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Red, White, Blue, and Green: Politics and the Environment in the 2004 Environment

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**YALE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
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Foreword

James Gustave Speth

Dean, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

June 29, 2004

At the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies we seek to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders by introducing students to all the scientific and policy complexity of modern environmental issues and, in so doing, to empower them to facilitate change. One of the most pressing issues we face today is how to address these concerns while other issues, such as terrorism, dominate the political stage. The environment has become too low a priority in the United States, and our political discourse on the environment has become impoverished.

So it was especially heartening to see two students at our school, Heather Kaplan and Kathleen Campbell, move swiftly into these troubled waters by initiating a graduate-level course and lecture series to address the critical issue of the role of the environment in our national politics, especially during this election year. The course, conducted with faculty collaborators Jim Lyons and Fred Strebeigh, brought an extraordinary series of guest lecturers to the school during the spring of 2004. Their presentations are skillfully edited here and make compelling, timely reading.

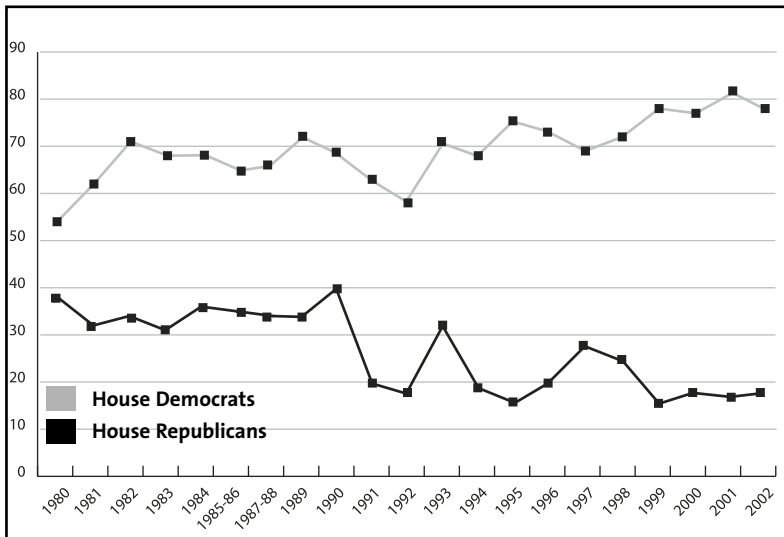
Many of the authors in this book – Republicans and Democrats – explain that the environmental community needs to take a new approach in communicating its issues to the general public. Voters will start to respond, they say, if they can understand how local and regional environmental issues tie into national and even global agendas. Global climate change, for example, occurs in local places. Groups like the League of Conservation Voters are now taking this strategy seriously, sending activists to swing states all over the country to talk to voters about these connections.

To my way of thinking, we have got to close two gaps. One is the growing gap between Republicans and Democrats on these issues. The other is the gap between the public's demand for more environmental

protection and the failure of our politics to deliver it. Clearly, these gaps are related.

When one looks at the voting record of the two parties in Congress, the divide between the parties on the environment could hardly be wider (See Figure 1). This is not a healthy situation, however it came about.

Figure 1 Average LCV Environmental Ratings



It wasn't always this way. The halcyon days of American environmentalism were the 1970s. Beginning with the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act under President Nixon and culminating in President Carter's protection of Alaskan lands, it was a bipartisan era, with Democrats such as Ed Muskie joining with Republicans such as Howard Baker to compile an unmatched record of tough environmental legislation.

Within a short span of a few years in the early 1970s — with a Republican president and Republican leaders such as Russell Train, Bill Ruckelshaus, and Russell Peterson — the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council of Environmental Quality were created, and a handful of major laws such as the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act began to take effect.

It is a fact of profound importance that America's period of maximum progress on the environment was a period of bipartisanship.

The second gap comes out clearly in a recent poll of American public opinion sponsored by our school. Conducted in May 2004 by a leading polling firm, the poll found that:

- Nearly three out of five Americans (59 percent) rate the quality of the country's environment overall as "only fair" or "poor," while just 3 percent say America's environment is "excellent."
- Just 16 percent say that the quality of the environment in the U.S. is getting better, while 50 percent say it is getting worse.
- Three-fourths rank global conditions as "only fair" or "poor," and 63 percent say conditions are getting worse.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans say the U.S. government does not do enough about the environment and should do more.
- Eighty-four percent believe the U.S. should enact stricter standards for business and industry. This reflects substantial majorities of Democrats (92 percent), Independents (90 percent) and Republicans (68 percent).

Further, a majority of Americans want more discussion of the environment in the ongoing presidential campaign and say that the environment will be a factor in their votes. Clearly there is a gap between what American citizens want on the environment and what our political system is delivering.

In many ways, these two gaps are linked, for surely the partisan divide is undermining major progress in addressing environmental threats. How then do we close them? Read on, for the chapters that follow contribute very usefully to the answer.

Introduction

Heather S. Kaplan, MEM '04 and Kathleen E. Campbell, MEd '04
Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

As students, we continually hear that the future of the environment and the environmental movement is in our hands. We are told that we must help solve a series of complex environmental problems – including climate change, energy consumption, water scarcity, toxic contamination, air pollution, sprawl, and the accelerated loss of plant and animal species – where local, daily decisions can have global, long-term implications. We are challenged to devise innovative strategies to build coalitions and educate businesses, communities, and governments about environmental issues and the need to take action. We are reminded that the last generation of environmentalists didn't make sufficient progress addressing some of these more intricate environmental problems. We are cautioned that if we don't act now our children and our children's children will pay the price.

Stepping up to the challenge of educating the public about the significant environmental issues that lie ahead and inciting action is not an easy mandate. In fact, at times, we find the challenge almost insurmountable. Issues such as those outlined above aren't going to solve themselves; indeed, the solutions are long-term, and will require local, national, and global coordinated efforts to address them effectively. But clearly, our generation must rise to the challenge if the future of our planet and its inhabitants is to improve. As the Jewish philosopher Hillel once said: "If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? *And if not now, when?*"

In working toward a cleaner, brighter and more sustainable future, one avenue that environmentalists rarely employ as a means of promoting change is politics. Even among our fellow students, we have observed a sense of indifference toward the political process and a profound skepticism as to whether our political leaders can help facilitate positive change. Although engaged in environmental science, policy, and advocacy, many young environmentalists are fed up with what they see as a government that values corporate interests over social and environmental concerns, and many have lost the motivation to even exercise their right to vote.

How did this happen? How is it that this generation of environmentalists, in contrast to the generation before us that helped shape many of our environmental laws and policies, has come to view politics with indifference and even disdain?

In light of this trend, it seems appropriate to ask some hard questions about politics and the environment:

- How has this gap between the public, politics, and the environment emerged?
- Do politicians and politics affect the environment in ways that warrant change?
- Will environmental issues affect the upcoming presidential election and can the election serve as a means to change current environmental policies?
- How can we get involved?

To investigate these questions, we decided to convene a seminar series to engage our speakers and our fellow students in a focused conversation regarding these issues. We decided to compile this book to expand that conversation, to share with others the lessons we learned from the dialogue, and to encourage those involved in the political process – and those who are not yet engaged – to see how the future of our environment might be shaped by the 2004 presidential election.

REFLECTING ON POLLING DATA: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

As we began to plan this series and the book to follow, one of the first – and arguably most important – questions became: what is the present state of public opinion on environmental issues in U.S. politics, and how are these issues playing out in the 2004 presidential race? After reviewing piles of polling data, we recognized that the American public cares about the environment – polls routinely find that more than 70 percent of Americans consider themselves environmentalists.¹

¹ In a May 2004 poll conducted by the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, 73 percent of respondents rated the environment as the “most important” or “very important” issue to them personally. Again, in an April 2004 poll conducted by The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land, 73 percent of respondents considered themselves “environmentalists.”

However, only one percent of voters continually cite the environment as the principal issue in their voting decisions.²

These two sets of statistics seem to paint a contradictory picture of environmental issues in American politics. Americans clearly want clean air, clean water, and wild places. But since they aren't necessarily deciding whom to vote for based on the candidates' environmental records, what is it that is affecting their voting behavior? The obvious answer is that Americans care more about other pressing concerns such as jobs, national security, health care, or education. We, however, weren't willing to accept such a ready response. We wanted to further explore ways that environmental issues – about which many Americans care deeply – factor into voting decisions, even if they are not the primary determinants of voting behavior.

THE GREAT DIVIDE: ENVIRONMENT AS A PARTISAN ISSUE

One thing is certain when analyzing the role of the environment in U.S. politics today: for the most part, the public perceives the environment as a Democratic issue. Many contributors to our project point out, however, that this wasn't always the case.

From our perspective, this partisan divide is detrimental to our political system and unhealthy for the future of the environmental movement. If the environmental community intends to move forward in strengthening our environmental protections, they must do so through a non-partisan commitment to address them. After all, many of the laws and policies that provide the foundation for protecting our environment today were forged in this manner – with a Democratic Congress and a Republican president, Richard Nixon, leading the effort.

The current political cooperation between environmentalists and Democrats raised several important questions in our minds:

- Why have Republicans largely relinquished their association with environmental concerns?

² On February 23, 2003, when asked by Fox News “What do you think are the two most important issues for the federal government to address?” only one percent identified the environment as being in the top two priorities, ranking below 13 other national issues. Again, when asked the same question in a Harris Interactive poll administered on February 12, 2003, only one percent identified the environment as a key issue.

- Have environmentalists alienated the Republican Party, or have Republicans themselves turned away from environmental problems?
- What can be done to encourage a return to the non-partisan approach to dealing with environmental issues that led to the environmental progress of the late 1960s and early 1970s?

Our intention in asking these questions extends beyond the 2004 presidential election; rather, our ultimate goal is to better understand the future role of the environment in U.S. politics.

DEVISING A NEW STRATEGY

Environmentalists have struggled in recent years to reach new constituents and to motivate these individuals to take political action. Throughout this book, our contributors seek to understand how we should better communicate environmental issues to the voters that “count” (i.e., those enigmatic swing voters that each party is trying to influence during this election year). Should our political strategy be focused on promoting “the environment” as broadly defined, or should it focus on specific environmental issues or messages that impact people’s day-to-day lives? Are national political strategies more important than local or regional political engagement? How do swing voters perceive the environmental movement? Although each speaker presented a broad range of responses to these questions, several overarching themes emerged that are highlighted in the book’s final chapter.

BOOK PARTICIPANTS

We invited a diverse group of individuals, representing both Republican and Democratic perspectives, and a wide array of experiences and disciplines, to participate in our project. They were asked to provide historical and current perspectives on the role of the environment in U.S. politics, and to explain, in their own words, the interplay between the environment and politics, especially as it might affect the 2004 presidential election. We hoped to learn from their experiences, to gain from their insights, and to share in their successes and failures as we attempted to address the questions before us.

The insights and experiences of former elected officials, political appointees, and strategic thinkers are essential in exploring the issue of politics and the environment. Our series began with an overview by Daniel R. Glickman, a former Democratic member of Congress, Secretary of Agriculture under President Clinton, and, at the time of his lecture, Director of the Harvard Institute of Politics. Congressman Christopher Shays, a Republican member of the House of Representatives, offered his current perspectives on the state of environmental politics on Capitol Hill, and Chris Henick, former Deputy Assistant to President George W. Bush, provided an insider's perspective on the Bush administration's environmental record. An historical perspective on the role of an administrative branch executive in the Nixon and Ford administrations was offered by Nathaniel P. Reed, former Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks in the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Additionally, we were pleased to benefit from the insights of John Podesta, former Chief of Staff to President Clinton. In fact, it was John Podesta who offered one of the more provocative observations of the seminar series when he responded to a question about the 2000 presidential election by noting that the environment may have cost Al Gore the 2000 election. This observation sparked much discussion and subsequent debate. Of course, it also helped to set the stage for former Vice President Al Gore's later participation in the series.

No political analysis or strategic political thinking is complete without the participation of pollsters. Pollsters observe general patterns in voter behavior, analyze why voters make the decisions they do, and distill the messages and strategies that work. We invited Democratic and Republican pollsters to explain how the environment is affecting the 2004 election and to highlight the key environmental messages that resonate with voters. The two pollsters included Chris Marshall, Senior Analyst at the Mellman Group (the primary polling agency for John Kerry's presidential campaign), and Kellyanne Conway, CEO and President of the polling company, inc./WomanTrend, who works primarily with Republican candidates.

Much of America learns about environmental issues by reading a news article or listening to a local environmental story on the evening news. The media exerts rare power over our perceptions of people, places, and the issues they represent. In this way, the media strongly influences what we know and how much we understand. We invited

two environmental journalists, Eric Pianin from the *Washington Post*, and Elizabeth Shogren from the *Los Angeles Times*, to explain their roles as environmental reporters at major national newspapers. We also invited Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Robert B. Semple, Jr. to discuss his extensive experience writing about environmental issues as a Senior Editor at the *New York Times*.

Nonprofit political advocacy groups play an instrumental role in the way environmental issues play out in the political sphere. They organize and motivate the grassroots, bolster support for candidates with strong environmental records, and advocate on behalf of strong environmental policies. They are the lifeblood of the environmental movement. Deb Callahan, President of the League of Conservation Voters, was invited to discuss the on-the-ground, grassroots political activities that are dominating the environmental strategy in the 2004 election. Jim DiPeso, Policy Director of Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP America), was asked to discuss his role as an environmental advocate and a stalwart Republican. Finally, Robert Kennedy Jr., the President of Waterkeeper Alliance, Chief Prosecuting Attorney at Riverkeeper, and Senior Attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council, closed the series with a sharp critique of the Bush administration's environmental policies and a vision for the future of environmental politics.

Every speaker in the lecture series has a chapter in our book. Their talks were edited to highlight their major points and the most interesting of their interactions with students in the course are included in a Q & A section at the end of each chapter. Together, we believe these edited talks and Q & A sessions give the reader the full picture of what was presented in the series, as well as offering the insights and reflections of the organizers of the course in this introduction and the book's conclusion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would first like to thank Gus Speth, Dean of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, for his support of our series and his undying support to all of the noble activities that students undertake at F&ES. Gus is more than a dean – he is an inspiration.

Jane Coppock, Editor of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies Publication Series, is the editor that just won't quit. We are eternally grateful for her support. She was the glue that kept us together, and encouraged us to make our vision a reality. This book would not have been printed without her dedication.

Hahn Ning-Chou was also critical to the success of this book. Without his video expertise, patience, and dedication we wouldn't have been able to chronicle the series and transcribe these insightful talks.

