress.

"First, mainstream voters are key to retaining the Republican majority in the House," said the staffer, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"Second, the bulk of the American public is somewhere in the middle of the political spectrum, and in national elections they can't be ignored."

The conversation with Cheney, Castle added, was aimed at addressing the fact that when it comes to the environment, "Some mistakes were made, but ultimately we think things will be smoothed out."

The Bush administration faces difficult choices in crafting its new energy policy, which is being handled by a high-level task force chaired by Cheney.

White House officials have already been slammed for not coming up with strategies that offer political cover for Members who face tough re-election battles next year.

Environmental groups and their supporters on Capitol Hill also complain that Bush and Cheney have overlooked conservation measures and instead focused on boosting oil and gas production, as well as signaled support for the construction of new nuclear-power facilities, all of which come with huge environmental liabilities.

Cheney, for instance, called for the construction of at least 1,300 new power plants in the coming two decades, a statement that stunned pro-environment Republicans. The Vice President also dismissed calls for implementation of additional conservation measures.

"The policy needs to have more than just the need for more energy plants," Castle argued. "We think we need more about conservation, and alternative [energy] sources need to be explored like solar energy."

Although Cheney did not address drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge directly in the meeting, Castle said moderates feel privately reassured that the administration would not push the policy, even if the report contained a "few lines" about the need for it.

Boehlert has openly criticized Bush's record on several high-profile environmental issues, including the President's decision to withdraw from the Kyoto protocol on global warming and his support for oil and gas drilling in ANWR.

Boehlert described himself as satisfied by the reception the moderates received from Cheney and said he will take a careful look at the administration's plan to relieve the nation's energy crunch. Still, he noted that it will take more than one meeting to persuade the public that Bush really cares about the environment.

"The good news is that this administration is very open to suggestions," Boehlert said. "Whether they will heed us is another question." However, the lack of information about what Bush will propose has angered some GOP lawmakers, along with a sometimes clumsy White House communications effort.

"The message is as important as what the White House actually proposes, and right now we are losing the message war," complained a leading GOP moderate. "We've got to do a much better job on this front."

The moderates' concerns about environmental issues also reflect a fear among Republican centrists that Bush and Cheney are pulling the party too far to the right, which may make it difficult for the GOP to attract moderate suburban voters in the 2002 and 2004 elections.

They are hopeful over Bush's decision to seek true bipartisan support for his upcoming education package, even to the point of upsetting the conservative movement, but the overall tone of the administration has been too strident for some moderates.

"You just can't go to the right for two years and then tack back to the middle at election time," noted one such moderate Republican.

"It just won't work that way anymore. We have to be aware that in the current political climate, we have to be the party of all the people, not just the people that will already vote for us."

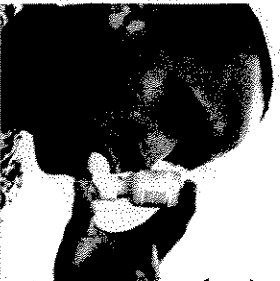
Susan Crabtree contributed to this report.

Safe Drinking Water

A new arsenic rule strengthens protections to permit just one-fifth of the current allowable levels of arsenic in drinking water. This rule is critical because arsenic causes cancer of the lungs, bladder and skin. Unfortunately, the Bush administration proposed to withdraw this protection because of costs to the mining industry and other polluters.



We must restore America's waterways so they are safe for fishing, swimming and drinking.



Clean Air Protection

New national health standards for smog and soot will save 15,000 lives each year. To meet the new standards, the EPA adopted new emission rules for power plants and automobiles. Unfortunately, the auto, coal and oil industries are already working to roll back these important clean air protections. For example, Senators Byrd and Murkowski have introduced bills that exempt coal burning power plants from Clean Air Act regulations.

We should consider clean air to be a right—and push industries to develop cleaner technologies that reduce or eliminate air pollution.

What you can do:

We must stop the rollback of our environmental laws. At the onset of a new Congress and a new Administration, citizens must make it clear that we oppose rollbacks of our environmental and public health protections.

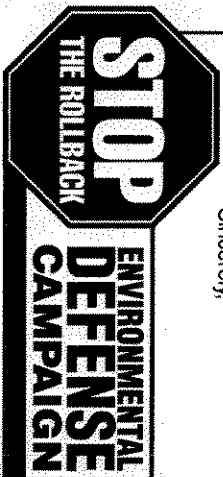
You can help. Write your senators and representative today and urge them to protect public health and the environment by stopping these rollbacks. Here's a model letter you can use, or go to www.stoptherollback.com and send a letter online.

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515 (representatives) / 20510 (senators)

Dear Representative/Senator,

- I urge you to defend our environmental and public health protections. I urge you to:
- oppose weakening standards for cancer-causing arsenic in our drinking water;
 - oppose oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;
 - defend the new protections for 60 million acres of national forests;
 - oppose the exemption of any power plants from the Clean Air Act; and
 - stop attempts to harm the environment through hidden provisions in budget bills.

Sincerely,



WISPIRG

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WISPIRG

Stop The Rollback Of Our Environmental Protections

Just months into the new Congress and the new Administration, powerful polluters are making headway on their schemes to roll back environmental protections, including protections for:

- ▶ **Safe Drinking Water**
- ▶ **The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**
- ▶ **National Forests & Other Public Lands**
- ▶ **Clean Air**

WISPIRG is working to expose their schemes, counter the political pressure, and make the case for putting our environment ahead of narrow special interests.

www.stoptherollback.com



Hard Won Victories: 30 Years Of Environmental Protections

In the 1960's and 70's our air was dirtier than ever and some rivers were so polluted they actually caught fire. In response, Congress passed our nation's core environmental laws.

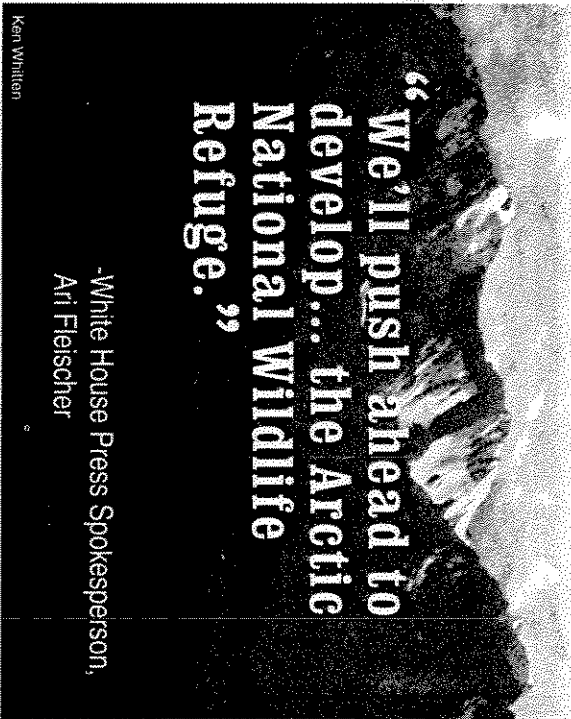
Since then, we have won new protections for public health and our natural heritage.