The lecture series would not have been possible without the financial support of several on-campus funds, including the Poynter Fellowship in Journalism, the Harvard College Fund, the Trumbull College Fund, and the Bromley College Fund. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s talk was co-sponsored by the Yale Environmental Law Association. Thank you to Jill Van Berg, President of YELA, for making that event possible.

Thanks also to Jim Lyons for helping to organize and arrange speakers for this seminar and for his financial support of the series.

The contributors to this volume – the speakers in our lecture series at Yale – deserve our utmost thanks. They accepted our invitation with great generosity. Not one asked for an honorarium. We are deeply in their debt and honored that, through this book, they have allowed us to share their insights and ideas with people far beyond our classroom at Yale. They have given us, and we hope you, a measure of hope for the future of environmental politics in America.

Politics and the Environment in the U.S.: An Introduction

Daniel R. Glickman¹

Director, Institute of Politics, Harvard University
Secretary of Agriculture, Clinton Administration

January 22, 2004

I'm going to start by talking about politics in general for a moment. I ran for Congress ten times, won nine times, and lost the last time. Then, as they say, "One door closes and another door opens." I became Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) with responsibility for farm programs, the Forest Service, the federal nutrition program, food stamps, school lunch, school breakfast, meat inspection, poultry inspection and all sorts of things. But my heart has always been in politics. I am now Director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard, a program that was established by the Kennedy family after John F. Kennedy died. The Institute aims to inspire young people – both at Harvard and around the country – to pursue politics and public service. We encourage people to understand that the political system is relevant to their lives. Whether they run for office or not, we want them to see that they can, in fact, have a role in changing the world, that it does make a difference, and that they should become engaged in the political process.

This upcoming presidential election will be very hard fought and will be very close. The country is split 50-50 – in terms of population, demographics, and the electoral college. So any issue – whether it's environment, health care, taxes, or foreign policy – may be critical in influencing this presidential election because it will be *that* close. The public is *that* divided. The Congress is *that* divided.

Today we're talking about an issue that the polls indicate is not the highest priority issue in people's minds. However, selectively and on a targeted basis, I believe that environmental issues will be very significant in certain key states and among certain constituencies.

¹ Mr. Glickman was recently named the President and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCES AT USDA

At USDA I had some involvement in environmental issues while running the Forest Service. I addressed issues such as farmland protection, private land conservation, and genetic engineering.

But during my tenure at the Department of Agriculture, I was the most assaulted member of the Clinton cabinet. In fact, I was probably the most assaulted member of any cabinet since the Second World War. Three incidents come to mind, and all of them involve environmental issues to some degree.

The first incident occurred while I was leading the American delegation at a World Food Summit in Rome. We were discussing international hunger, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) had become a big issue. The Europeans were very much opposed to the use of GMOs, as was the rest of the world to some extent. I was on the podium at a news conference, and a whole group of people in the first two rows stripped naked and threw genetically modified soybeans at me and everybody else on the podium. On their bodies was written, “the naked truth” and “no ‘gene beans.’” Of course, I didn’t look. It was my first real experience observing the intensity of people regarding this particular issue. In a sense, it was kind of a “pre-globalization demonstration.”

Shortly thereafter, I was in Yellowstone National Park and we were discussing a disease called brucellosis, which affects buffalo and can affect cattle. The policies of the Park Service resulted in an excess of buffalo leaving the park and grazing in private grazing areas in Montana and Wyoming. Some of these animals had brucellosis. The cattle ranching community was concerned that the privately owned cattle could be contracting the disease themselves. USDA’s Animal Damage Control Unit was helping the states remove some of these diseased animals from circulation. We had a meeting with about 500 people who were upset about this treatment. I was there with the Governor of Montana, the two senators from Montana, and the two senators from Wyoming. All of a sudden, a woman came down from the audience carrying a big giant pot in her hands. I asked her, “What’s this?” She started yelling, “You’re killing my brothers! You’re killing my sisters!” I looked at Senator Burns from Montana, who is an old, crusty conservative (an ex-auctioneer), and asked, “What’s she talking

about?” He responded, “We’re in trouble. She thinks she’s related to the animals.” And the woman proceeded to throw brucellosis-infected bison guts at me and all the other federal officials on the podium. There were intestines all over our laps and everything else, and all I kept thinking was, “Why did I take this job?”

The final straw was at a National Nutrition Summit about a year later in Washington, DC. There were a thousand people in the room. We were talking about dietary guidelines, the food guide pyramid – issues that are very much in the news right now. A woman started coming up the center aisle toward the stage and she was carrying something that looked like a pizza. She was screaming, “Glickman, you’re nothing but a pimp for the meat industry.” She proceeded to throw a tofu cream pie at me – which grazed me as I turned my back, but landed in the lap of Donna Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Bob Dole and George McGovern were both on the platform because they were very involved in nutrition issues. I didn’t know what to say. I turned to Dole and said, “Bob, I don’t think we’re in Kansas any longer.”

My point in all of this is not only that this was a dangerous line of work, but that the issues of food and agriculture – including the environmental consequences of these activities – have raised the blood pressure of many people in this country and throughout the world, and they will continue to do so.

POLLING DATA

I’d like to start addressing these critical environmental issues here by focusing on polling data. In the 2004 Iowa caucus, environmental issues were either not mentioned by people in the exit polls or were ranked very low. However, there is a real difference of opinion among voters on these issues – and those opinions vary in different parts of the country. I don’t think that the environment necessarily plays as a monumental national issue. But it does play as a very significant and divisive wedge issue regionally and with certain groups of voters. For example, in certain swing states like Washington, Oregon, and Florida (and there are many, many others) – whether the issue is mining, timbering, sugar issues, or the Everglades – environmental issues can be significant.

Where there are specific environmental issues in a particular area that motivate voters, these issues may become very powerful wedges between the pro-environment community and, for example, the industrial or the agricultural community.

One example is in Washington State, where the U.S. Senate race between Maria Cantwell, a Democrat, and Slade Gordon was largely decided on Cantwell's hammering Senator Gordon, a Republican, on mining issues and timbering issues. While the State of Washington tends to be more liberal and pro-environment on many national issues, it recently has elected both Democrats and Republicans to Congress. Cantwell was able to capitalize on environmental issues in a swing state and attract many middle-of-the-road and moderate Republican and suburban voters.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

Environmental issues expose some of the most striking differences between Democrats and Republicans. The impression persists that Republicans are assisting corporate interests on a variety of issues, including clean air, clean water, the Artic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), rollbacks on clean water protections through a voluntary self-regulatory approach, rollbacks on administrative protections on land, and support for the timber industry. The Bush administration typically is perceived as aligning itself with lawsuits filed by industry, and this certainly has been the case with regard to the Forest Service. The administration is viewed by its critics as using the courts to dismantle environmental protections – sometimes under the radar.

These are issues that separate the Republicans from the Democrats in the minds of many citizens and certainly in the eyes of the political activists. These issues will be presented in this campaign as evidence of the Republicans knuckling under to the power of special interests, economic interests, and powerful interests of the status quo. Another example of this, of course, is the Kyoto climate change treaty and the Bush administration's unilateral decision not to comply. The Republicans have been very sensitive to this.

Frank Luntz, who is a very famous Republican pollster and former Fellow at the Institute of Politics, wrote a memo for the Republican Party that addresses the core of the Democratic argument on the environment. In this memo, he asserts that Democrats believe that “Washington regulations represent the best way to protect the environment. We don’t agree.” Then he proceeds to offer an argument for how Republicans can articulate the position that they aren’t the “anti” party to the environment – that they are, in fact, the party of balance and the party of science. He asserts that the Republican Party needs to support the preservation and application of good science. The memo is extremely interesting because it is defensive. It recognizes that Republicans are susceptible to losing a fairly significant number of targeted suburban Republican voters who care about environmental issues.

Quite frankly, I have to give the Republicans kudos. I think the Luntz memo is better than a lot of material that the Democrats have put out on the other side. Democrats tend to lash out, almost capriciously, by lumping all Republicans together as anti-environmentalists and captives of special interests without carefully articulating their own position.

I raise this point because it is part of a broader theme that the Democrats are likely to use during this presidential election year to show that the Republicans are broadly beholden to special interests. Democrats seem intent on using environmental issues and the Republicans’ anti-environmental extremism as a way to focus on swing voters, particularly in higher-income, suburban districts. The Democrats aim to sway these voters by demonstrating that on these issues, the Republican Party is extreme, it’s on the edge, and it doesn’t represent the mainstream. As this strategy plays out, perhaps Democrats can siphon off enough voters in those areas to make a difference in the electoral votes of that particular state.

You can already see some of this happening on the Congressional level. For example, there do still exist some Republicans in this country who categorize themselves as pro-environment. Jennifer Dunn, a Washington State Republican, is an interesting person to watch.

Congresswoman Dunn is a suburban Republican and part of the Republican leadership in the House. She has repeatedly been pressured by her constituents to take a pro-environment stance on issues where the rest of the Republican leadership has encouraged her to vote the other direction. Senator Norm Coleman (R-MN), who was elected to succeed Senator Paul Wellstone, also equivocated for a while on ANWR before the environmental community in Minnesota and around the country reminded him of the pledges that he previously made on that issue.

ENVIRONMENT AS A WEDGE ISSUE

Despite the overall Democratic strength on environmental issues, these subjects can also be a trap for some Democrats. This is particularly the case in individual states. For example, the Clean Air Act debate over emission levels is an issue that tends to drive a wedge between the steel community and the environmental community. As such, clean air is an issue that bears watching in states like West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These are states where manufacturing jobs are being lost at a very rapid rate for other reasons (such as “going offshore” to reduce labor costs).

In my judgment, if the Republicans are smart, they will try to use the cost of environmental regulation as an issue and as an antidote to the job loss argument that is likely to be made by some Democrats. That strategy will deflect criticism made by the Democrats that these job losses are due to the mistakes of George Bush’s economic policy.

The auto industry also poses significant challenges for politicians attempting to weigh industry and environmental concerns. One of the biggest and strongest Congressional opponents of increased fuel economy standards is John Dingell of Michigan. John Dingell is the senior member of the House of Representatives and a progressive member of Congress who has generally been one of the strongest opponents of President Bush’s economic programs. But he is from Detroit. He and the auto companies – and to some extent the United

Auto Workers – have joined forces in fighting what they believe are, at times, unreasonable fuel economy standards. Similar conflicts erupt in the states of Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and, to some extent, California. These states have lost an enormous number of jobs in the auto industry over the past several years. Democrats who champion higher fuel economy standards must realize there is a conflict. There is a controversy of principles.

The fuel economy controversy is not impossible to deal with, but the environmental community must realize that some of these issues, if not articulated in a proper way, can feed into the belief system that Democrats, progressives, and environmentalists are not interested in preserving a strong industrial workforce in this country.

In the area of agriculture, I dealt with this all the time. There's probably no community in America that is, in its "gut," more suspicious of the environmental community than farmers. Part of this has to do with the fact that farmers are very suspect of government generally – even though they do receive many resources from the government in the form of farm subsidy payments. But there's a feeling that when Uncle Sam comes in to tell them what to do, the government representatives are uninformed, have never spent a day of their life on a farm, and don't understand the difficulties of farming and agriculture. What you find is that large farm organizations tend to fight pesticide policies, reasonable water use, and related issues. As Secretary of Agriculture, I tried to do my best to see if the Department could balance these issues and provide a means to reduce conflict – not to make everybody happy, but to make everybody believe that we were acting reasonably.

We've lost almost three million jobs since President Bush has been in office. Most of these are manufacturing jobs. My gut tells me that the Bush administration does not have a lot of evidence that what they're doing is necessarily working very

well in curbing the loss of jobs. So, the best defense is a good offense – and my guess is that they will go on the offensive by saying that these jobs were lost because of clean air standards and other environmental requirements.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

There are some other environmental issues I think are worth discussing. They include protecting farmland, curbing urban sprawl, and trying to maintain a rural and agricultural resource base. It's interesting that local conservation initiatives – open space initiatives, anti-sprawl initiatives, and farmland protection ballot initiatives – have been approved all over the country. On November 4th of this last year, there were 64 ballot initiatives protecting parks and open space approved by voters, committing about a billion and a half dollars. These 64 successful initiatives were out of a pool of 77 initiatives nationwide, which is a success rate of about 83 percent. So, at the local level, there is no reluctance to spend money where necessary to protect open space and to protect parks and farmland. This is a major policy issue around the country, and it's something I think federal policymakers should be aware of.

While the Congress has been reluctant to approve new wilderness, new parks, and related initiatives, county commissioners, state governors, and local units of government have aggressively gone ahead and approved these particular measures. Maybe we can learn something from how those local farmland protection measures are done.

AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

There are several areas in agriculture and the environment that are interesting to discuss for their political implications.

One is factory farming. I use that term because much of agriculture today is industrialized agriculture. Virtually all livestock production is industrial today. Most beef is produced in large “hotels” for cows, sometimes 100,000 cattle in one place. This number of cows produces a lot of waste – both manure as well as water waste. This is one of many implications of the consolidation and centralization of agriculture in America and around the world today. The government has taken some action to try to help reduce the environmental implications of factory farming. However, in certain states (for example, Iowa and North Carolina) where there is a lot of poultry and dairy production, these issues still need to be addressed and considered from a public policy perspective.

Another issue is sugar. I will mention it briefly because it involves only one or two states. Some of you have followed closely the environmental issues affecting the Everglades. This was a big topic for Vice President Gore in the last presidential election, and it’s an issue that Governor Bush in Florida has dealt with in a way that is akin to trying to “cut the baby in half,” so to speak. Our sugar policy in America protects the sugar producers by giving them high prices and restricting imports of low-cost foreign sugar. This encourages the production of sugar at home that wouldn’t otherwise be produced here – it would be produced in the Caribbean or in Africa or other parts of the world. Sugar production has significant environmental impacts and needs to be addressed by policymakers. For this reason, it is an issue that may be a big concern in Florida and perhaps Louisiana in the next presidential election.

Another big issue is water, generally. Almost 90 percent of the water in the world is used for agriculture. Only 10 to 15 percent of the water is potable (used for drinking). Virtually all the water that’s used anywhere in the world is used to grow crops. In our country, we have seen water tables – particularly in the vast heartland area of America – fall rather rapidly. This area is where most of the corn is grown in this country and industrialized agriculture relies on water very heavily for irrigation. This is a tremendous public policy issue that, for the first time, will pit urban and consumer interests against agriculture

interests. I don't know if these water issues are going to play a big part in the next presidential election or not, but they may be significant in California, New Mexico, Texas, and states that are concerned about water usage issues.