- **Drinking water utilities must reduce the amount of arsenic in water supplies.**
- **Oil and gas companies are not allowed to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.**
- **Timber companies cannot clearcut 60 million acres of wild national forests.**
- **Power plants must reduce smog, soot, and deadly toxic pollution.**

A Turn For The Worse The Attacks On Our Environmental Laws

Unfortunately, the oil, timber, coal and mining industries, and others who stand to gain from weakening our environmental protections, are attacking these laws. To gain influence and access to Congress and the President, they have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to political campaigns over the last 30 years, including more than \$47 million in the last election alone. **Last fall, it wasn't clear** if the new Congress and Administration would continue to improve our environmental and public health laws. In his campaign, President Bush came out in support of regulations of pollution from power plants, including the pollution that causes global warming. Yet, just months into the new term it has become clear that the Bush Administration will cave to the wishes of industry.

President Bush has already reversed a campaign pledge to support a reduction in CO2 emissions. Pauli Weyrich, head of the Free Congress Foundation, one of the conservative think tanks that has been pushing for the rollback, said that "...unless something happens before the election like a bunch of people turning up dead, these issues are not going to resonate with lots of voters."



"We'll push ahead to develop... the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

-White House Press Spokesperson,
Ari Fleischer

Ken Whitten

On March 20th, the EPA announced its plans to revoke a new rule that would have reduced the acceptable level of arsenic in drinking water. In doing so, EPA administrator, Christine Todd Whitman, rejected arguments that the limits are critical to protecting millions of Americans from cancer and other health threats.

It is less clear who Congress will listen to when cuts to environmental and public health protections make it to the House and Senate floor. Many members are currently pushing destructive proposals that will be up for debate shortly.

Representative Hansen, Chair of the House Resources committee has threatened to roll back a broad range of protections for public lands. He is particularly focused on rolling back protections for recently designated national monuments by redrawing their boundaries or allowing destructive activities. He has said, "Our committee is thinking we'll turn this back the way it should have been."

Proponents of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have found a strong ally in Senator Murkowski, Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He has said of his efforts to open the Refuge to drilling, "We have an opportunity, I think, now to go on the offensive..."

Stop The Rollback Of Our Environmental Protections

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

The pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is now off-limits to oil and gas drilling. The area is home to spectacular wildlife like caribou, musk oxen, bear, and wolves, and is sacred to the Gwich'in people. Unfortunately, oil companies led by BP, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Phillips, along with their allies in Congress and President Bush, want to drill in the Refuge.

We must reduce our dependence on oil and other energy sources that pollute our environment, and invest in energy conservation, energy efficiency and clean renewable power.



Public Lands Protection

A new Forest Service policy protects 58.5 million acres of National Forests, and other important public lands have recently been protected by designating them national monuments. Our public lands provide habitat for endangered species, clean drinking water, and endless opportunities for recreation. Unfortunately, the timber and oil industries and their allies in Congress and the Administration are working to overturn protections for national forests and monuments.

We must treat our nation's forests and other public lands as a natural heritage to be passed to future generations, not auctioned off for private plunder.



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For Immediate Release:
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BUSH ADMINISTRATION ATTACKS ON KEY ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTIONS WILL HARM WISCONSIN

WISPIRG ANNOUNCES CAMPAIGN, TV ADS, WEBSITE TO STOP ROLLBACK

(Madison, WI)- Actions taken by the Bush administration to roll back environmental and public health protections since taking office in January will harm citizens in Wisconsin, according to data released today by the Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG). The group unveiled a new TV ad and called on the public to send an Earth Day message to the White House to stop their assaults on the environment and public health.

President Bush and his administration have blocked or weakened several critical environmental and public health protections since taking office in January, according to WISPIRG. These rollbacks include reversing a campaign promise to reduce global warming pollution from power plants, delaying a plan to protect nearly 60 million acres of national forests, suspending new regulations on the mining industry, and withdrawing a rule to increase protections against arsenic in drinking water. According to data released by WISPIRG, the threats posed by not curbing global warming pollution exemplify the local impacts of these environmental rollbacks.

"Given these blatant attacks on critical environmental and public health protections, it seems that President Bush has rejected modern science and the will of the American public in favor of the dark ages of the industrial revolution," said WISPIRG's Megan Fitzgerald. "These rollbacks appear to be a payoff to the polluting industries that funded his campaign, and are a betrayal to citizens across the country," she added.

In addition to the announcement on March 13 that the Administration was renegeing on a campaign promise to cut global warming pollution from power plants, President Bush announced that the U.S. would not support the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty to cut such pollution. Scientists predict that if global warming pollution is not reduced, global warming will lead to rising sea levels, the spread of disease and hunger, and species extinction. They also link global warming to a documented increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as storms, flooding, droughts, and heat waves.

Wisconsin ranked 20th in the nation in per capita damage due to extreme weather in 2000, amounting to more than \$193 million in damage. Wisconsin also suffered more than \$1 billion in extreme weather losses for the 1990's - the hottest decade on record according to "Flirting with Disaster: Global Warming and the Rising Costs of Extreme Weather," a report released by WISPIRG.

"President Bush says that it will cost too much to tackle the problem of global warming. This report shows that we can't afford not to," said Fitzgerald. "If we fail to curb global warming pollution, the costs will only continue to increase. The President is flirting with disaster."

The group also released data showing that the rollbacks in arsenic regulations and the protection of nearly 60 million acres of national forest will threaten Wisconsin.

The EPA has withdrawn a rule that would have protected 13 million people from tap water with 10ppb or more of arsenic. Nearly 30 million Americans are drinking water with unhealthy levels of arsenic, a known human carcinogen. The new standards were based on 25 years of public comment and scientific inquiry.

"By withdrawing the rule, President Bush is exposing Americans to further delay and seeking an opportunity to weaken protections," said Fitzgerald.

Additionally, the Bush Administration has delayed a plan to protect nearly 60 million acres of national forest, including nearly 69,000 acres in Wisconsin. Nearly 1.6 million citizens and 600 public hearings supported the plan to protect these forests, including over 19,000 comments from Wisconsin citizens. Now, in response to opposition from the timber industry, President Bush is delaying implementation of this plan.

"The sad truth is that once these forests are gone, they are lost forever to future generations," said Fitzgerald.

WISPIRG warned of further attacks on environment and public health protections that will follow these rollbacks. For example:

Arctic: President Bush has pledged to open the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. This area is home to large populations of caribou, musk oxen, all three species of bear (polar, black, and brown), wolves, snow geese, and more than 130 species of migratory birds.

Clean Air: Campaign donations from notorious air polluting industries are giving new life to efforts to roll back clean air protections. President Bush has already broken a campaign promise to fight global warming by reducing carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. The EPA, responding to oil industry complaints, is calling for a "study" on a new standard that would save thousands of lives by lowering pollution from diesel-powered trucks and buses, and is poised to make a decision on mercury and pollution in national parks caused by power plants.

Hazardous Waste Cleanup: In years past, President Clinton threatened to veto legislation that would have stopped or weakened clean up efforts at some of the nation's most contaminated toxic waste sites. It is unlikely that President Bush would threaten to veto such rollback efforts, thereby allowing polluters to pay less in clean up costs, but leaving the public more exposed to dangerous toxic waste.

WISPIRG today unveiled new TV ads and announced that concerned citizens could send an e-mail to their member of Congress by visiting the new website.

"It is time for President Bush to stop these attacks on critical environmental and public health protections," said Fitzgerald. "We urge the public to celebrate Earth Day by visiting our web site at "stoptherollback.com" and send a strong message to the White House."

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The Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG) is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy group working on consumer, democracy, and environmental issues with 15,000 members in Wisconsin.