The last issue I will briefly address is the environmental consequences of genetically modified foods and the new technologies of producing food. There is not as much of a debate in this country on the genetically modified organism (GMO) issue as there is in Europe. In this country, by and large, the public believes its food supply is safe. And, by and large, citizens trust their government, in its regulatory role, to maintain food safety. In the rest of the world, there are many people who believe that making genetic modifications to foods is inherently unsafe or may cause significant environmental consequences. I think this is going to grow as an issue – how we regulate and how the government is involved in legislating food production. I doubt that this will become a big issue in the next presidential election, but it may be, on a selected basis, an issue that affects some Congressional districts around the country.

CONCLUSION

In summary, I think that the environment will have some impact on the 2004 election. It will have some impact regionally with certain demographic groups, such as younger voters and suburban voters. And it may be used – in fact, it probably will be used – by the Democrats to show that the Republicans are captive to economic special interests. The danger on the Democratic side is to remain pro-environment without making it appear that Democrats are willing to risk manufacturing jobs and employment in the process.

Q & A

Q: What environmental issue do you think the American populace cares about the most?

A: I personally think that voters care a lot about clean water. I've always felt that water holds a special place in family life and anything that is done to jeopardize the safety of clean water is something that really gets people in their gut.

From an organizing perspective, clearly if you look at what the Democrats in Congress have done, ANWR has been one of the things that's been used as a rallying cry because you can combine the pristine nature of Alaska with the need to find alternative sources of energy. You've got to figure out what specific subset of issues really motivates people, and most of these are more regional than national.

Q: Do you think that some of the anti-globalization efforts and some of the coalition building that's being done between labor and environmentalists is going to help mobilize younger voters?

A: The anti-globalization movement is one of the few areas I've seen recently that's inspired young people to take political action. At Harvard, we even sent young students down to the Free Trade of the Americas Conference in Miami to teach them about political engagement. Unfortunately some of them got arrested.

Q: Why does environment rank so low in the spectrum of political priorities in this country?

A: One reason is that we've had some success over the last 50 years. The fact of the matter is that the air is better, the water's cleaner, and it's in the public mind now, so I think that's minimized it as a crisis problem. Success breeds some inaction. When Congressmen and Senators have town hall meetings, environmental issues are rarely raised. Issues in this country don't just happen, they happen because they percolate up from the public. So, the question should be, "Is there much percolating on the environment?" I suspect not a lot. I suspect that there's very little serious advocacy targeted to Senators and Congressmen in their districts. I don't know how many of you have ever gone to a town hall meeting, but if you haven't, you should. They need to hear these messages repetitively. Congressmen and Senators get so many emails and letters these days that you really need to communicate with them directly so they're listening to you. The squeaky wheel really does get the grease, and I don't think there's much squeaking on the environment anymore.

Next, I think a lot of the national environmental groups have gotten lazy, fat, and comfortable. When I was first elected to Congress, and the Sierra Club or the League of Conservation Voters ranked me, I used to get intimidated. I liked to get those 100 percent ratings, and I would therefore watch what the environmental votes were and I

would listen to what the voters were saying on those issues. I just don't think they have the clout they once did.

I also think that after nearly ten years of a Republican Congress, and perhaps a Democratic administration that didn't have this as a high priority, maybe some of them have been worn down by the whole thing.

Hamilton and de Tocqueville were talking 220 years ago and de Tocqueville asked Hamilton what made America unique. Hamilton said: "Here, sir, the people govern." The fact of the matter is that people have to start governing, and organizing, and speaking out on this issue.

Environmental Politics in 2004

Jim DiPeso

Policy Director, REP America

February 5, 2004

Good afternoon. I'm Jim DiPeso, the Policy Director of REP America, the national grassroots organization of Republicans for Environmental Protection.

I know what some of you are thinking. Republicans for Environmental Protection – sounds sort of like an oxymoron. Like light traffic in Manhattan or – here's my personal favorite – the Federal Paperwork Reduction Act.

But we're a real organization made up of real individuals – Republicans who care about restoring our party's conservation tradition. The group was founded in 1995 by three women who attended an endangered species conference in Washington D.C. and were greeted with titters when they identified themselves as Republicans.

Our goal is to speed up the day when having Republicans at a conservation conference does not result in titters or even a second thought. We are proud to call ourselves Theodore Roosevelt Republicans – ordinary voters trying to keep alive the legacy of a great president who said that conservation is America's patriotic duty.

We look at our mission as political conservation biology, keeping alive that extant gene pool of conservation-minded Republicans. We have not yet gone the way of the woolly mammoth!

Looking back at Roosevelt's time, we can get an early glimpse of how environmental politics is playing out in our country today. Many of the political dynamics that surround issues today had parallels when Theodore Roosevelt was around. Granted, that was a much different era. You didn't have polls or focus groups or fancy

consultants and you certainly didn't have anywhere near the amount of money from entrenched interests pouring into campaigns that you see today.

But at the most basic level, much *hasn't* changed. Environmental politics is all about how we sort out our never-ending debates about tangible resources – forests, water, wildlife, and the like – and how our values of freedom, democracy, equality, community, and stewardship influence those debates.

These are values rooted in the history and culture of a unique nation that was shaped by a howling wilderness. The wilderness supplied a vast cornucopia of resources to build the greatest economic machine in the history of the world. The wilderness forged a culture of individual opportunity and entrepreneurship because one could escape poor economic prospects at home by heading to the virgin lands out west.

To really understand how the environment will factor in the politics of 2004, you have to understand the history of environmental politics in this country. Because of the organization I represent and the message we bring, I'm going to pay particular attention to the interplay between the environment and Republican politics, how that interplay may affect how Republican candidates will treat the environment in 2004, and how Republican voters may take the environment into account in the voting booth.

THE ENVIRONMENT AS A POLITICAL ISSUE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

The environment emerged as an issue in American politics in the mid-19th century. At the time, the prevailing ethos was that wilderness must be tamed and nature conquered to build the nation. But a small segment of Americans, educated people influenced by Transcendental ideas and Romantic literature, began sounding an alarm about the wanton waste of natural resources that was taking place at that time. An emerging school of thought at the time also held that exposure to natural beauty was good for one's health and that a democracy ought to afford such opportunities to everyone.

Out of these movements came our first national parks and national forests. These movements were led by upper-class people and it's fair to say many had Republican leanings.

In fact, the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, set an important conservation precedent by signing a bill that transferred Yosemite Valley to the state of California solely for use as a public park. That precedent was reinforced in 1872 with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park.

An obscure Republican president named Benjamin Harrison signed the law authorizing the establishment of forest reserves, forerunners of our national forests. This was conservation in a utilitarian sense because of the role forests play in supplying and purifying water.

The high point of the early conservation movement was the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. He compiled an astonishing record of achievement – 130 million acres of national forests, five national parks, 18 national monuments, and 55 bird and game reservations that became the nucleus of our system of national wildlife refuges.

Theodore Roosevelt had a lifelong interest in birds, wildlife, and natural history, but he had another, broader reason for his action. He was a nationalist. He saw natural resources as the fundamental basis of national strength and prosperity. He believed that conservation was essential to keeping the country strong and prosperous for the long term. That's what we mean when we say, "Conservation is conservative."

Did all of Roosevelt's Republican colleagues share his views? Of course not. His bitterest enemy in Washington was Speaker Joseph Cannon, who was supposed to have said, "Not one cent for scenery!" Roosevelt and Cannon represented two strains of thought within the Republican Party, one viewing conservation as a necessary underpinning of national strength and well-being, the other viewing conservation skeptically as an impediment to freedom, enterprise, and prosperity.

That gets to the nub of the environmental debates we have today. To what extent should we exploit natural resources to meet today's wants and needs, and what should we do, if anything, to protect resources on behalf of unborn generations? These questions expose a fault line – within the Republican Party and within the nation at large.

Perhaps Roosevelt's most lasting political achievement was that he hard-wired the environment into our national political architecture. While political interest in the issue has ebbed and flowed, the environment undeniably has been a national issue since the early 20th century.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS IN THE 1960s AND 1970s

The next great wave of environmental politics crested in the 1960s and 1970s. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was a catalyst, one of many signs that the prosperity of the post-World War II era was coming at a horrendous price – poisonous wastes fouling the air, water, and land.

During that time, there was less of the political polarization you see today. You had liberal Democrats – Hubert Humphrey – and conservative Democrats – Scoop Jackson. You had conservative Republicans – Barry Goldwater. And you had liberal Republicans – such as Nelson Rockefeller, Jacob Javits, Charles Percy, and John Chafee.

Goldwater and Humphrey fought like cats and dogs on the floor of the Senate on just about every issue you can think of. But at the end of the day, they were friends. You didn't have the personalized animosity in Congress that you have today. It was easier to reach across the aisle and cut deals then than it is today. That had implications for the environment then. What we call the lack of civility has implications for environmental politics today.

There was another philosophical dimension in play. In 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act, thanks to the leadership of Pennsylvania Republican Congressman John Saylor, who was a very conservative Republican, but a conservative of a different sort.

Saylor, in many ways, was a throwback to an older strain of conservatism that was less materialistic, less enamored of economic growth at all costs, and more focused on conserving traditions and values – the intangible, even spiritual aspects of life.

Saylor believed wilderness was essential to national defense. Imagine that notion coming out of Tom DeLay's mouth. Saylor said wilderness offered a toughening experience that would keep Americans from getting soft and, as he put it on the floor of Congress in 1956, prevent us from "deteriorating in luxury and ripening for the hardy conquerors of another century." Back in the 1920s and 1930s, Herbert Hoover had somewhat similar concerns about materialism and moral decay, one reason he greatly expanded our national parks system to provide healthy outdoor recreation.

Saylor spoke about taking special pride, as American patriots, in the unspoiled lands of the backcountry. He talked about protecting wilderness as a pathway for humility that would keep us from getting too big for our britches. This was a conservatism that emphasized prudence, the art of avoiding hubris and triumphalism.

Ultimately, however, it was practical politics that came to the aid of the environmental movement during that era. It was a Republican looking to strengthen his political appeal who led the charge to turn the tide against pollution and to expand protection of natural areas. In 1970, Richard Nixon sent Congress a 37-point environmental platform that became the basis of many of the national environmental laws that we have on the books today. Nixon said, "It is now or never" to clean up the air, water, and land.

Was Nixon a closet greenie? Probably not. For all his faults, however, he was a canny politician. After the 1968 election, Nixon was at a pre-inaugural dinner and, as luck would have it, Russell Train was seated next to him. Train later went on to become EPA's second administrator. He told Nixon at the dinner that the environment

would be a great way to unite America. At the time, of course, the nation was experiencing a very rough patch – badly divided about Vietnam, college campuses in turmoil, violence in the cities. Nixon immediately got Train’s message.

So, no, Nixon was not much of a conservationist, but he grasped the broad political appeal of fighting pollution and protecting our natural heritage. He proceeded to compile an admirable environmental record.

Nixon’s record was not an aberration. At the state levels, governors took up the charge of protecting the environment. Republicans such as Tom McCall in Oregon, Dan Evans in Washington, Bill Milliken in Michigan, David Cargo in New Mexico, and Deane Davis in Vermont fought for parks, open space, and pollution cleanup.

But all that was a long time ago. Theodore Roosevelt is a colorful, slightly eccentric figure from the tintype era, a world that has long since vanished. John Saylor and Tom McCall are largely forgotten statesmen. And Richard Nixon has left this world for precincts unknown.

So, you may ask, what has happened over the past 30 years? Why has the environment become a polarizing issue between the two major parties? Why is an issue Richard Nixon seized upon to unite the country now portrayed as a litmus test for choosing up sides?

THE “REDS,” THE “BLUES,” AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The second wave of environmentalism reinforced the accomplishments of the first to a large degree. Today, no one would call a plume rising from a smokestack a necessary price of progress. Today, every politician says he or she favors a clean environment. Numerous polls show that environmental protection enjoys broad support from American citizens across the spectrum.

But with broad support comes a tension embedded in our history as both exploiters and protectors of nature. We still wrestle with the question I alluded to earlier – to what extent do we make use of natural resources to meet our needs today, and to what extent are we obligated to look after the needs of unborn generations?

More contemporary factors are at work as well. We hear that we live in a “red” and “blue” nation, two Americas divided by culture, by the mental pictures making up our worldviews. The reds and the blues speak a common language but hear different meanings, like two radio sets tuned to different frequencies, uncomprehending and talking past each other.

The “red” and “blue” divide is overly simplified, of course. Each person, whether Republican, Democrat or Independent, carries a unique mix of values, passions, likes, dislikes, and neuroses into the voting booth. Not every Republican cares for Rush Limbaugh and not every Democrat agrees with Al Franken. Still, “red” and “blue” is a useful, broad-brush way to describe how our politics have become more divisive.

The reasons for the “red and blue” state of affairs are very complex and would be worth a two hour lecture in and of itself. An interesting theory was laid out in the 1997 book *The Fourth Turning* by William Strauss and Neil Howe. The authors hold that America goes through generational cycles that include four phases – a High, a great Awakening, an Unraveling, and then a Crisis that resets the clock. If this theory is true, perhaps we are experiencing an unraveling.

Regardless of the underlying cause, both parties seem to have become internally more uniform in their ideologies, with less overlap between the parties. There are fewer conservative Democrats such as Scoop Jackson, and fewer liberal Republicans such as Nelson Rockefeller.

America’s current political complexion is reflected in the dramatic changes that have come over the Republican Party since the mid-20th century. In those days, the party was dominated by its Northeastern establishment – the “Rockefeller Republicans” of yore. Out West, a colorful iconoclast named Barry Goldwater was leading an insurgency challenging the Northeastern establishment. In 1964, Goldwater captured five southern states in the presidential election, the first chink in the Democratic Party redoubt that used to be known as the Solid South.

Today, the Solid South is solidly Republican, an astonishing political makeover. Goldwater’s insurgency, expanded by Ronald Reagan, transferred the party’s center of gravity to the South and West. The Northeastern establishment, the Rockefeller Republicans, is now a quiet minority.

Today, the Republican Party leadership takes much of its intellectual nourishment from an ideological strain that 1) doubts whether environmental problems are as serious as an honest look at the science would admit, and 2) calls for leaving most environmental problem-solving to the private market, under the quasi-theological assumption that a perfectly functioning market has all the answers. The older conservative notions of forbearance, humility, and prudence seem to have no place in this worldview.

Not that the party leadership is terribly consistent about this ideology. Much of the party's support comes from entrenched interest groups – sugar, cotton, and fossil energy, for example – that depend on federal subsidies, trade preferences, and tax breaks. One result of this contradiction is that the party of fiscal responsibility has produced exploding deficits that will burden future generations with enormous debts. But that's another issue.

As the '60s and '70s gave way to the '80s, the environment increasingly became identified with the politics of the left. As the Vietnam War wound down, the environment became a new cause for the passions of that time, just another "interest" in the band of interest groups making up the ever-quarreling Democratic Party.

The national environmental groups, those centering their operations on lobbying in Washington D.C., cast their lot mostly with the Democratic Party. In tandem with the rise of dogmatic ideologues in the Republican Party, the result of that choice was that the environment has become a political football. The Republican Party is perceived today, with some accuracy, as indifferent or even hostile to environmental protection.

It is an exaggeration to say that the big environmental groups are handmaidens of the Democratic Party.

But a number of thoughtful, pro-environment Republican leaders, such as former Washington Governor Dan Evans,

believe that environmentalists have unnecessarily alienated Republican politicians who otherwise may be receptive to their message. We believe, however, that the single largest factor for the increased polarization around the environment is that politics has increasingly become a corrosive money chase.

In 2000, George W. Bush and Al Gore together spent more than \$300 million on their campaigns. In the 2002 cycle, \$1 billion was spent on all House and Senate races. In 2004, those numbers will only go up. It seems that the environment has been swept up in this battle of incomprehension between the “reds” and the “blues.” Harsh language about “environmental wackos” or “junk science” spews from the media.

And yet – are things really that simple? The black-and-white language of “jobs vs. environment” does not tell the whole story. There’s more to environmental politics than meets the eye. There are shades of gray and nuances that you may not see in superficial media reports, spin, and counter-spin.

THE 2004 ELECTION YEAR

Here we are in another madcap presidential election year. We’re already past the first wave of caucuses and primaries. What can we say about how the environment will play out in the 2004 presidential election, from our unusual standpoint as Republicans for environmental protection?

Let’s start with some polling data. Let’s talk about swing voters, swing states, and Republican-tending constituencies where environmental messages resonate. I’ll turn to the famous – or infamous, take your pick – Frank Luntz memo. I’ll talk about an intriguing political brush fire out West that could mean real trouble for President Bush. Then I’ll wrap this up, and come to some conclusions that undoubtedly will fall short of the mark come November 2.

In spite of “red” and “blue” polarization, polls show strong support for environmental protection across the board. Here’s an example: In a New York Times/CBS poll conducted shortly after the November 2002 election, 46 percent of Republicans said the federal government

should do more to regulate the environmental and safety practices of business. Only 21 percent said less should be done.

However, in the same poll, 57 percent of Republicans supported oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Only 26 percent of Democrats and 36 percent of Independents agreed. There's that fault line, that tension in the GOP I spoke of earlier.

In spite of broad support, the environment is usually not the top issue determining how people vote for candidates. It's not even close. In May 2003, a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll conducted by a leading Republican and Democratic pollster asked Americans to list the one or two issues President Bush and Congress should address. Fifty-seven percent chose the economy. Thirty-six percent said fighting terrorism. Only 6 percent chose the environment.

A CBS News/New York Times poll released in January 2004 asked voters to identify the one issue they would like the presidential candidates to discuss. The economy, jobs, and unemployment were listed by twenty-five percent. The environment came in at one percent. That was not out of the ordinary. In CBS News/New York Times polls dating back five years, the number of respondents who cite the environment as the nation's most important problem has rarely exceeded one percent.

However, as we all know, broad-brush polling numbers present an incomplete picture of a very large, very complex, very diverse nation. While it may seem that support for the environment is a mile wide and an inch deep, electoral support for the environment can be quite high, depending on the context.

Ballot measures are an example. In the November 2003 election, 64 of 77 local and state land protection ballot measures were approved by the voters. In November 2002, 95 of 112 such measures were approved. And not just in liberal enclaves such as Santa Monica or Boulder. They were approved in conservative strongholds, such as Dallas, Colorado Springs, and southwest Florida. These are communities that voted for

bonds and/or taxes for open space acquisition and public recreation projects, often by hefty margins.

What do these facts and figures tell you? They tell you that conservative voters are not knee-jerk anti-environmentalists.

Moreover, the broad-brush polling numbers don't have a fine enough resolution to pinpoint swing constituencies around the country where voters have conservative ideas about fiscal and other issues, but strongly support environmental protection. In these swing, often suburban, constituencies, the environment can emerge as an issue that can tip an election outcome. I'll give you some examples, which show that partisan polarization on this issue is not as all-encompassing as we may think.

The first is one that I am personally familiar with – Washington State's 8th Congressional District. The 8th is one of those classic suburban districts, with a mix of middle, upper middle, and high-income communities across Lake Washington from Seattle. Bill Gates lives in the 8th District in a 20,000-square-foot home in a very toney community.

Since 1993, the 8th District has been represented by Jennifer Dunn in the House. Formerly chair of the Washington State Republican Party, Jennifer Dunn has won re-election by wide margins and has been steadfastly loyal to President Bush – except on one high-profile issue. Last year, Jennifer Dunn voted against opening ANWR to oil drilling.

Dunn is nobody's fool. She knows that her district went for Al Gore in 2000 and that the environment is a big issue for her constituents. That's why she has been out front on selected environmental issues, such as a tax law change that would make it easier to keep the 8th District's working forests in the tree business rather than selling out to real estate developers.

Here's another example: REP America's founder and current president Martha Marks served for 10 years as a county commissioner in Lake County, part of Illinois' 10th Congressional District. She ran as a Republican and won the endorsement of the Sierra Club. The Illinois

10th is a constituency similar in political and economic complexion to the Washington 8th.

In 2000, Lake County voters approved \$85 million in bonds to expand the county's forest preserves. They narrowly supported George W. Bush for president and a Democrat for Congress. The Democrat, however, lost in the 10th District overall to Mark Kirk, a fiscally conservative Republican who has compiled a stellar environmental voting record in the House.

One more example. Great Outdoors Colorado is a non-profit working on protecting that rapidly growing state's open spaces. In 2001, Great Outdoors Colorado took a poll in Front Range communities that make up bedrock Republican territory. The poll results showed that Republicans were more likely than Democrats to support funding for open space, parks, and wildlife habitat.

In the January-February 2004 edition of *The Atlantic*, there is a very interesting article by Joshua Green entitled "In Search of the Elusive Swing Voter."

The article tells us that 12 states were decided by fewer than five percentage points in the 2000 presidential election. In several of those states, the environment potentially is an issue that could tip the outcome.

The Northwest states of Oregon and Washington are two of those swing states. Together, they have 18 electoral votes. Green issues are leading public concerns in both states, particularly in the Seattle and Portland metro areas. Gore won both states, although Oregon was very close.

The Democratic candidate, whether it's John Kerry or somebody else, will talk a lot about the environment in Washington and Oregon. You'll hear damning words about the president's record on public lands, that it's been one giveaway after another to commodity interests. Bush, in his defense, will talk about restoring healthy forests and increased funding for salmon restoration.

Nevada, with five electoral votes, is another state where the environment could be a swing issue. Nevada went for Bush by fewer than four points in 2000. President Bush supports the Yucca Mountain

nuclear waste repository – or nuclear waste suppository as a former Nevada senator once called it. Opposition to burying high-level nuclear waste 100 miles north of Las Vegas unites Nevadans across the political spectrum.

Florida and its treasure trove of 27 electoral votes will be in play as well, and it is another state where the environment could be a tipping issue. Florida voters love their manatees, love the Everglades, and hate offshore oil drilling. It is one of only two states that a coalition of Democrat-leaning interest groups will target in the South this year.

Here is an enticing factoid. Florida International University has conducted a series of polls since 1995 asking Floridians whether environmental regulations are too strict or not too strict. Between 1995 and 2002, the percentage that said environmental regulations were not too strict has drifted upward from 71 to 78 percent. The pollsters believe Gore could have taken Florida four years ago had he made more hay about the environment.

The operatives in both the Republican and Democratic shops are fully aware that the environment is an issue that could bite President Bush come November. That observation runs through the famous memo produced last year by GOP pollster Frank Luntz.²

The Luntz memo stated bluntly that “The environment is probably the single issue on which Republicans in general – and President Bush in particular – are most vulnerable.”

Luntz calls on Republican candidates to talk about the issue more skillfully, in a way that doesn’t alienate swing voters or suburban Republican women. Don’t use scary words such as “rollbacks.” Instead, talk about “common sense” solutions grounded in “sound science.” Don’t talk about cost-effectiveness tests, which sound cold and heartless. Instead, talk about unnecessary regulations that hurt “moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas.”

So, you won’t hear President Bush calling the EPA a “Gestapo” agency, as Tom DeLay did a number of years ago. The President’s

² Luntz, Frank. “Straight Talk – The Environment: A Cleaner, Safer, Healthier America.” The Luntz Research Company, pp. 131-146.

proposed EPA budget, for example, states that “President Bush has focused on addressing these challenges in a common sense, cost-effective manner based on sound science, and his 2005 budget builds upon these successful principles.” Notice the carefully calibrated language.

Notice also, that the president recently offered environmental initiatives in key swing states – more funding for Great Lakes cleanup, a high-profile issue in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio. More salmon money for Washington and Oregon. An exemption for New Hampshire on MTBE levels in gasoline.

The *Atlantic* article on swing voters describes the vast computer databases both parties will use to study socio-economic sub-units of the body politic. The Republican Voter Vault has detailed data on 165 million people. The Democratic DataMart has tabs on 158 million. They know how often you vote, what kind of car you drive, what you watch on TV, and what magazines you subscribe to. Like retail marketers zeroing in on consumers, the political operators will hunt out pockets of people likely to support their candidates and craft language that appeals to them.

Voters who think about the environment a lot, and even those who think about it a little, can expect to have their mental and emotional buttons pushed repeatedly. The candidates will choose language that will make technically complex issues concrete for voters who are not specialists and have many other things on their minds. We as voters will be treated like flatworms on a microscope slide – poked and probed, our every twitch observed and recorded, grist for the image makers and the spin machines.

Yes, it seems we’re a long way from Theodore Roosevelt’s time.

But maybe not. Let’s go back to a point I made earlier, that environmental politics is all about the values and aspirations that inform our debates about natural resources. There is a fault line in the Republican Party and the nation at large between values speaking to prudent restraint and those speaking to individual freedom, between aspirations speaking to heritage preservation and those speaking to economic development.

The fault line has come to the fore in dramatic fashion in recent weeks. A political brush fire has been burning out West and it’s caught national attention. Hunters and fishermen, who are mostly conserva-

tive and mostly Republican, have had some choice words about the Bush administration's management – or mismanagement, if you will – of national forests and other public lands.

There is a strong sense of betrayal running through the remarks, which the press has picked up. Greg Petrich is an example. Mr. Petrich is a registered Republican from Alaska. He organized a petition signed by 470 hunting and gun clubs across the U.S., 40 from Texas, demanding that the administration protect the Tongass National Forest, one of the largest expanses of intact temperate rainforest left on Earth. The Tongass, by the way, was established by Theodore Roosevelt.

In an Op-Ed published last week in *USA Today*, Mr. Petrich said: "I respect Bush. I just can't believe he's doing this. The right thing is so obvious, it's a no-brainer."³

Another example is Ryan Busse, a gun manufacturer from Montana. Mr. Busse joined a group of outdoorsmen who lobbied against the energy bill in D.C. last week, specifically against the provisions that would loosen Clean Water Act and other regulations for oil and gas production on public lands.

He was quoted as saying: "Anybody who wants to take that away and loosen the protections of such a pristine country is an enemy of me and every hunter and fisherman I know. I voted for President Bush. I'm a lifelong Republican. I'm on the team. But our quarterback's heading us the wrong way down the field. At some point, we have to change the play-calling, or we have to change the quarterback." Powerful stuff.

These folks are not tree-hugging greenies. None of them is demanding an end to economic uses of public lands. Nor are we. But what they want and what we want is the Republican Party leadership to rediscover stewardship and re-commit to protecting wilderness and wildlife. Angry sportsmen motivated to punish the administration could be very dangerous for the President in November. Millions of Americans hunt and fish regularly. Whether significant members of this vast constituency mobilize against the President remains to be seen.

³Jans, Nick. "Conservative Sportsmen Turn Against Bush." *USA Today*. January 28, 2004.

Like much else, predicting the outcome November 2 is like predicting the weather. There are a vast number of variables, of which the environment is just one. At this point, the presidential election is likely to be close and Republicans are likely to retain control of Congress.

Whether and how the environment tips the presidential outcome in key states will depend on the confluence of many factors – the closeness of the election, news events preceding the election, how motivated each candidate’s base is, and the persuasiveness of messages aimed at swing voters on the environment and other issues.

FUTURE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP ON THE ENVIRONMENT

There is an important long-run question that will bear consideration long after the 2004 election is over. Can the Republican Party find its way back to a positive, constructive leadership position on the environment? Economics may point the way toward reconciliation.

In a competitive global environment, quality of life matters. Communities with forests, rivers, and wildlife nearby attract people and companies who could readily locate elsewhere. The environment has been called a “second paycheck” that spurs economic vitality and rising land values. This has been documented empirically. Any long-term economic development strategy must include protection of the natural capital that makes a place worth living in.

A couple of weeks ago, I attended a clean energy conference in Portland, Oregon. The keynoters were not the usual enviro suspects. Instead, they were a conservative Republican state legislator, a conservative Republican congressman, and representatives of the Farm Bureau. They spoke about a clean environment for our grandchildren and reviving distressed rural economies through renewable energy. Not either-or. Both-and.

People want a clean environment, but not at the expense of comfort and prosperity. The good news is that there is no need for one to trump the other. But we as environmentalists – or conservationists, if you will – must make that case in clear, persuasive language that speaks to what people care about most.

It will take time to take some of the polarized sting out of environmental debates. But the environment is an issue whose

importance transcends political dividing lines. We believe that the potential for discovering environmental solutions that can be framed in ways that attract broad support is high. For the sake of our nation and our future, we must strive toward that goal.

Q & A

Q: Why do you think that environmental issues and policies are better served from a Republican platform?