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**Testimony of Kerry Schumann,
Director of Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group**

May 10, 2001

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Kerry Schumann and I am the Director of WISPIRG, the Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group. WISPIRG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, environmental, consumer, and democracy advocacy group with about 15,000 citizen members across the state and student chapters at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee.

I am speaking in support of SB 159, a bill that would prohibit oil or gas drilling in the Great Lakes. SB 159 would protect our Great Lakes waters from a very environmentally harmful and dangerous activity. Experience in other parts of the country has shown us the public health risks, environmental disasters, and economic risks associated with oil and gas drilling. I would encourage committee members to look at the state of Michigan to see the challenges they have faced because of the drilling they have done in Lake Michigan.

I'd like to highlight just a few of the reasons that it's bad for Wisconsin to drill for oil and gas in the Great Lakes.

Drilling for, transporting, and processing oil and gas releases many different types of toxic, hazardous, and carcinogenic chemicals into our environment, including benzene, arsenic, lead, mercury, and hydrocarbons. These toxic substances can cause sickness in humans as well as threaten the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Hydrogen sulfide, which is frequently found when drilling for oil and gas, is an extremely toxic gas that can cause depression, extreme fatigue, dizziness, memory loss, and insomnia. Scientists have found the damage of hydrogen sulfide to be serious and irreversible.

There is always the probability of leaks, spills, and accidents at oil and gas drilling sites. Just one quart of oil can contaminate two million gallons of drinking water, while four quarts of oil can cause an eight acre oil slick. We don't want to expose our drinking water or the water we fish and swim in to that kind of hazard.

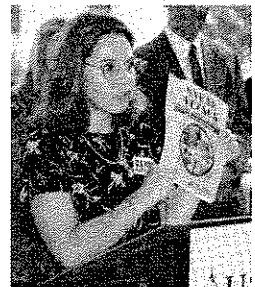
Oil and gas drilling also poses an economic threat to Wisconsin's fishing and tourism industries. Imagine oil washing ashore on the popular vacation beaches of Door County, or fishing coming to a halt because of a spill or leak. Also consider the large mercury problem Wisconsin already has in its waterbodies. Drilling would exacerbate the

mercury problem, while also creating new problems associated with other toxic substances like lead and arsenic.

Despite the Bush Administration's calls for increased oil and gas drilling in areas ranging from Florida's coastal waters, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the Great Lakes, dependence on nonrenewable resources like oil and gas is not a wise energy policy. We need to face the reality that we are going to run out of resources like oil, gas, and coal in the not too distant future. As a state and as a nation, we need to turn our focus to energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewables like solar and wind.

WISPIRG asks members of the committee to support SB 159.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



WISPIRG ANNUAL REPORT

Real problems, practical solutions, tireless advocacy, concrete results

WISPIRG

Wisconsin State Public Interest Research Group and the WISPIRG Foundation



LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS

Kerry Schumann
Program Director

Being a life-long Wisconsin resident, I like to think we Wisconsinites know what kind of world we want.

After all, we are the state of John Muir, Aldo Leopold and "Fighting Bob" LaFollette—Wisconsinites who had a clear vision for the future and a belief in protecting our heritage.

I am proud to be part of this rich tradition of conservation and civic participation.

Unfortunately, I fear that John Muir and Aldo Leopold would be dismayed to see how few of our national forests remain untouched by logging and road-building. I think they would be appalled at the amendments attached to "must-pass" spending bills in Congress designed to erode protections for endangered species and wilderness areas.

I fear that Fighting Bob would cringe at how the voices of ordinary citizens are out-shouted by special interest lobbyists—whether it's the banking lobby's fight to stop pro-consumer legislation or the automobile lobby's attempts to block emissions standards that would make our air safer and healthier to breathe.

Muir, Leopold and LaFollette are no longer here to stand up for the environment and the common good. Instead, the work of protecting the environment and public health, stopping consumer rip-offs, and promoting true democracy falls to ordinary citizens.

That is why WISPIRG is so important to Wisconsin. Our team of dedicated staff, committed citizen members, and passionate students is working to ensure that the voice of the public is heard over the big money of the special interests.

We don't always succeed. Our work this year to cap the outrageous interest rates of the payday loan industry was stalled in the state Legislature by the industry and the huge amounts of money it spent on lobbyists and campaign contributions (see page 5).

But, often, hard work and a faith in democracy pays off, and we win solid victories for the public. This year, thanks to WISPIRG staff, with the ongoing support of citizens, the EPA passed new rules that will cut emissions from SUVs and other light trucks, making our air safer to breath for everyone (see page 3). We've also helped lay the groundwork for the permanent protection of our last wild places (see page 8).

As Wisconsin enters the next millennium, we need to keep in mind the traditions that have helped make Wisconsin the great state it is. WISPIRG will continue to be here, ensuring that the voices of ordinary citizens are heard. As ever, thank you for making this work possible.

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Cover Photos: WISPIRG Staff, Rick Trisch
Staff Photos: Jan Pelton



Kerry Schumann spoke to reporters about cleaning up air pollution.



Ed Mierzwinski alerted the press to anti-consumer practices of major banks.



Lexi Shultz worked to keep anti-environmental "riders" out of the federal budget.



Derek Cressman spoke about the need for campaign finance reform.

NO AMOUNT TOO SMALL

The EPA expanded reporting requirements for the most toxic substances

WISPIRG's research on toxic emissions and advocacy for better "right-to-know" laws paid dividends as the Clinton administration announced new rules

In October, spurred on by the work of WISPIRG and allies such as the National Environmental Trust, President Clinton announced that industries will be required to report nearly all emissions of mercury and dioxin—even very small amounts that had previously escaped reporting rules.

Dioxin, a known carcinogen, can impair immune system functioning, neurological development and learning behavior in infants and small children. Mercury exposure has been linked to damage to the central nervous system and kidneys.

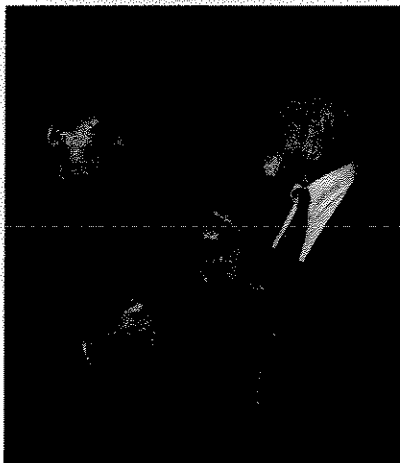
In 1998 (the last year for which complete data exist), there were nearly 2,000 fish consumption advisories nationwide due to mercury contamination.

The new reporting rules mark a victory for WISPIRG's Right To Know Campaign and the organization's lead advocate on the issue, Jeremiah Baumann, who worked out of the national lobbying office in Washington, D.C. For two years, Baumann had called for new rules that would require industries to report even very small emissions of mercury, dioxin and other dangerous substances known as "persistent bioaccumulative toxins," or PBTs.

"Some toxic substances are so dangerous that even minuscule amounts can prove harmful or deadly," said Baumann.

The new information will provide researchers with a clearer picture of the sources of toxic emissions, and provide the public with more complete access to information about toxic threats in the environment.

In states such as Massachusetts, tougher right-to-know laws have led to companies cutting back on releases of toxic substances.



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National Lobbying Director Gene Karpinski met with U.S. EPA Administrator Carol Browner to discuss the EPA's proposal to lower the reporting thresholds of toxic substances like mercury and dioxin.