A: I don't necessarily think they are always better served from a Republican platform. I think both parties have important ideas to contribute to the debate. I believe that from the Republican standpoint there are some good ideas, such as market-oriented environmental policy. Markets can't do everything, but they do have a role to play. I think the sulfur dioxide reductions that have been achieved for the 1990 Clean Air Act were an example of how a carefully drawn policy that makes use of market forces can achieve positive results. The utilities were predicting that this was going to cost \$1,000 per ton of SO₂ reduced. Well, you can now go on the various exchanges and brokerages and you can buy yourself a ton of SO₂ reduction for \$100-\$200. So the market forces drive innovation, they reward innovation, and that signals to the business community that if you can figure out a way to make this happen at a very low cost, go for it. So that's something that Republicans have to contribute to the debate.

I also think that there's a stronger role we can play on land and wildlife protection if we just pay people to do the right thing. Property owners value the idea that there is a rare species on their property, but they also want to do things with their property, so if there's a way we can balance the use of the property with a conservation system incentive, I think we ought to try it out. Again, I don't think that markets are the Holy Grail – this is not theology; this is public policy analysis. You pick the tools that get the job done.

Q: Have you ever had a call from Karl Rove?

A: Well, we have been told from sources – second, third hand sources – that we are on Karl Rove's, how do I put this delicately, fertilizer list. We heard that. He does not interact with us. Frankly, I have been look-

ing forward to the day when I get that phone call from one of his hit men – the guy he pays to crack heads, which all politicians have, by the way. Democrats and Republicans, they all have head crackers on their staff. That’s how you get things done. But I’m still waiting for the day when one of those head crackers calls and says, “Hey, you guys, back off.” We’re going to tell them “No, we’re not going to back off.” If that means we don’t have any influence in the White House, so be it, but we like to think of ourselves as an edgy outfit. When Republicans do good things, we’re very public about it. When we do bad things, we’re also very public about it. Call it tough love, if you will. Sometimes we treat these Republican politicians like 16-year olds who haven’t yet earned the right to the car keys. They’ve got to show that they deserve that right. So no, they have not earned it . . . and will they? It’s hard to say.

The Environment as Part of Democratic Political Strategy

John Podesta

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Chief of Staff to President Clinton*

February 12, 2004

Good afternoon. Let me start by telling you a little bit about how I got involved in politics and the environment.

I started my career in the law after I finished at Georgetown as a budding environmental lawyer. At that time, I thought I really wanted to practice environmental law. My first job was with what was then called the Land and Natural Resources Division – now the Environmental Division – of the U.S. Justice Department.

This was at the end of the Ford, the beginning of the Carter administration. The Republican Assistant Attorney General at the time looked at my résumé and saw the many Democratic campaigns I'd already worked in by 1976 and quickly assigned me to the condemnation section of the Land and Natural Resources Division. So I spent a little over a year condemning land for the Army Corps of Engineers in eastern Kentucky. This was not exactly my idea of how one should go about being an environmentalist in this country, but it did give rise to my long-term interest in the environment.

I understand that you recently heard from Jim DiPeso of REP America, the Republicans for Environmental Protection. Of course, whenever I meet a Republican environmentalist, it's hard not to ask if they're listed under the Endangered Species Act. After all (and Jim probably told you this) REP America named Jim Jeffords, a great senator from Vermont, as Environmental Legislator of the Year in 2000, and five months later Senator Jeffords left the Republican Party. I think that speaks volumes about the politics of the environment today. Because while, to some extent, the conservation movement traces its roots in this country to Teddy Roosevelt – and even though environmental protection was still a bipartisan affair when I started on Capitol Hill in the 1970s – environmentalism as a *movement* today

seems to reside solely on the Democratic side of the 50-50 political fault line now running through the country.

PARTISAN DIVIDE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

I think you might be surprised to hear me say what I'm about to say if you know anything about my biography. I'm generally viewed as a fierce partisan. But I think it's a tragedy that environmentalism has become the partisan issue that it is today. You'll hear next week from Congressman Christopher Shays (R-CT), who's an example of the dwindling group of Republicans on Capitol Hill still working to forge some bipartisan compromise. I think the American people deserve better. They deserve more. They deserve a Congress that can rise above partisanship and craft common-sense solutions to environmental problems. I think it's fair to say that that's not exactly what we have today.

After I left the White House, I joined the board of the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), a bipartisan organization. LCV endorsed Chris Shays, for example. It endorses Republicans as well as Democrats.

Most of my Democratic friends thought I was nuts to join the board of LCV, a bipartisan organization. But I think it's important – in fact, one of the great challenges in this country – to see if we can rebuild a moderate wing in the Republican Party.

I think it is fair to say that this polarization, or partisan divide, didn't happen overnight. In fact, it took almost three decades to emerge. My friend and colleague at Georgetown Law School, Richard J. Lazarus, has written extensively on this issue, including several law review articles tracking the votes of Republicans and Democrats by region in the country to demonstrate this widening gulf between the voting records of Democrats and Republicans.¹ In the early 1970s, the environmental record of Congressional members tended to be based on region rather than party. That's changed substantially over the last 30 years.

In reflecting on some of the reasons for this widening gap, I think on the Democratic side, it reflects the growing influence of what has come to be known as the new class of college-educated professional

¹ See Lazarus, Richard J. 2003. "A Different Kind of 'Republican Moment' in Environmental Law," *Minnesota Law Review* 87 (4).

technical workers. These types of suburban voters were the people President Clinton, in particular, appealed to. It also reflects, to some extent, the decline of the more traditional smokestack industries, which were the heart and soul of the Democratic Party as I was growing up in Chicago. Unions and the industries that produce pollution, if you will, represent a smaller portion of what we call “the Democratic base.”

It’s also fair to say that with passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) in 1970, union members in particular – because they are organized and educated by their unions – have become more conscious of how they themselves and their families are at risk of exposure to chemicals and other pollutants on the job. And if you think about it, some of the bluest of the blue-collar unions, like the United Steelworkers of America, have been some of the strongest advocates for change in the environmental arena.

So you saw the Democratic Party’s base becoming more and more pro-environment and aligning itself with environmental issues. On the Republican side, the trend went in the opposite direction. I think that stems, in good measure, from the shift in the center of gravity of leadership away from northeastern moderates and toward more reflexively anti-government conservatives in the South and in the West. These leaders, supporting causes like the “Sagebrush Rebellion,” which organized resistance against federal land policies in the West, really began an anti-environmental sentiment in the 1970s that continues to this day.

The Republican Party’s ties to extractive industries, such as the oil, coal and gas industries, and a lingering unease about the counter-cultural veneer of environmentalism at the root of the environmental movement, play a role as well. All of these factors conspired to push Republicans like Jim Jeffords first out of the policy-making loop and eventually out of the party entirely. They were replaced by Republicans who approached environmental policy concerns less with natural science and more with political science. Instead of depending on facts to define their agenda, they insisted on using their agenda, quite frankly, to define the facts. I think the current Bush administration is a pretty good example of that.

A SHIFT IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

When I started working in the Senate, the Republican leaders on environmental issues were guys like Bob Stafford, senior member from the state of Vermont who worked with Ed Muskie (R-ME) to pass the Clean Air Act; John Chafee, father of Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), who was a great environmental leader; Jacob Javitz (R-NY), and Lowell Weicker (R-CT). These leaders have been replaced with the likes of James Inhofe (R-OK) and Frank Murkowski, who's now the governor of Alaska, but was head of the Senate Energy Committee for years.

The leadership also moved. Republicans leaders in the Senate, such as Senator Lott of Mississippi, Senator Nickles of Oklahoma, and Senator Frist of Tennessee, represent a much more conservative brand of Republican than a previous Republican majority leader from the state of Tennessee – Howard Baker – who was really much more moderate on some of these issues. Even Senator Dole, who was a more traditional Republican conservative, was more moderate than the current leadership.

In the House we see the same effect, with the likes of Tom Delay (R-TX) really driving policy. Billy Tauzin from Louisiana, who had jurisdiction over much of the Clean Air Act and energy policy in this country, will soon be off making millions as a Washington lobbyist. He's been replaced by Joe Barton, another oil-patch Republican from the state of Texas. Don Young, from Alaska, who controls much of what is going on in the natural resources arena, is now putting together the transportation bill. So I think it's safe to say there's no square inch of America that will be safe from concrete as long as he's in charge.

The result of all of this is that the Republican Party of Teddy Roosevelt – the president who established the Forest Service, enacted the 1906 Antiquities Act (which we used to great effect in the Clinton Administration), and created five national parks, 15 national wildlife refuges and 150 national forests – has really morphed into the party of Ronald Reagan, a president who once suggested that trees were the principal source of air pollution.

And it was Mr. Reagan who put people like James Watt, Anne Gorsuch, and Rita Lavelle, a less-than stellar group of environmentalists, in charge of the agencies that are supposed to act as stewards of the environment and natural resources. I don't know if these names mean anything to you today, but they certainly made headlines when they were appointed – and then when most of them were indicted back in the early 1980s.

THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION

The leader of the Reagan Republican Party, I think, is indeed President George W. Bush, in contrast to his father. Maybe his father retained a little bit of those Connecticut-Maine roots that he had. I think that the current President Bush does everything he can to shake that image and pretend that he's never set foot up here in the Northeast. I have to tell you that if you look at President George W. Bush's policies, they remind you of John Kenneth Galbraith's observation: "It is a far, far better thing to have a firm anchor in nonsense than to put out on the troubled seas of thought." I think that is, to some extent, characteristic of the way the president approaches the entire issue of the environment.

I'm not going to go through President George W. Bush's entire track record on the environment, but I would like to just hit a few of the highlights. For example, his decision to shift the cost of Superfund cleanup from polluters to taxpayers. His decision to let power plants increase SO₂ emissions by 50 percent and to increase mercury emissions by a factor of three. His 35 percent increase in taxpayer subsidies for timber companies to buy trees in the national forests. His administration's cheerleading on behalf of mountaintop removal by coal companies in Appalachia. His drive to exempt one-fifth of the nation's wetlands from federal protection.

I would also note that in this administration, Mike Leavitt, the former Governor of Utah and current EPA Administrator, measures success by just saying they're not going to do the things they said they were going to do. So he's taking great credit for the fact that they've at least stalled this approach on wetlands. It's under reconsideration and that is viewed as environmental progress today! Of course, there's the President's decision, early on, to trash the Kyoto Protocol, breaking his commitment to regulating CO₂ from coal-fired power plants. The list goes on. I don't have to dwell on it.

I think, though, what's actually more shameful than any of those policies that I've just mentioned has been the President's effort to portray his assault on the environment as opening up just one more front in the war on terrorism.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

I was reminded of that last Sunday. I don't know how many of you watched "Meet The Press" and saw the president being interviewed by Tim Russert. In this interview Bush said, trying to frame the election, "I'm a war president. I make decisions here in the Oval Office on foreign policy matters with war on my mind." And I think it's that same persona – that person he's trying to project – that is being employed now to push the president's environmental agenda. So, of course, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is repackaged as a piece, an important piece, of the war on terrorism, notwithstanding that it was being pursued as part of the Vice President's energy policy well in advance of 9/11.

Under the guise of thwarting terrorists, and in spite of advice from Governor Tom Ridge, who was then serving as homeland security czar in the White House, President Bush moved to gut the right-to-know standards that help communities protect themselves from toxic chemicals.

Both Governor Ridge and Governor Whitman, the EPA Administrator, suggested that the way to deal with chemical plants and the dangers they pose (which are quite substantial) from a security perspective was to regulate, to do risk reduction at those plants, to limit the amount of chemicals that were stored, and to administer just-in-time manufacturing. Despite that advice from his EPA Administrator and from his homeland security czar, the White House chose a different path, which was to simply remove any information about chemical plants from the public domain. In that way, communities wouldn't know what the risk was, they couldn't demand further action, and at least the problem was swept under the rug.

My favorite example of this strategy to put environmentalism into the terrorism loop is the link between national security and endangered species. It's called the Readiness and Range Preservation Initiative. It is intended to give the Department of Defense immunity – not only from the Endangered Species Act, but also from the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Superfund Law, the Clean Air Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

During my tenure in the White House as Chief of Staff, I served on the National Security Council. We put a lot of time into improving military readiness and I believe we got a lot of results. I think the war in Afghanistan and, indeed, the initial days of the war in Iraq, indicate that this was an armed forces and an army that was built up, really, in the late 1990s. But I have to confess that as I sat in the Situation Room and we discussed these matters I can't recall anyone out of any of the branches of the armed services – certainly not the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – warning us that we had to do something about “those damn whales”!

Not only is this administration getting away with proposing these kind of initiatives – they're often enacting them. Some of those provisions I've just mentioned have already been passed into law. How can that be? After all, I think Americans do believe in a clean environment. And as a rule, we don't really like oil companies digging in wildlife refuges. We believe that people do have the right to know about the chemicals they're being exposed to. We're more inclined as Americans to say, “Can't we just leave those whales alone?”

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Last fall I saw a Harris poll on global warming. It said that 54 percent of Americans who have heard of global warming and the Kyoto and Bonn agreements believe that supporting agreements to limit greenhouse gases is the right thing to do. Only 30 percent disagree. So I think environmentalists like the NRDC, the League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, or people who are actively engaged in the

political work of the environmental movement can say, “The public is with us.” You can feel pretty good about that. And I think we should. I think there’s been a kind of sea change in the public attitude over the last 30 years concerning protection of the environment.

But we sometimes make the mistake of confusing support that’s extensive with support that’s intensive. Do Americans want a clean environment? I think the answer to that is clearly yes, but perhaps we want a country that’s safe from terrorism even more. And it’s not just concern about national security. We worry about clean air and clean water, but if you talk to a working mom here in New Haven who’s just lost her job, she’s probably more likely to have other priorities than voting on who’s got a better plan to clean the air.

Right now there are 15 million Americans who don’t have jobs. We’ve had the worst job performance record in the last three years any time since World War II and the Great Depression. Last year, 26 percent of Americans lacked the money they need to pay for their family’s health care needs. It’s not that people don’t agree with what the environmental movement has to say. It’s just that sometimes what environmentalists are saying isn’t very important in exercising the vote.

I assume that some of you may have taken an introductory psychology class at some point in your undergraduate career. I was a psychology student, so you’ll excuse me for a second. When I was in school, we studied something called Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs. In 1943, the psychologist Abraham Maslow published a theory of human motivation. In it he argued that people follow a fairly rigid sequence of satisfying their needs. He said we’re first concerned with our basic physiological needs, like having enough food to eat, being sheltered, and being warm.

Once those kinds of needs are addressed, we look to fulfill a need for safety and stability. Afterwards, people move on to a sense of love or belonging, and a sense of community. Once we achieve *that*, we move up the ladder to addressing our need for self-esteem and

recognition from others. (I think, having worked with a lot of politicians, that the need for recognition is really above or below, depending on your ranking, the need to get food and shelter!) But Maslow had a slightly different conceptualization of this. Only after we've done all that, Maslow would say, are individuals ready to address their need for self-actualization (his term). Self-actualization includes the fight for world peace or finding God or pursuing the arts or protecting the natural order.

Well, I think, to a great extent, Americans follow Maslow's sequence in how they decide to vote. During a period of war, a period of recession or a period when real wages are stagnant, when jobs aren't being created, things seem more pressing, perhaps, than protecting the environment.

That's not to say that there aren't voters who put a good deal of importance on this. Particularly some independent swing voters and younger voters – both men and women, by the way. I think that younger voters pay a higher-order attention to politicians' platforms and votes on the environment.

And the environment can be even more important to voters when it's perceived as a question of health – especially children's health. A particularly interesting phenomenon now is that the environment is a very driving issue in the Hispanic community and one that groups like the NRDC and Sierra Club and others have latched onto in terms of their public education campaigns and environmental justice.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

The Bush administration has also figured out that these issues of health and environment can affect people's lives. Let me give you an example. Today the EPA is proposing a cap-and-trade approach to cutting mercury emissions from oil and coal-fired power plants. They claim that since it worked in reducing sulfur dioxide emissions, it'll do the same for mercury. Just this week, EPA released a new report in conjunction with FDA finding that mercury tends to concentrate in

the umbilical cords of developing fetuses. So it's a particular problem with regard to this issue of children's health.

But this notion of cap-and-trading and viewing mercury in the same way that has been effective with sulfur dioxide is a problem. Mercury *isn't* sulfur dioxide. That's why Carol Browner, during the waning days of the Clinton administration, designated mercury as a dangerous pollutant and set a December 2003 deadline for power plants to install the technology to achieve real cuts in mercury emissions. It doesn't do you much good if you're in Chicago and your kids are eating fish that are caught in Lake Michigan to know that there have been reductions in Montana and maybe the trout are safer out there. Mercury is a toxic that's a persistent pollutant. It accumulates in the food chain and that was the reason that Administrator Browner took the approach that she did.

But the real issue ends up being "who controls the megaphone." If you only hear from the Administration, from the President, that we want to reduce mercury, that we want to improve children's health, and we want to do it in the most cost-effective way, it sounds pretty good. It sounds like "healthy forests" and "clear skies" and all the other language that the president has used.

In contrast, if people think about how mercury, lead, and nitrous oxide emissions are causing asthma attacks in their children, sending people to emergency rooms, and causing thousands of premature deaths, people are going to stand up and say, "We've got to do something about this, and we ought to do it now." And they may actually start saying something else, which is "We could do something about this by changing the administration . . . overturning policies to care for our kids instead of the electric power utilities."

LANGUAGE VS. ACTION

This question of who you're listening to and what story you're hearing is one in which the issue begins to transcend the environment, even public health. The question begins to be "Whose side are you on?" and "Whose side is this administration on?" And I tell you, that worries the administration. It's why they spent so much time, at least in the 2003 State of the Union, talking about these issues.

Just a year ago Republican pollster Frank Luntz told GOP leaders, "[T]he environment is probably the single issue on which Republicans

in general – and President Bush in particular – are most vulnerable.”² Why? Because the public already thinks Republicans are “in the pockets of corporate fat cats who rub their hands together and chuckle maniacally as they plot to pollute America for fun and profit.” That’s his quote – not mine.

I think Mr. Luntz actually understands the same thing we do on the progressive side, and that is that, on environmental questions, the contrast between President Bush’s words and his deeds is really quite stark. The gulf is so enormous that it raises fundamental doubts about who he is, what he really believes in . . . and when he closes the door in the Oval Office, who he’s fighting for.

The President evoked the image of the Oval Office so powerfully in his interview with Tim Russert when he spoke about his decision to sit behind the desk that John Kennedy and Bill Clinton sat behind, and to wear the mantle of responsibility and make those decisions when the doors are closed. But I think if people begin to think about who he’s fighting for, who he’s listening to, and who gets to go behind those doors, it’s a very different equation and a different matter in the election.

I think the President and his advisors know this. That’s why he keeps insisting he’s cutting air pollution from power plants by 70 percent, even though he delayed implementation of the current requirements in the Clean Air Act. He’s also saying that, because of his leadership, Americans will have healthier forests, lakes and estuaries, acid rain will be virtually eliminated, and smog will be dramatically reduced, protecting Americans from respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Remember? . . . Remember the “healthy forests,” and “clear skies.” It’s the language that matters.

I keep coming back to that 2003 State of the Union address. I think it’s very interesting if you look at the polling before and after. The President spent about the same amount of time speaking about the economy as he spent talking about the environment. Despite this, he had almost no impact on his job approval ratings on the economy. They didn’t budge at all. In my view, that’s because people feel it, know it, and under-

² Luntz, Frank. “Straight Talk – The Environment: A Cleaner, Safer, Healthier America.” The Luntz Research Company, pp.131-146.

stand that issue. You can't b.s. them on the economy. If they don't have a job, if they don't have money in their pocket, they know what their real wages are. On the environment, it all sounded good and he seemed like he really cared about it all. And his job approval numbers on the environment jumped more than on any other single indicator as a result.

It's interesting. This year the president chose a different course in his 2004 State of the Union address. He didn't talk about the environment at all. It was a very partisan speech. It was a very hot, heavy partisan speech that had almost nothing to say about the environment or the economy. In contrast to recent States of the Union (*most* recent States of the Union), his job approval actually tanked after the speech. I think that was the beginning of a kind of slide that he's had on the economy, the Kay report on the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and a budget that doesn't add up. This is part of a slide that the president's been having on credibility and trust.

A 2004 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

You might ask, "Is all that environmentalists have to do is help voters connect the dots?" That's what the leaders of the League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, and other environmental organizations have to do.

I think both the environmental movement and the Democratic candidate have to do more than just connect the dots between the President's credibility gap and his record on his use of power in office. You can't only offer a critique of what George W. Bush is doing on the environment. You've got to offer a positive, more compelling vision to let voters know that to us – people who believe in environmental protection, protecting public health, and sound stewardship of the envi-

ronment – it isn't just campaign rhetoric. It's fundamental to who we are. I think the candidate has to project this as part of his core belief.

I think you can point to history. I say this as a Democrat and someone who's very proud of President Clinton's environmental record. You can go back to President Carter and the protection of the Alaska wilderness, which was a tremendous use of executive power that led to passage of ANILCA that protected so much of Alaska. I think if you come back to the Clinton administration, what we did on clean water, the protection of roadless areas, and the use of the Antiquities Act to create monuments around the country illustrates the use of this executive power. President Clinton set aside more land than Teddy Roosevelt or any other President since Teddy Roosevelt (depending on how you calculate what we did in Hawaii). The improvement in both automobile emissions through the so-called Tier II standards and the clean diesel initiative illustrate what the Clinton administration did to protect the environment. Having blocked the diesel regulations, the Bush administration takes credit for deciding to unblock them and letting them go into effect, not exactly a bold initiative. It's interesting . . . but I guess we all do that a little bit.

But campaigns are really not about the past. They're ultimately about the future. And so I think that the campaign is likely to be run from an environment perspective, largely on an energy platform. And that's where the President is really quite vulnerable and where the Democratic campaign is likely to go.

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Today the U.S. imports 51 percent of its oil. Two and a half million barrels come from the Persian Gulf. We're using 25 percent of the world's oil production, yet we have only three percent of the world's oil reserves. That's why – notwithstanding two wars in Iraq in the last 15

years, the oil shocks of the 1970s, and a global war against terrorism, which obviously has its roots in the Middle East – the Persian Gulf’s leverage on the U.S. is actually rising today. Eighty-five percent of the increase in oil production between 2010 and 2020 is likely to come from the Middle East and that skews our foreign policy. Tom Friedman, the New York Times columnist, has said that “We view the entire region as one giant gas station.”

I think that’s really inhibited us from refusing to take stands that we should have in the past: on behalf of women’s rights, on behalf of free speech, and on behalf of the right of workers to organize in that area of the world, just to name a few. Democratic as well as Republican administrations bear this burden. We’ve had a dishonest relationship with the regimes in the Middle East.

And if you think about other places we go to get oil – the Caspian Basin, Nigeria, Angola, Venezuela – the picture’s not particularly any prettier in the rest of the world. The Bush administration has reacted by promoting drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge and by trying to provide tremendous subsidies – \$31 billion in the energy bill that’s currently stalled in the Senate – to the oil and gas industry.

But the truth is, and I think everybody here that’s studied the issue understands, you can’t drill your way out of this energy problem. There’s not enough oil in the United States, and there’s not enough oil in friendly places in the world to do that.

I think this administration is largely just moving the whole energy debate and energy policy in the wrong direction. And it’s understandable why, in the spring of 2001, when the president first came into office, he put his vice president in charge. He was the CEO of a company you may have heard of recently called Halliburton. I won’t go into Halliburton. But I think it’s no accident that when the vice president’s energy task force met with environmental organizations on the energy report, they had 13 meetings – but 12 of those meetings occurred on the day after the report was printed and before it was released. One meeting was held with a consumer organization and 158 meetings were held with energy companies. So I think we got what we paid for . . . or what we bargained for.

A NEW VISION

But, again, I think that this year we can't talk only about the shortcomings of the president's energy policy and the administration's ties to the oil industry. We have to do something more, something more visionary. Actually, Senator Kerry has offered a fairly compelling vision. During this campaign, Senator Kerry has made it a centerpiece of what he's talked about. It is a vision that invests in American technology, that invests in jobs here, that creates a real kind of pathway toward better conservation, and deals, finally, with the issue of global warming. I think that's why he's earned the support of the League of Conservation Voters, which endorsed him for the New Hampshire primary. We've got to use our energy resources more wisely, and I think that if you do it in a way that makes the right kind of investments and creates a more robust, sustainable electric grid, you can actually create jobs in this country.

I think if you had lost your job at a plant and had to go to work at a convenience store, that might be a pretty compelling vision: a cleaner environment, a more prosperous economy, and less sending of our sons and daughters overseas. I think that's a vision to which millions of people can subscribe.

Let me close by reflecting on the fact that I think that this vision is one that marries better with our values as Americans. I think it actually marries up with, and is grounded more in, the faith that we display as Americans.

You know, over the last dozen years or so, the idea that the worlds of faith and politics have something to say to each other in this country has gotten a bit of a bad rap. After all, the religious leaders who always seemed to get the widest attention always seemed to be the ones with the narrowest minds. You know: Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Dobson.

But there's a tradition of faith in public life that predates any of those people. It was the tradition of social reformer and Presbyterian minister Norman Thomas, the tradition of a fierce advocate for the

poor named Thomas Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, a tireless voice for social justice named Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and one that was shared by his good friend, a Baptist minister named Martin Luther King, Jr. That's the religious tradition with which I identify. I'm sure many of you probably do, too.

It's a tradition that not only calls on each of us to stand up for the dignity of others, but to act as responsible stewards of the Earth. We were taught in the Bible to love your neighbor as yourself. At a time when global warming threatens so many of the world's people with droughts, floods, disease, and hunger, can there be any doubt that loving our neighbors requires us to make sure our country contributes not to ravaging the world, but to renewing it?

Governor Howard Dean – I don't want to take a shot at Governor Dean, he's probably had enough shots taken at him – was famous for talking about the Book of Job (and getting it in the wrong testament). There's actually a wonderful passage I'd like to close by reading. In the book of Job, it says, "Ask the beasts, they will teach you, the birds of the sky and they will tell you. Or speak to the earth, it will teach you, the fish of the sea, they will inform you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the eternal has done this?"

That's why I think environmental politics is not just about TV spots, direct mail, and opinion polls. In the final analysis, it's about who we are as a people, what America's all about, our values, our faith, and our sense of responsibility for each other and to this world.

I'm convinced that Americans want a president who's willing to talk about these responsibilities, who's not afraid to protect our natural resources for our children and our grandchildren. Americans want a president who's willing to fight for the public's health. I'm convinced that if environmentalists stay true to who we are, by this time next year, we might have a new occupant at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Q & A

Q: How can environmentalists better focus in on our priorities, and how can we then use them in the elections?

A: Most voters end up approaching issues that are closer to home, so from a national perspective it's difficult to prioritize because if you do polling in Michigan it's going to be different than if you're polling in Los Angeles or New Mexico. The one thing that ties a good deal of this together, though, is energy policy and its relationship to air emissions and thinking of CO₂ as a pollutant. I think the public is sketchy on this – the last couple of years have reduced their resolve to take specific actions on climate change. That's the issue that needs to be communicated because it ties together job creation, environmental protection, economic development, stewardship, and most importantly, it has the security dimension.

Q: How can Democrats and environmentalists better empathize with our opponents?

A: It's particularly challenging because of the President himself and his team at the White House. The breaking point was after 9/11 when I think that the Democrats really wanted to come together in support of the President and the country, and they felt used by that process. It's very hard to rebuild a level of trust. So, their reaction is maybe not tactically smart, but they feel burned by someone for whom they wanted to find common ground.

Maybe there's such a cultural divide, or an ideological divide, that you just can't communicate with the third of the country that's driving us in a much more radically conservative direction. There are, however, plenty of people of goodwill who think the President is a person they can personally relate to – they like his competency, they like his plainness. These are things that people in the center find quite appealing. I think that the question for liberals is: how do you reach those people in a dialogue that respects their values and opens up to the way they view America?

I don't think it's a hard sell on this particular set of issues because I think there's a pretty broad swath of the country that essentially agrees about the fact that government has a role to play on the environment, that corporations are not likely to do the right thing, and that mandatory controls have proven effective. Maybe environment is an issue

that actually does bridge that divide and even opens up and begins a dialogue that can lead to more common ground, in at least that pink section of the country.

Q: What are your impressions of the 2000 election and how does that play into the elections this year?

A: From a political perspective, I don't think there's a real question that Ralph Nader cost Al Gore the Electoral College vote. You can debate whether or not that was the case in different areas of the country, but in Florida Nader clearly cost Gore the election.

The Green Party should have been a critical wake-up call for the Democrats and if we don't listen to what people are saying who are passionate about the Green Party, I think that would be a mistake. Nader, however, is a particular phenomenon of his own, almost independent of the Green Party.