WISPIRG's Mission

WISPIRG is an advocate for the public interest. When consumers are cheated, or our natural environment is threatened, or the voices of ordinary citizens are drowned out by special interest lobbyists, WISPIRG speaks up and takes action. In the watchdog tradition of Ralph Nader, we uncover threats to public health and well-being and work to end them, using the time-tested tools of investigative research, media exposés, grassroots organizing, advocacy and litigation. WISPIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, result-oriented public interest activism that protects our environment, encourages a fair, sustainable economy, and fosters responsive, democratic government.

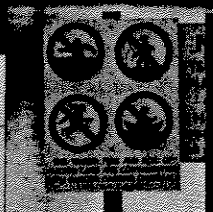


Carol Browner
Administrator
U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency

"The state PIRGs do an outstanding job across the country of educating the public about environmental and public health threats. They work tirelessly and effectively to strengthen and defend environmental laws and regulations."

Toxic threats to public health

Source: Toxics Release Inventory, U.S. EPA
Photo: Corbis



Acres of Wisconsin lakes under mercury advisories from exposure to persistent bioaccumulative toxins: **116,920**

Minimum number of teaspoons of mercury needed to contaminate a 25-acre lake: **1/70th**

NO EXCEPTIONS

Despite pressure from automakers, the EPA strengthened new emission standards

WISPIRG's environmental program worked to clean up air pollution from automobiles and power plants, as well as water pollution from factory farms

In December, President Clinton announced landmark clean air safeguards that, when fully implemented in 2004, will reduce pollution from new cars—including sport utility vehicles (SUVs), minivans and pickups—by as much as 90 percent.

The announcement came after a two-year effort by WISPIRG, other state PIRGs and our allies to shine the public spotlight on the environmental and health threats posed by automobile emissions.

“Requiring new cars to be cleaner cars was the single most important step taken in 1999 to protect Americans’ health against air pollution,” said Staff Attorney Rebecca Stanfield, who helped lead the organization’s efforts on the issue from Washington, D.C.

Stanfield estimated that the new rules will prevent 2,400 premature deaths and tens of thousands of emergency room visits annually.

The rules will also put a dent in the global warming pollution generated by the nation’s automobiles.

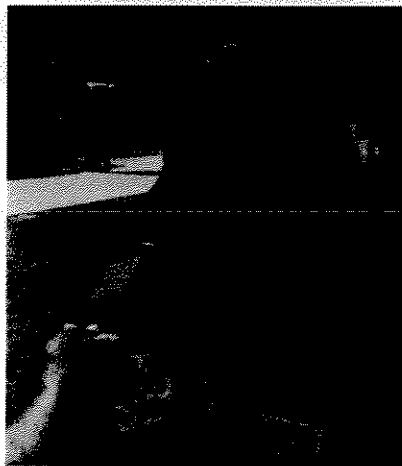
Framing The Debate

While lobbyists for the auto and oil industries argued that stronger emission standards would cost too much,

WISPIRG advocates and our allies documented the extensive—and expensive—health crisis caused by excessive auto pollution.

A particular focus of our research was the exhaust spewed by increasingly popular SUVs, minivans and pickup trucks which, due to a loophole in existing law, have been held to far weaker emission standards.

At EPA hearings throughout the summer, Stanfield and other state PIRG staff testified in support of stronger emission standards. And over the



WISPIRG staff

WISPIRG's Kerry Schumann responds to a reporter's question about air pollution at a news conference on July 1 in Madison.

course of the year, the state PIRGs led a national clean air effort that included the following:

- A March report which found that closing the SUV-light truck emissions loophole would result in 1.2 million fewer tons of smog-forming pollution emitted into the nation's skies per year;
- Another study tracing over \$56 million in auto and oil industry campaign contributions over a seven-year period—helping to expose one source of political opposition to the EPA's emissions proposal;
- The October release of “Out of Breath,” a report estimating that summer smog sent 4,200 Wisconsin residents to emergency rooms and triggered 150,000 asthma attacks in the state. The study was published jointly by the Clean Air Task Force, the National Environmental Trust and the state PIRGs; and
- A grassroots effort in which WISPIRG and other state PIRG staff, members and volunteers helped gather 107,000 signatures in support of comprehensive air pollution standards and presented them to EPA officials.

The loophole in clean air safeguards for SUVs and light trucks was created at a time when those vehicles were used primarily for farming. But over the last 20 years, SUV sales have

The ill effects of air pollution

Sources: U.S. EPA; Abt Associates: “Out of Breath,” report, October 1999.
Photos: Amy Wolf, Photodisk



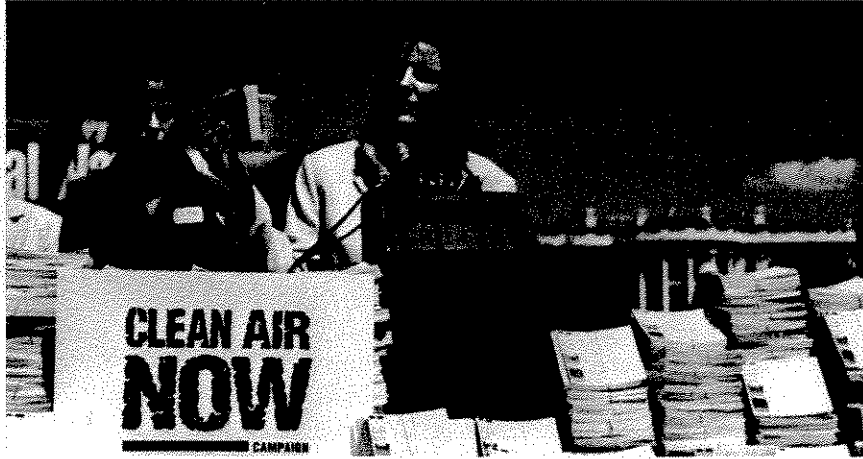
Estimated number of Americans who die prematurely each year due to health problems caused by breathing soot: **40,000**
Number of Americans living in areas affected by unhealthy smog levels: **110 million**

grown tenfold, with more than 2.8 million SUVs hitting the nation's roads in 1998.

As a result, what was once an exception for a small number of automobiles has mushroomed into an enormous loophole for vehicles that are used today mostly for daily commuting.

Wisconsin's congressional delegation to support the Clean Smokestacks Act, which was introduced with bipartisan support in October and would close the loophole.

Factory Farms And Water Pollution
In 1999, WISPIRG's environmental program expanded to include work to



Rich Trisch

Staff Attorneys Rebecca Stanfield (right) and Katherine Silverthorne called on the Clinton administration to support stronger air pollution standards for cars, SUVs, minivans and other light trucks at a news conference in front of the White House on August 2.

Cleaning Up Dirty Power Plants

In addition to fighting air pollution from automobiles, WISPIRG is targeting emissions from dirty, coal-burning power plants, which are the main culprits in the production of smog-forming nitrogen oxide.

As was the case with SUVs, minivans and light trucks, old power plants built before 1977 are allowed to emit higher amounts of pollution due to a regulatory loophole.

WISPIRG's Kerry Schumann urged

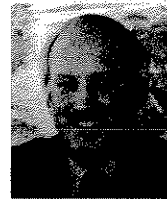
eliminate the water pollution caused by factory-style farms. In just a short time, the project's research uncovered many examples of how the excessive animal waste that is often stored in open-air pits frequently leaks into local watersheds and compromises the quality of local waterways.