I think the judgment that there wasn't a bit of difference between Gore and Bush has historically proven to be suspect. I think the passion of people who feel disenfranchised by both the Democratic and Republican parties is more intense now against the President. So I think the chances of Nader getting the vote he got last time are slim. I can't imagine that Nader could mount that sort of challenge as an independent this time around.

Al Gore's campaign made a calculation to de-emphasize the environment because it didn't seem to appeal to swing voters and they were worried about states like West Virginia and Tennessee, which he ultimately lost, where they thought the environmental message hurt him. I think that his advisors were telling him, "Look, I know you really care about this, but don't talk about it very much." They took something away from him on that calculation. They took his passion away from him by telling him to stick to the lock box, the patient's bill of rights, etc. They really took his passion out of him, and that meant that the Republican attacks on him began to stick, and it was really unfair. Al Gore has a core and this is at the center of that core. The campaign's failure to project that was a critical tactical mistake in the 2000 election.

Congressional Perspectives on the Environment and the 2004 Election

Christopher Shays (R-CT)
U.S. House of Representatives

February 19, 2004

I want to talk with you about leadership and the need – the absolute, imperative need – for environmental action. I honestly believe that the environment is one of the most important concerns I have as a member of Congress. We're not going to have a world to live in if we continue our neglectful ways. I believe that with all my heart and soul.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Among environmental groups, Congress, and this administration, sadly, there is little effort to resolve what we can agree on, no real effort to resolve what divides us, and no apparent effort to participate in leading a world desperate to be led. Led not by the dictates of a powerful nation, but led by the most effective kind of leadership – the kind that listens, learns, helps, and leads – and then listens again.

It's easy for us to be good environmentalists without being good leaders. It's also easy for us to be critical of the Bush administration. Clear Skies, Healthy Forests, the Artic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and our lack of movement on climate change are all examples of poor environmental policy. But when we are critical without creating a vision that others can buy into, we aren't leading.

In times like these, the question is not which policies we should follow. In many cases, such as in the Clean Air Act, the right policy is already in place. We know what it is, and we need to work to defend its strength as one of the seminal environmental laws of all time – a law that the rest of the world uses as an example of how to do environmental legislation right. At times like these, the question is *how*. How do we keep the progress that we have worked so hard to accomplish? How do we move the ball forward on crucial policies like increased Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards and effective clean air policy?

I believe the environmental community has a responsibility to move beyond itself and reach out to new constituencies – to build a grand coalition that shares a vision for an improved environment. The environmental community has much strength; it hangs together quite well. But there is reticence to concede on any issue because one part of the community doesn't want to sell out another. This is an important strength – and there are certainly some issues, such as ANWR, that should never be compromised away. But this “hanging together” can end up being like “circling the wagons.” It can be defensive, and not terribly effective, in finding new strength to move forward.

Environmentalists need to reach out to industry, truly. We should also be reaching out to churches, ranchers, fishermen and so many others. I think that right now some environmentalists may see industry as an opportunity for fundraising rather than understanding that corporate interests can be important allies. Environmentalists need to reach beyond the Democratic Caucus and the very few of us Republicans who are within a certain “comfort level.” Cooperation between the parties has almost disappeared for many reasons, but success in the past has come when there are substantial numbers on both sides of the aisle who want environmental progress.

The Republican Party, believe it or not, is not the enemy. We have to rebuild the coalition – we have to rebuild the bipartisan base. Vision and leadership is how that is accomplished. And if we fail, even if we fail in certain cases, we will be stronger for trying. Casting aside our assumptions and our day-to-day methods, we have an opportunity to define a new leadership on the environment. We can act together for lasting change to ensure that our world is cleaner for generations that will exist well beyond our own horizons.

We must look back on this time at which we saw that we are the key – that we, each of us, must act with all our strength to be leaders. I think we must do it now because the stakes could not be higher.

When I talk about leaders, I'm talking about every individual in this room. Sometimes it takes leadership to speak out in a class about something you're hearing that you just don't agree with. I had no qualms about standing up to the Clinton administration when they engaged in environmentally damaging policy, like their unbelievable support of the extremely destructive mountaintop coal-mining practice in West Virginia. And I do not hesitate to express my environmental views to the Bush administration either. In fact, I have met with Paula Dobriansky, Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, and Jim Connaughton of the Council on Environmental Quality, to discuss what I believe to be an absolute failure on the part of the Bush administration to involve environmentalists and Republican moderates in the formation of sound environmental policy. I asked them: Why do they seem to take so much joy in ticking off the environmental community?

The Bush administration is masterful at framing its message on the environment with good titles like the "Clear Skies," and "Healthy Forests".

But the truth is that many of the initiatives proposed by the White House exacerbate, rather than improve, the problems they target. This dichotomy of rhetoric and reality was clear throughout our debate on the energy bill, as well as in discussions of the Healthy Forests initiative and the Clear Skies initiative. In my mind, all three represent extraordinary missed opportunities to advance forward-looking, environmentally progressive legislation.

This reality highlights the challenge we face: Without new leadership on the environment, the potential for policy that melds the objectives of public interests, environmentalists, and industry is lost.

ENERGY POLICY

For decades, our country has lacked a national environmental policy. This year, we had an incredible chance to devise a forward-looking energy policy that would have increased fuel efficiency, provided incentives to make renewable energy more affordable and widely available, made polluters, including the producers of MTBE (Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether), pay for harming our environment, and advanced a renewable portfolio standard. Instead, we got quite a bad bill, which makes fiscally irresponsible and environmentally reckless decisions for the benefit of a few very profitable industries that don't need this kind of help from taxpayers.

The Bush administration framed the Energy Policy Act as a way to modernize energy production and distribution systems, promote conservation and environmentally sound production and new technologies, strengthen our economy and create new jobs, and reduce America's dependency on foreign oil. Back in November, however, my colleagues in the House passed a conference report for the Energy Policy Act that includes nearly \$23 billion in tax breaks to promote greater use of coal power plants, to renew interest in nuclear power, to encourage oil companies to drill in deep waters in the Gulf of Mexico, and to expand the generation of power through wind, among other things.

This bill includes \$11.9 billion in incentives for the oil and gas industry. It includes no requirement for electricity producers to increase their use of renewable fuels. It includes no new CAFE standards to reduce petroleum consumption. That part absolutely blows me away. It includes liability immunity for MTBE producers and a repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act – long a mainstay of consumer protection in the utility industry, limiting mergers between utility-holding companies.

What should have been a comprehensive energy policy that strengthened our energy independence, while promoting efficiency and renewable energy development, became a very robust grab bag that environmentalists had no choice but to oppose.

Although the Energy Policy Act has lost steam a bit since passing the House on November 18, it serves as a powerful example of what can happen without the new, coherent environmental leadership I mentioned.

“HEALTHY” FORESTS

Another example of environmental policy gone wrong was the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, which was signed into law December 3, 2003. I opposed the bill because I believe that focusing Forest Service personnel on active forest restoration efforts rather than managing timber sales would have offered lasting effective benefits to all who enjoy our national forests. The administration argues that the bill would reduce the threat of destructive wildfires while upholding environmental standards and encouraging early public input in the review and planning process. They argue that the bill would strengthen public participation in developing high-priority forest-health projects, reduce the complexity of environmental analysis, allow federal agencies to use the best science available to actively manage land under their protection, and provide a more effective appeals process by encouraging early public participation in project planning.

In actuality, this legislation weakens important environmental protections. You’ll see more logging and more road building. It does not sufficiently target our limited resources to protect vulnerable homes and communities from forest fires and fails to protect pristine roadless areas and fire-resistant, old-growth trees.

Instead of giving priority to areas where population centers and forests intersect, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act attempts to reduce forest fires by weakening environmental protections and increasing logging on federal public lands far from people and their property. This is simply the wrong approach to forest protection, and its impacts will have drastic consequences for public lands.

CLEAR SKIES

The Clear Skies Initiative is another good example of environmental policy that is well marketed but just does not go far enough to fix the problem – and in some cases goes backwards. I believe the threat from global warming is very real. We must act now to combat potentially catastrophic climate change, but the Bush administration's Clear Skies Initiative does not include regulation on the number one greenhouse gas: carbon dioxide.

The Clear Skies Initiative is modeled on the cap-and-trade provisions of the 1990 Clean Air Act acid rain program – a program that worked. On Feb. 27, 2003, Congressman Joe Barton (R-TX) introduced H.R. 999 and Senator Inhofe (R-OK) introduced S. 485 – the Clear Skies Act. The bill is the legislative reality of President Bush's Clear Skies Initiative. Instead of responding to the challenge of devising a clean air policy that will dramatically improve dirty power-plant emissions in a comprehensive way, while complying with market restraints, responding to environmental projections, and reflecting public health concerns – the Clear Skies Initiative creates a mandatory program to reduce power-plant emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury by setting national caps on each pollutant. But it does not regulate carbon dioxide, and the bill weakens protections that exist in current law regarding power plant emissions of mercury.

I'm an original co-sponsor of legislation, introduced by Congressmen Obey (D-WI) and Congressman Gilchrest (R-MD) that mirrors the Climate Stewardship Act (S. 139), which was introduced by Senators McCain and Lieberman in the Senate. S. 139 was defeated in the Senate by a vote of 55 to 43 in October 2003. I believe this bill would have taken a responsible first step toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in a way that's timely, meaningful, and cost-effective. I have hope that our House bill will be more successful.

The Climate Stewardship Act regulates emissions from the electricity generation, transportation, industrial, and commercial economic sectors, which together account for 85 percent of the overall U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. It achieves reduction goals by allowing trading of emissions allowances on the open market, supported by a government inventory of emissions and emissions reductions for individual companies and utilities.

The bottom line is: to achieve real progress on clean air policy, we need to regulate carbon dioxide emissions, and we need to advance a package that has the support not only of Republicans and Democrats, but of environmentalists and industry as well.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by making these points. When Abraham Lincoln went to Gettysburg, he expected to lose the next election. Things had not been going well for him or our country. The nation had broken apart. Thousands and thousands of Americans were dying each month – on average, over 5,000 soldiers and almost an equal number of civilians – for four years, in a nation with a population of 30 million people. President Lincoln’s Cabinet was filled with appointees who believed they should be president. Those of power, industry and wealth thought Lincoln an incompetent fool and were working to replace him. So here he was, going to Gettysburg, with the opportunity to exploit a victory, rally the North against the South, and improve his electoral chances. Carl Sandburg tells us, “Lincoln’s words at Gettysburg were sacred – yet strange and familiar.”

This is part of what Lincoln said: “We cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men . . .” Now you’re saying to yourselves, “Where the hell is he going with this?” Listen to what he said: “We cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our poor power to add or detract.” Those words meant something to me – and meant a lot more when I saw it from Sandburg’s perspective. Sandburg points out that Lincoln could have said “the brave Union men.” And then he asks, “Did he have a purpose in omitting the word Union? Was he keeping himself and his utterances clear of the passion that would not be good to look back on when the time came for peace and reconciliation? Did he mean to leave an implication that there were brave Union men *and* brave Confederate men, living and dead, who struggled here?”

Now this is my point: The politician in me marvels at these questions. I hunger for this kind of strength of character and leadership in my leaders that Lincoln showed continually during his presidency.

As some of our brave soldiers come home draped in heroes' flags, and continue to die in Iraq – for a cause I believe they deeply believe in – I wonder what is being asked of me and you during these troubled times. What sacrifices should we be making to help win the peace in Iraq and the war against terrorism? What is being asked of you and me as we live our relatively carefree lives in a world that is not so carefree? I don't know about you, but I want my president and my Congressional leaders to ask more of us. Like Lincoln, I want them to care more about what history will say of us, rather than what we will say of ourselves.

The War Between the States ultimately resulted in the end of slavery. But looking back, we wonder how people could own slaves. David McCullough, another writer and historian, looks at this issue and then asks us to look at ourselves. In an interview in *Forbes* magazine in 1998, McCullough points out, "We will probably never be able to comprehend how honest, kind, Bible-reading, decent Americans could actually own people. How could they have had slavery? What was on their minds? What was wrong with them?"

But McCullough tells us, "You can be sure that someday, people are going to look back at us and say: 'What in the world were they thinking about? What kind of blinders were they wearing?'" "It's anyone's guess what will be," he says. Then McCullough goes on to say, "I suspect that they will say of what we are doing to the environment, 'Look what they did. Had they no sense at the time? No sense of responsibility? Look at what they did.'"

I know we have made significant strides over the years to protect our air, water, and habitat. But I believe that David McCullough is right. History will not be kind to us. And believe me, they won't be any kinder to environmentalists. Failing to change our neglectful ways seems unthinkable. While I have to believe we *will* wake up and

change, I wonder: Will we act soon enough so that the cure does not kill the patient?

What's alarming is that few people seem to care. What's surprising is that few people seem to know they *should* care. But that's also our hope. They just don't know.

It's time for the environmental community to move beyond itself. We have an absolute responsibility to work together to forge a coalition that shares a vision for an improved environment.

Q & A

Q: Where does your environmental ethic come from?

A: When I was in high school, Rachel Carson was writing *Silent Spring* and it was new. The word environment was new to me then, but when I went off college they started an environmental program. That was a new concept – it's almost laughable now to think that was the case. So in my formative years, I was exposed to this issue.

In 1974 I was a state legislator, and I began to focus on various issues. I tell people that being in the legislature is like going to a large university like Yale, where you are told to take a lot of different courses and get a passing grade in every one. You have to know a little about so many things. At any rate, I was exposed to it at a point when people were waking up to it, exposed to it as a legislator in the early 1970s when this movement was really strong, and I also have a daughter who has religion on this issue.

When we went to vote on the energy bill, my daughter came up to me and said, "Dad, I want to know what your position is on ANWR." I said, "Well, I don't want to mine ANWR." And the next day she gave me a paper she wanted me to read about the devastation that had occurred there already. I took the paper and had no intention of reading it. The next day she asked me if I'd read it and I said "No". The next day she asked me if I'd read it, and I said "No." Finally, I had to read it. The next day she asked me if I had read it and I said, "Yes," and walked away. She said, "What did you think?" So I stood up a little bit

and said, “Sweetie, someday you’re going to realize that when you’ve made a sale, you just take the sale.” And she said, “Dad, I know that’s your argument, but the problem is that you don’t believe passionately enough about the issue.” She didn’t just want the sale. She wanted my *passion*. Well, she got my passion. I ended up speaking on the floor of the House against it. I just wanted to tell this story to make a point. You sometimes need a little shove to do the right thing.

Q: Why do you think the White House thinks it’s good politics to attack the environmental community or environmental causes?