WISPIRG joined with the Wisconsin Farmer's Union, Sierra Club, Catholic Conference, Wisconsin Citizen Action and others to advocate for new regulations that would prevent this type of water pollution.

Public Education

One of WISPIRG's main functions is to educate the public and shine the public spotlight on the undue influence of special interests in decision-making processes that affect our health and environment. For example:

- In October, National Lobbying Director Gene Karpinski and representatives from the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council met with Clinton administration officials and learned that the president would likely approve a rider allowing the mining industry to ignore clean water protections. Staff scientist Anna Aurilio and other staff made sure the public learned about the harmful rider by alerting the national media to the story. Their efforts resulted in stories in the New York Times and Washington Post within 72 hours of the meeting with Clinton officials. By the middle of the next week, White House staff informed Congress of the President's opposition to the rider. The rider ultimately failed to make the final federal budget bill.



Howard Ris
Executive Director
Union of Concerned Scientists

"The state PIRGs have been powerful allies in educating the public about the need to clean up pollution from power plants and cars—to keep our air healthy and curb global warming. Their extensive grassroots network provides a great vehicle for getting the facts out and mobilizing a potent political force."

Number of instances in which the U.S. EPA health standard for smog was exceeded in Wisconsin between March and November in 1999: **225**

Number of states in which the EPA's health standard for smog was exceeded in 1999: **43**



Estimated annual number of emergency room visits in Wisconsin that are caused by smog: **4,200**

Estimated annual number of asthma attacks in Wisconsin that are attributable to smog: **150,000**

MORE FEES, LESS PRIVACY

Wisconsin residents paid more in bank fees and got fewer privacy protections

WISPIRG criticized unfair bank fees and ATM double charges, documented financial privacy threats, and alerted parents to dangerous toys

WISPIRG researchers and advocates were busy at the state and national levels last year, targeting unfair bank fees, usurious lending practices, new financial reform legislation that threatens our privacy, and toys that endanger our children. Here are some of the highlights from 1999:

Big Banks, Bigger Fees

WISPIRG took a close look at rising bank fees in a report released in October.

Researchers found that consumers in Wisconsin paid an average of \$210 annually to maintain a checking account, which was slightly lower than the national average cost.

"Banking in Wisconsin costs a little less than in other states, but we still pay a lot of money to maintain a checking account," WISPIRG's Kerry Schumann said.

"Many banks are now charging consumers for services that used to be free. There are new charges such as ATM card rental fees, cancelled check fees, even fees to close accounts," she added.

ATM "Double Dipping"

One of the most egregious examples of excessive bank fees is escalating

ATM charges. Another report, released in April by National Consumer Advocate Ed Mierzwinski, documented the practice of what he calls "double dipping."

Mierzwinski found that more than 97 percent of banks charged their customers a "foreign" or "off-us" fee for using another bank's ATM. In addition, in nine out of 10 cases, the ATM owner imposed a second charge—causing customers to be charged twice for one service.

Mierzwinski also found that the largest banks charged the highest ATM fees, with banks charging their customers more than \$1.25 to use another bank's ATM, and banks charging consumers who are not account-holders with them \$1.35 to use their ATM.

The attention that Mierzwinski and others have drawn to ATM surcharges has prompted action against the practice on some state and local levels.

In 1999, WISPIRG testified in support of legislation to ban the ATM surcharge that was introduced in the state Assembly by John Lehman and in the Senate by Judy Robson.

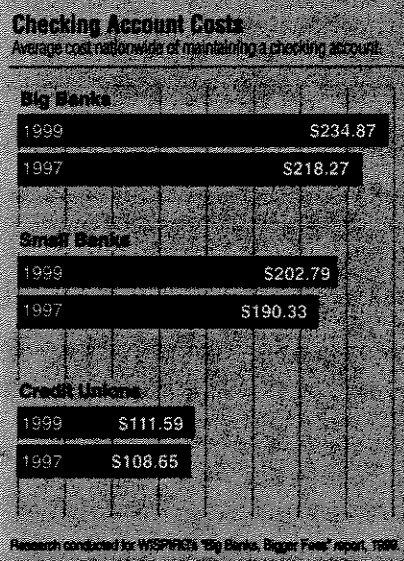
Usurious Lending Practices

WISPIRG and a coalition that included the AARP and the Center for Public Representation worked to cap the rates charged for "payday" loans—money lent to consumers who give post-dated checks as collateral.

Lenders in Wisconsin have typically charged consumers the equivalent of 500 percent annual percentage rate. WISPIRG supports a proposal to cap that rate at 26 percent.

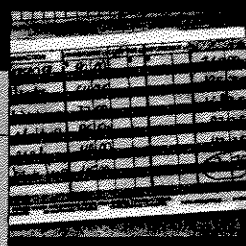
More Mergers, Less Privacy

In 1999, WISPIRG consumer advocates cast a spotlight on another abusive practice by the American financial industry—invasions of consumer privacy.



Big banks, bigger fees

Sources: WISPIRG, "Big Banks, Bigger Fees," report, 1999.
Photos: Ryan Moeckly, Corbis, ArtToday.com



Average annual cost, in dollars, of maintaining a regular checking account in the U.S. in 1999: 217
Number of Americans who cannot afford bank accounts: 12 million

Under current law, banks can share, and even sell, their customers' private financial information. Banks regularly sell their account holders' checking account numbers, credit card numbers, Social Security numbers, and other sensitive information.

President Clinton signed a new law in

In July, Mierzwinski testified before Congress, pointing out these consequences and calling on lawmakers to give consumers the right to decide whether their financial information could be shared with bank affiliates or third parties. Congress failed to make the changes proposed by Mierzwinski, but efforts to amend the law continue.

Investigative Reports

Every WISPIRG project begins with a consideration of the facts. Staff researchers review data collected by government or non-profit groups, analyze data in ways that may lead to new conclusions, or conduct independent investigations. For example:

- WISPIRG's "Green Scissors 2000" report documented federal lawmakers' reluctance to cut "polluter pork"—federal subsidies to wasteful and environmentally destructive projects. The report found that in 1999, the U.S. House of Representatives took advantage of only four of 11 opportunities to cut programs that the state PIRGs and other pro-environment and taxpayer groups identified as polluter pork. Researchers, including Staff Attorney Lexi Shultz, uncovered several new wasteful programs in 1999, such as \$405 million slated for the unnecessary widening of backcountry roads in national forests.



National Consumer Advocate Ed Mierzwinski appeared on CNN's Crossfire to advocate against banks' practices of charging consumers twice for one ATM transaction.

November that is likely to compromise consumers' privacy even further. The Financial Modernization Law allows banks, insurance companies and stock brokerages to merge, making it easier for banks to share private financial information within their different divisions.

"These newly merged firms will develop huge databases of information about their customers, and have the legal right to swap and share that information in order to sell other products—even if the customer doesn't want them to," Mierzwinski said.

Dangerous Toys

In the state PIRGs' 14th-annual toy safety survey, released in late November, WISPIRG and other state PIRG staff identified 34 toys on store shelves that pose serious risks to children. At least 17 of the toys were cited for choking hazards. Choking is the chief cause of toy-related deaths among infants and toddlers in the U.S. The survey prompted manufacturers to modify two toys, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to send letters to eight manufacturers alerting them to potential health hazards posed by their toys.



Bill Oemichen
Administrator,
Wisconsin Department
of Agriculture, Trade
and Consumer
Protection

"For the past two years, we have worked closely with WISPIRG in identifying dangerous toys and warning the public about them. We salute WISPIRG in its efforts to protect children from injury."

Percentage of banks that charge customers an ATM surcharge on top of a fee already charged for using another bank's machine: **90**

Average amount, in dollars, that consumers pay per ATM transaction at machines not owned by their own bank: **2.57**



Total amount of profits U.S. banks recorded in 1998: **\$62 billion**

Number of consecutive years that U.S. banks have made record profits (through 1998): **8**

EASING STUDENT LOAN BURDENS

Congress reduced fees on federal student loans and increased Pell Grant funding

WISPIRG lobbying efforts helped persuade federal lawmakers to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in education costs for the nation's college students

In 1999, the cost of higher education continued to soar while Congress did little to help the millions of students who pursue the dream of a college education but, as a result, find themselves caught in a nightmare of debt.

Working to find relief for students, WISPIRG staffers based at the organization's national lobbying office in Washington, D.C., helped win a fee reduction on loans in the direct student loan program and exposed a budget rider backed by Sallie Mae, the largest private student loan company, that would have provided a huge break to lenders while doing nothing to ease students' debt burdens.

During the spring, advocate Ivan Frishberg helped persuade U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley to reduce the fees on direct student loans, saving students hundreds of millions of dollars.

Later in the year, private lenders such as USA Group urged Congress to cancel the fee reduction and stop the Department of Education from making further reductions.

But Frishberg, working with the U.S. Student Association, successfully lobbied Congress to reject the proposal

by lenders and protect the 25 percent reduction in student loan fees.

Frishberg, along with other members of a federal study group appointed to examine subsidies to the loan industry, also drew attention to a budget rider that would provide a huge increase in federal funds for Sallie Mae.

The Department of Treasury estimated that the rider would increase the value of Sallie Mae's federal subsidy by \$600 million—which may have explained why the lender spent over \$2

million on lobbying and political contributions in the year prior to the rider's introduction.

Despite WISPIRG's efforts to cast a spotlight on the rider, Congress passed it as an attachment to an unrelated bill, thereby giving Sallie Mae money that could have gone toward student loans or other financial aid.

More Grant Aid

WISPIRG staff helped win increased federal grant funding for college students, when Congress approved an additional \$757 million in 1999 for Pell Grants, Educational Opportunity Grants and work study programs.

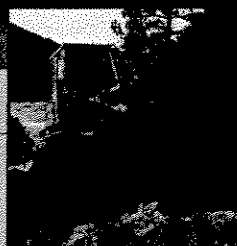


Higher Education Policy Associate Sanjeev Bery testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Oct. 6 in support of legislation to crack down on fraudulent scholarship services, that promise, but never deliver, new sources of financial aid in return for larger fees.

Our imperiled national forests

Sources: Heritage Forests Campaign; U.S. Forest Service.

Photos: Index Stock Photography, M. Vaslevic-NC Forest Exp. Station, ArtToday.com



Miles of existing roads in America's national forests: **383,000**

Miles of existing road in America's interstate highway system: **48,000**

A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

President Clinton proposed a plan that could save 60 million acres of national forests

The plan was announced after staff attorney Kim Delfino continued to shine the spotlight on practices that waste tax dollars and destroy our natural heritage

On Oct. 13, President Clinton announced a plan that could result in permanent protection for as many as 60 million acres of America's national forests—including an estimated 74,000 acres of Wisconsin's Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

While the president left it to the U.S. Forest Service to work out the details, his plan represented an important first step in what could be the most significant land preservation act in the nation's history.

The president made his decision despite fierce opposition from lobbyists for the timber industry—a testament to the work of the state PIRGs' Kim Delfino, Adam Ruben and Aaron Viles, as well as their allies, including the Heritage Forests Campaign, the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society.

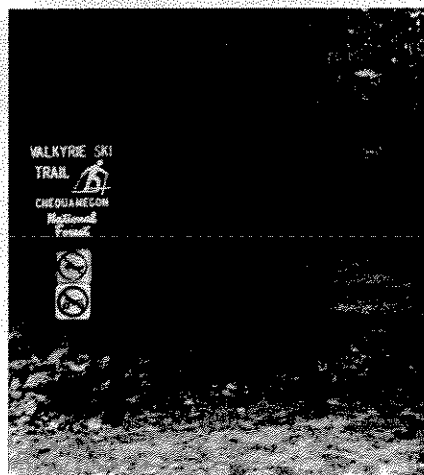
Campaign for Protection

State PIRG staffers led a campaign that helped convince the president to back a strong forest protection plan. Among the highlights of that campaign:

- In June, the organization's report "Public Loss, Private Gain" documented political influence-peddling

by the eight largest beneficiaries of current timber-cutting practices on National Forest land. The investigation found that these firms, including Boise-Cascade and International Paper, have contributed \$5.8 million to congressional campaigns, and spent another \$22.5 million on Washington lobbyists between 1993 and 1998.

- By the end of the year, more than 500,000 citizens had stated their support for preservation to the Clinton administration—with 175,000 of those messages from citizens contacted by WISPIRG and other state PIRG staff.



Parts of Wisconsin's Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest would be permanent protected from development under the president's proposal.

National Lobbying Office

In addition to our work at the state and local levels, WISPIRG addresses problems that affect Wisconsin residents but cross state and national boundaries—like global warming—as well as issues that fall under federal jurisdiction—like national forests, federal higher education grant funding, and congressional campaign finance reform.

In 1983, WISPIRG and other state PIRGs across the country formed a national lobbying partnership to address these kinds of issues. Based in Washington, D.C., our national staff lobby federal officials, conduct outreach to national media, and help coordinate the state PIRGs' research and advocacy on federal issues.



Carl Zichella
Midwest Regional
Staff Director,
Sierra Club

"It's really great working with people as dedicated as those in WISPIRG. WISPIRG is effectively working to protect our national forests. The reports they researched and released this year documented the need for stronger forest protections, while their work mobilizing Wisconsin citizens contributed to the overwhelming public support for protecting these unique national treasures."

Percentage of America's ancient or "old-growth" forest that remains standing: **4**

Percentage of national forest land that is protected from logging or development: **18**

Percentage of national forest land that is already developed or logged: **51**

Amount lost by the federal government to below-cost timber sales between 1995 and 1998: **\$1.7 billion**

THE SOFT MONEY STONEWALL

Campaign reform was blocked again, as Congress considered raising contribution limits

The research and advocacy efforts of staffer Derek Cressman helped prevent Congress from increasing the role of big money in politics

Is it worth it to raise limits on individual federal campaign contributions in return for restrictions on currently unregulated donations to political parties—commonly known as “soft money”?

In 1999, Sens. Chuck Hagel and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska—along with other senators—argued the answer was yes, offering a proposal to raise the individual contribution limit for candidates to federal office from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Derek Cressman, who heads the Democracy Program in WISPIRG's national lobbying office in Washington, D.C., sharply criticized the idea.

“Increasing the amount wealthy individuals can give to candidates is not reform,” he said. “Amendments to raise contribution limits are anti-reform: they would bring more big money into politics and further decrease the role of ordinary citizens.”

Thanks in part to Cressman's lobbying and research efforts, the House of Representatives voted down an amendment that would have tripled individual contribution limits.

However, the Senate leadership is likely to continue pushing similar pro-

posals to raise contribution limits, Cressman said.

Report Looks At Spending

To illustrate the effects of raising contribution limits, Cressman issued a report in July that found that the move would result in an even greater percentage of campaign money coming from wealthy donors.

The report also refuted arguments that increasing the limit would enable candidates to spend less time fund-rais-

ing and would result in lower incumbent re-election rates.

Cressman's research showed that since 1974, campaign spending by political candidates has escalated at a rate 50 percent greater than inflation and 2.3 times faster than wages for ordinary Americans.

Worse still, Cressman found that political action committees (PACs) and industries that contribute the largest sums to candidates are more likely to receive favorable votes from the lawmakers they support.



Rick Trisch

Democracy Advocate Derek Cressman speaks on the steps of the U.S. House of Representatives. “This has become the House of Unrepresentatives,” Cressman said, citing the influence of special interest money over the public's best interest, and calling on Congress to pass campaign finance reform laws.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Charts reflect combined financial information for WISPIRG's citizen outreach programs, WISPIRG Foundation, and Wisconsin Student Public Interest Research Group.

Foundation Support

The WISPIRG Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, conducts research and public education on emerging public interest issues. Contributions to the WISPIRG Foundation are tax-deductible.

The following foundation has offered its support to the WISPIRG Foundation. To find out more, contact Kerry Schumann by phone at 608-251-1918 or by email at wispirg@pirg.org.

Consumer Federation of America Foundation

WISPIRG SUPPORTERS

WISPIRG and the WISPIRG Foundation enjoyed broad support in 1999

CITIZEN SUPPORT

Citizen support is the cornerstone of WISPIRG and the WISPIRG Foundation. Thousands of Wisconsin citizens supported WISPIRG by making membership contributions in 1999. The following citizens were particularly generous in backing the organization's research and advocacy.



Names that appear in italics denote WISPIRG PUBLIC INTEREST PARTNERS, who provide stability to the organization's resources through our monthly giving program.

Sponsors

Sponsors supported WISPIRG with contributions of \$250 or more.

Kathleen Burchby • Margaret Cousin • Mark Davis • William Forbes • Lemuel A. Fraser • Judith Haf • Jeremy Hecht • Anna Hill • Dorothy Holtz • Nancy and Anthony Hyibert • John Knudson • Karen Konwent • Mary Kopac • Seth Lerner • Sue and Art Lloyd • Charles McCarthy • Brent McCown • Cheri McIntosh • Don McKenzie • Marshall Meier II • Bonnie Normington • Eric Plantenberg • Tom Raily • Jean Rowley • Mark Sager • Winifred Sartoris • Margaret Schoeninger • Roger Seip • Mary Shanesy • Thomas Woodford

Century Donors

Century Donors supported WISPIRG with contributions of \$100 to \$249.

George Adams • Jeffrey Ahrens • Nicole K. Anderson • Paula Anderson • Kathy A. Andes • Candye Andrus • Marshall Arne • Jill Aruguete-Siewe • David Austin • Margaret Babcock • Margaret Banchy • Bradley Barbian • Thomas Bartell • Clint Beaver • Bruce Beck • Diana Beck • Robert Becker • Karolyn Beebe • Robert &

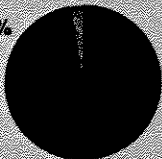
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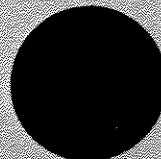
FY99 Income

- Citizen Contributions 57%
- Student Chapters 37%
- Foundation Grants 3%
- Other 3%



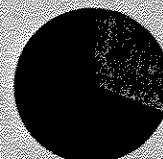
FY99 Expenses

- Program 77%
- Fundraising 13%
- Administration 10%



FY99 Program Expenses

- Clean Air 31%
- Environmental Defense: Superfund 26%
- Clean Water 12%
- Preservation 12%
- Toxics & Other Environmental Issues 11%
- Consumer Protection & Other Non-Environmental Issues 6%



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WISCONSIN'S ENVIRONMENTAL DECADE

TO: The Senate Committee on Environmental Resources

FROM: Rich Bogovich, climate change specialist

DATE: May 10, 2001

RE: Endorsing SJR 32

Other representatives of the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate Change Campaign were unable to attend the hearing, so they have authorized me, as a member of the campaign's steering committee, to testify on their behalf as well as on behalf of Wisconsin's Environmental Decade. The statement signed by Methodist Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, Lutheran Bishop Peter Rogness, and seven other Wisconsin religious leaders on April 4, expressing profound disappointment in the President's position on global warming and the Kyoto Protocol, is certainly consistent with Senate Joint Resolution 32.

The main point I would like to make regarding SJR 32 is that there is a significant minority within Republican ranks, if not a majority, that disagrees with President Bush on several of the issues mentioned in the resolution. There are clear examples of Republicans in Congress rebuffing the President on environmental issues so early in his tenure.

I would like to address several provisions of the joint resolution directly:

1. the provision relating to oil drilling in sensitive public lands such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

President Bush's budget request assumed \$1.2 billion in new revenues from drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. However, on March 16 a number of House members, including thirteen Republicans, signed a letter to House Budget Committee chairman James Nussle strongly urging him "to reject the President's request to assume revenues from drilling activity that is prohibited under current law and widely opposed throughout America." One paragraph of this letter read:

Because of the unique nature of this natural treasure, Congress in 1980 prohibited oil and gas exploration or production on the coastal plain of the Refuge. Repealing these protections is opposed by millions of Americans and by many Members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans. Because of this widespread opposition, we believe it would be imprudent to assume any new revenues from this source at this time. When you consider the environmental values at stake in this extraordinary wilderness area, we believe it would also be a mistake to do so.

The next day a group called Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP America), which counts Congressmen Christopher Shays and Rob Simmons of Connecticut and James Walsh



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of New York among its members, sent a letter to all Republican Senators and Representatives that stated in part, "The American people deserve and need a real national energy policy. We deserve and need natural treasures like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We can have both. The answer lies in a national energy policy whose cornerstones are efficiency, conservation and the energy technologies of bountiful alternative fuels; and not a short-sighted, pointless and politically damaging fight over risking harm to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

A few days later, the committee jettisoned this provision of President Bush's budget.

It will come as no surprise that Wisconsin's Environmental Decade agrees that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a treasure, but drilling there can be rejected on the basis of dispassionate data alone. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, oil from the refuge could not be brought to market in the Lower 48 states for seven to twelve years, and the supply that is "economically recoverable" would last only about 140 days. White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer has maintained this week that there are no quick fixes to the current jump in gasoline prices, but here is one small one: Reinstate the ban on exporting oil that was lifted in 1995. According to the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration, in 1999 the U.S. *exported* about 339 million barrels of oil, more than *triple* the 104 million barrels per year that could be produced from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge starting in 2009.

2. the two provisions relating to greenhouse gases and the Kyoto treaty to reduce global warming

The Washington Post reported that on April 6 the U.S. Senate approved a bipartisan amendment to restore \$4.5 billion in funding for global warming programs that the Bush administration had sought to cut. The amendment was offered by Senators John Kerry (D-Massachusetts) and James Jeffords (R-Vermont) and sponsored by eleven other Senators, including Susan Collins (R-Maine). Along with the wide variety of international and domestic programs the amendment would fund it would also provide additional authority to the State Department "to fully engage with the international community in on-going and highly complex negotiations" toward a global warming treaty. There were no dissenting comments before the Senate approved this amendment on a voice vote.

Later in April three Republicans in the House, Frank LoBiondo of New Jersey and Felix Grucci and John Walsh of New York, added their names as sponsors of the Clean Smokestacks Act (H.R. 1256), a four pollutant bill that would return carbon dioxide emissions from power plants to 1990 levels. That raises the total of Republican sponsors to eleven so far. The bill is being spearheaded by Reps. Henry Waxman (D-California) and Sherwood Boehlert (R-New York). On March 15, just after President Bush reversed a campaign pledge consistent with this bill, Boehlert had said, "I told the White House I agree 100 percent with Bush - candidate Bush." He also said he was "profoundly disappointed" in the President, language echoed by the religious leaders.

The most significant signal from the House occurred just **yesterday**. Congressman Robert Menendez (D-NJ) won adoption of an amendment to H.R. 1646, the Foreign Relations Authorizations Act, calling for domestic reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and for a resumption of efforts to complete negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol in a way that ensures its environmental integrity. Word is that this amendment is not going to be contested on the House floor when the bill comes up this week, meaning that the amendment will remain in the bill.

There is a good chance that some or all of these Republicans have been influenced by President Bush's Treasury Secretary, Paul O'Neill, former CEO of Alcoa. In the March 8th *Wall Street Journal* it was noted that at the first meeting of President Bush's cabinet O'Neill distributed copies of a 1998 speech he made to a trade association in which he criticized the Kyoto Protocol--not for being too tough but rather for being too timid! "I believe the real danger to civilization," he said, "is that, as a consequence of this 'brilliant' political process, we don't do anything for 10 years. That would not be a good idea."

Members of Wisconsin's congressional delegation haven't been too vocal on this issue, but there are positive signs. Most notably, on February 22 Congressman Paul Ryan held a press conference at his Janesville office to endorse the work of the Wisconsin State Public Interest Research Group, Friends of the Earth and Taxpayers for Common Sense on this year's "Green Scissors" report. Among the comments that the *Janesville Gazette* reported was:

"Since 1984 the government has spent \$2 billion on clean coal technology looking for cheaper ways for reducing pollution," Ryan said. "But we still have subsidies going to fuel companies and still use the most polluting fossil fuel."

Noting the \$225 million for Coal and Oil Research and Development programs, Ryan explained that many are duplicates of other federal programs, add to air pollution and global warming and subsidize research into continued production of dirty fossil fuel, while benefiting for-profit corporations.

Such statements may not be the result of constituent pressure alone. Business leaders have shown increasing willingness to accept the regulation of carbon dioxide. For example, in the December 11th issue of *Business Week*, Paul Raeburn, senior editor for science and technology, bemoaned the failure of last fall's Kyoto negotiations and said, "Unilateral efforts to limit emissions of the so-called greenhouse gases that cause global warming could quickly aid the U.S. economy, by encouraging a more efficient energy system." In addition, the respected British periodical *The Economist*, made the following observation in its April 5th edition: "Many of America's biggest businesses, ranging from DuPont to United Technologies, and even to coal-fired utilities like AEP, support action on climate change and want regulatory certainty on the question of carbon. Those are the sorts of voices that Mr. Bush should heed."

3. the provision relating to the budget proposal to slash energy efficiency and renewable energy research spending by one-third

That same *Economist* editorial stated: "Claims by Mr. Bush that America's 'energy crisis' prevents it from taking action to curb emissions are bogus. There is no energy crisis in America, just a botched deregulation of electricity in California."

If President Bush truly believes that there is a nationwide "energy crisis," then attempting to undercut efficiency is a contradictory action. Power plants, like the city of Rome, can't be built in a day, but energy efficiency and conservation measures are available immediately and often pay for themselves quickly. As Governor Tommy Thompson noted in an October 1997 proclamation, "energy efficiency is a win-win effort that increases the competitive advantage of Wisconsin firms...". Even more astutely, in that proclamation he also stated that "wise energy use is more important now than ever before because scientists agree that there is a discernable human influence on global climate, much of that influence the result of burning fossil fuels...".

Wisconsin Religious Leader's Statement on Global Warming

As people of faith committed to justice, protection of creation, and strong US leadership in the world, we are deeply troubled by President Bush's decision to abandon the Kyoto Protocol, the international global climate change treaty that is the only current mechanism to seriously address global warming. We are also profoundly disappointed that President Bush has broken the promise he made during his campaign to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas – from power plants. We are concerned that the emerging energy policy of the Administration does not address the central energy challenge of our time: that our reliance on fossil fuels threatens grave harm to humankind and creation.

We view climate change as a religious and moral issue. Global warming violates God's creation and our responsibility to protect and restore creation. Global warming afflicts God's children, both those living and future generations. We are particularly called by our Biblical traditions to seek justice for the vulnerable, and it is the vulnerable, in our own societies and others, who will suffer the most from rising seas, extreme weather, agricultural disruptions, and migrating diseases – all of which are likely to happen if we do not rapidly address our greenhouse gas emissions. With less than five percent of the world's population, we in the US produce 22 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. We, the richest nation on Earth, are disproportionately responsible for global warming, and it is the world's poorest nations and people who will disproportionately suffer the consequences. As people of faith, we call on the US to take action and provide leadership. And as people of faith we stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable around the world. Only after we in the US have taken action can we expect developing nations to do so.

Alongside faith leaders at the national level and in more than 20 states, we have been working with a broad diversity of Jewish and Christian denominations to address climate change. Churches and synagogues are undertaking energy audits and implementing energy efficiency measures, as are congregants in their own homes. Congregations and religious schools are teaching their congregants and young people about the moral and religious dimensions of climate change. We are working together to advance action by governments on all levels, and particularly the federal government, to address this urgent challenge swiftly and effectively.

The changes in policy and technology that will address the challenge of global warming would also benefit the US in other ways. Energy conservation, including raising fuel economy standards and new technologies are good for consumers and good for the economy. Fuel efficient cars and energy efficient appliances save consumers and businesses money – and they, along with clean energy technologies, are highly marketable around the world. Indeed, there are no significant downsides to an energy policy focused on conservation and new, cleaner technologies. Public health will benefit. The environment will benefit. Consumers will benefit. Innovative businesses will benefit – that is why foresighted oil and auto companies are advocating the development of a clean energy technologies. National security will be enhanced.

We now understand what the President and Administration will not be doing to address global warming. And we know that the major focus of the emerging energy policy of the Administration as articulated to date is on increasing the supply of oil. We ask, therefore,

how will we as a nation fulfill our obligation to our own children, to our neighbors and people around the world, to other species, and to our Creator to prevent harm, preserve creation, and pursue justice?

Signatures

- Sr. Michelle Balek, OSF, North America Region Coordinator, Franciscans International
- Rev. Philip C. Brown, Executive Presbyter, The Presbytery of Milwaukee
- Rev. Dr. Jerry L. Folk, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Churches.
- Mr. Jack Murtaugh, Executive Director, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee
- Rev. Gail O'Neal, Associate Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ
- Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, Wisconsin Conference, United Methodist Church
- The Rev. Peter Rogness, Bishop, Greater Milwaukee Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Rev. Dr. Dave Steffenson, Staff Coordinator, Wisconsin Interfaith Climate Change Campaign.
- Rev. Aden Ward, Policy Board Chair, Wisconsin Interfaith IMPACT

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