A: The White House thinks that the environmental movement is a Democratic movement, and even if Republicans walked on water, they wouldn’t get the support of the environmental movement. What surprises me is that, even if they’re right in the short run, they’re dead wrong in the long run.

When I spoke to the President about this issue – and I don’t want to give the impression that I speak to him every day, but when you have those moments you take advantage of them, and flying on an airplane with the President is one of those moments – on the airplane, I asked the President why he didn’t improve the CAFE standards. His response was that he believes the market is going to move people in that direction.

At his ranch in Texas, he collects the water, he recycles wastewater, he heats and cools his home from ground temperature from piping in the ground, and he thinks he practices what he preaches. And to him that speaks more than laws. So, in his mind he believes that he is a strong environmentalist. He’s never been given that recognition by the environmental movement and so he doesn’t see why he should work with them.

Do Americans Care about the Environment? A Republican Perspective

Kellyanne Conway

CEO and President, the polling companyTM inc./Woman Trend

February 26, 2004

I know you're probably here just to see if I actually have horns on my head! I may be one of maybe five or six Republicans in New Haven these days, but I am, in fact, *fairly* normal. I do appreciate the fact that you're here, because at least I know we share a commitment to what I would call the greater issues matrix – the greater public policy agenda that is informing the American populace, if not the American electorate, those being two very different things. I would imagine most people in this room are as strange as I am, meaning that you actually are politically involved somehow. And that does makes us “strange,” because less than 50 percent of the country even bothers to exercise their constitutional right to vote – a remarkable fact when you consider, especially for women, that in the span of 100 years we've gone from busting the barriers with the suffragist movement to basically having to drag people kicking and screaming to the polls to cast a ballot.

Earlier today I had some meetings in Trenton for the Republican State Committee of New Jersey. One of the candidates was asking people to sign a petition so he would have enough signatures to run for office in the upcoming Congressional elections. The amazing thing was that the people who were signing the petition were sharing stories about how, when you try to get a petition signed in their neighborhood, it's often the people who are the loudest complainers, who have the most to say, the ones who roll their eyes when you approach them, who, when you get them to sign a petition, are not registered to vote. Not even *registered*, let alone participating. It seems that is an appropriate context in which to cast the discussion today.

DO VOTERS CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

When you ask me “Do voters still care about the environment?” my answer is “Yes – of course we do.” I will answer that with data, I will answer that with cultural examples, I will answer that with additional questions. But in the broader perspective it is clear that *yes, Americans* are “concerned” about the environment.

When you boil it down to voters, we must draw a distinction. I must emphasize this because I think that far too often in today’s political and public policy arenas, very few people are making the distinction between “what Americans think” and “how voters behave.” Sometimes these are apples and oranges.

The greatest evidence we have that people care about the environment is that many of their actions suggest that they do. It’s not that people will be rushing to the polls anytime soon based solely on environmental concerns. That is not true. But if you just take a look at our culture right now, you see that there’s been a complete assimilation of environmental concerns in our lifestyles.

For example, at the grocery store they ask you, “Paper or plastic?” That didn’t exist 20 years ago. Recycling bins are ubiquitous, including in office buildings, and local municipalities have mandates that force you to recycle. Look at the type of packaging that is used, that is *allowed* to be used, according to EPA and other regulators. Even the voluntary emissions standards that are going into effect in different states, such as Governor Pataki’s program in New York, provide evidence of responses to popular and practical environmental considerations within the culture.

The greatest piece of evidence I have that people “care about the environment” derives from the largest class of non-voters – kids under the age of 18 who can’t even vote yet. The environment is being taught to them in the public school curriculum. When I was a kid (not that long ago, but long enough ago), I would come home and say, “Mom, I want to do the Rice Bowl program or the dance-athon or the

walkathon for charity.” Today the kids come home and say, “I want you to drive me to Jiffy Lube so we can recycle motor oil. I want to collect all the Diet Coke cans from the neighborhood. I want to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway or the Clean-a-Park program.” And if you turn on the cartoons on a random Saturday morning, you’ll see Captain Planet. Or you’ll see Eco-Man, who can destroy his enemies, recycle them, and then destroy them again – all in one half-hour. The most high-tech cartoon that we had on as kids was “The Jetsons” with Elroy and Astro the dog. That just shows you that there’s a real difference in our culture now with respect to the awareness of the environment.

Why is that important? Because I’d be the first to say that some in Washington are so full of themselves that they fail to realize the proper order: politics is meant to respond to culture, not the other way around. I think that the natural sequence of events has been perverted and turned on its head many times and in many ways. Politicians should take account of the way we live our lives or what we need or what we desire, and respond to that politically. Sometimes that means getting out of the way; sometimes that means passing a piece of legislation or placing an issue before the voters on the ballot in an initiative and referendum state. But it doesn’t mean passing laws and then saying, “Go ahead and alter *your* behavior.” So if you assess the culture, you’ll find that, even if we don’t realize it, the environment has moved its way not just into our consciousness, but also into our everyday practices.

Still, the difference between things that people care about concerning the environment and their voting patterns on issues concerning the environment is huge. On the matter of the environment, it’s a larger gap between interest and engagement – between agreement and intensity – than on most other issues.

Most people who tell you that they’re concerned about tax reform have it as part of their consideration in their issues matrix when they go to the polls. People talk to you about marriage or abortion or stem cell research or the Second Amendment – the more hot-button issues.

If they are more “raised eyebrows” than “shrugged shoulders” about it, chances are they consider these issues when they go to the ballot box. But the environment is something different.

In our poll, we asked people “Which of the following describes you best on the matter of the environment?” (responses are rotated to prevent bias):

- I am an active environmentalist;
- I am concerned about the environment, but not active;
- I am not concerned about the environment, and not active.

Sixty-nine percent of Americans voluntarily place themselves in the category of “concerned but not active.” I think that’s such a more important and fairer question to ask than just saying, “Do you care about the environment?”

When you ask a question like, “Do you support or oppose protecting the environment?” you see that 85 percent of Americans support protecting the environment. Eighty-five percent of Americans support improving public education; 90 percent of Americans support making sure that seniors are fed and clothed – I mean, who are the other 10 percent? Who doesn’t like these things? Who doesn’t like world peace and chocolate-chip cookies and protecting the environment? Who doesn’t like cuddly blankets in the wintertime or improving the quality of public education? That’s just feel-good phraseology. That does nothing to probe the underlying ideology. What it does is mistake intensity for what is just passive and polite agreement. If I throw a feel-good phrase in front of you – “protect the environment” – you can just nod your head in agreement. We all would. Very few people would not. I actually wouldn’t want to meet the 15 percent who said that they don’t agree with that!

But what do we really mean by saying “I’m for protecting the environment?” You can have everybody in there – from somebody who says, “The environment is the only issue I vote on, the only thing I care

about, the only thing I examine in the candidate's references. It's the only thing I listen for in debates; it's the only thing I am mindful of when they choose their running mates and they make their speeches. It's all I care about; it's all I donate to." And you can have people who just say, "Yeah, I think protecting the environment is a good idea. I mean, after all, I put my bottles out differently from my cans." They're two very different people. And so this feel-good phraseology does nothing to probe the gradations of viewpoints that one person or that one voter can have. You can agree that the environment is important – but are you gonna crawl across broken glass? Are you gonna bleed all the way to the polls, based on that issue? So the best poll questions are the ones that force you to choose, that don't make you shop at some Soviet Safeway where there are no choices on the shelf. They actually force you to choose between three or four things that matter to you.

When open-ended questions ask, "What's the most important issue facing the country today that you yourself are most concerned about?" or, asked a different way, "What's the most important issue that influences your vote?" or "What's your most important priority for the President and the Congress or the next President and the next Congress?" in those contexts, you see why the environment gets a grand total of two, three, sometimes a whopping four percent. Sometimes the take for the environment is the margin of error of the entire poll! That doesn't mean people don't care about the environment. But when a question is presented in an open-ended fashion, it is human nature to gravitate toward the thing that we need immediately. That affects not our larger orbit, so to speak, but the little circle around us called our lives.

In the late '90s, the "SHE" cluster of issues dominated – Social Security, Healthcare, Education – because there was peace and prosperity. Now the "SHE" cluster of issues has given way to the "WE" cluster of issues: War and Economy.

The main reason that people don't run to the ballot box because of the environment is a matter of pure competition; there are so many issues out there. What's more, the environment stands alone as the one where Americans tell pollsters they believe there have been measurable improvements over the last three decades, and I would say they're correct.

Seventy-three percent of Americans recently said that they were either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with the general state of the environment. Now, in a different media-sponsored poll, 82 percent of those surveyed said that the environment would be "extremely," "very," or "somewhat" important to their vote this year. That's fine, too. Those two do not conflict. That's because those are two very different questions. Many people ask, "Can't you [a pollster] just ask the question you want? Isn't one of the questions biased?" There's nothing biased about these questions, but they're probing different values in your mind, and different levels of intensity.

One question is asking how satisfied you are – "Are you *satisfied* with the state of the environment?" – and you say, "Yes." The other question asks, "How *important* is the environment to how you vote?" and we're saying, "Oh, it's so important." This is because we like free Q-tips in this country if you're handing them out. *Everything's* "important" to us until you tell us what the cost is – whether in time, money or hassle – or if you tell us that if you choose A, you have to give up B, or maybe even B and C and D. Then we start to say that A doesn't look so good anymore. The most legitimate polling questions are the ones that respect Americans' intelligence rather than try to foist opinions on them and then test them two weeks later as though they're testing their opinion. (There are lots of polls out there that are *creating* public opinion instead of *measuring* it. Trust me.)

ENVIRONMENTAL PHRASEOLOGY VS. IDEOLOGY

The polling questions that respect *you* are the questions on the environment that allow you to make choices the way that you do in your daily lives. I don't think I've ever met a single one of you before,

but I guarantee that whatever you are wearing right now is not the only thing in your closet. I guarantee it. So you chose to wear today's clothes to the exclusion of everything else. Even if your eyes were closed and the lights were out, you chose to wear it because your hands went *here* (motioning up) instead of *there* (motioning down).

If you're going to your favorite restaurant tonight, they'll say "Oh good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Smith." After they seat you, they don't say, "Here's your table and here's your dinner." They hand you a menu of options. And if you've been in a restaurant anytime in the last 10 years, you see that these menus of options look like the Manhattan phone-book. You try to get through them and make a tough decision. The dialogue goes something like this:

My husband will say to me, "What are you going to have?"

And I will respond, "Well, what are you going to have?"

He will say something like, "Well, I was thinking about the salmon."

And I will say, "I'll have the filet."

"Well, that was my second choice," my husband will say.

"Okay, well, why don't you get the one and I'll get the other and we'll share a little," I'll respond.

He'll say, "Okay. Do you want an appetizer?"

"I don't know, because I may want dessert," I'll say.

"Well, if you want the Grand Marnier soufflé you have to order it now because it takes 35 minutes," he'll say.

It's the most stressful part of the day! And just when you've got it all situated, here comes the waiter who announces, "In addition to our usual menu, we have 17 specials today – just for aperitif!"

That's great. That's America. Those are choices. We are a country of many options: what to wear, what to eat, where to go, what to say, or do or not to do – so why should poll questions say to you, "Support or Oppose?" "Agree/Disagree?" "Yes/No?" and make you nod your head like that red cockatoo that so many people are trying to save? That makes no sense.

So the best questions on the environment are actually the ones that don't ask you if you care about the environment. Because what happens with questions like that is what happened to campaign finance reform. That law just came out of polls. That is a bipartisan piece of legislation, which is now law, passed by a Republican House, a Democratic Senate, signed into law by a Republican president, and it came from polls, polls, polls. They asked, "Do you support campaign finance reform?" And we, the American people, said, "Oh, yeah! Campaign finance reform? Delicious!" It turns out no one really knows what this thing called "campaign finance reform" IS. That includes the lawyers and some judges who preside on the courts.

It's not to say that people are factually ignorant. To demonstrate that the public is starved for basic information about the terms, phrases, words, and the so-called issues that are swirling all about them, a couple of knowledge questions in the poll never hurt. There's a huge difference between saying, "I'm for campaign finance reform" and determining individual priorities. To do this we use a question like, "Which of the following are the most important to you and your family? Pick three issues that are most important to you in this year's election." When the choices are "reform the campaign finance laws," "provide a prescription drug benefit for seniors," "protect natural resources and the environment," "improve quality of air and water," "preserve social security," "allow young people to put some of their Social Security money in personal accounts," or "fight the war on terror," you can get very different responses.

In this context, campaign finance reform calls to mind the Sesame Street song in a list: "*one of these things does not belong here, one of these things is not the same . . .*" It gets 80 percent when it stands alone, because all you did was ask people to nod their head like bobblehead dolls. But when you ask, "Okay, but what's *most* important to you?" it falters and almost fades.

Ladies and gentlemen, policy is being made all across this country based on polls that ask Americans to respond to feel-good phraseology rather than probing underlying ideology. The environment is no exception.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF REPUBLICANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

What we have also found in polling is that the environment has now become almost a theme and a proxy more than just an issue. In the 1990s, I had written a document called, “Ignoring the Environment Would Be Hazardous to Republican Health.” My argument was that of all issues where the two parties can claim one advantage over the other (this is certainly pre-9/11) the environment has persisted as an issue where the Democratic Party generally – and the Democratic Congress specifically – claims primacy and enhanced credibility over Republicans in terms public perceptions regarding which party is better able to handle the issue.

My entire argument was that when you juxtapose that presumption on the part of many in the electorate with what’s going on in the culture – with kids coming home with the environment and their environmental concerns in their book bags – then the Republican Party needs a response. Speaking as a Republican strategist, right now many Republican governors and a number of local Republican office holders (city council members, mayors, and municipal chairs) are doing more for the environmental concerns of their constituents than you hear on a grander scale nationally or internationally.

That makes some sense because, for many Americans, the “environment” is a proxy for development, overdevelopment, and open space preservation. When people talk about development – we’ve actually teased that out in a state like New Jersey, to find out if voters mean commercial development, residential development, or retail development – we found that commercial development and retail development are looked upon very differently by people, something I would not have thought of unless we had tested it qualitatively in focus groups and one-on-one interviews. It turns out that if you ask them, “Do you care about sprawl, or overdevelopment?” it’s almost an insult; of course, they have some concern. Ask them *specifically* what they’re concerned about, and you will find that among people who say that they support mass transit, they really mean they think that *you* should take it. The car is a symbol of freedom and mobility. So if *you* take mass transportation, there will be less traffic and congestion for me and *of course* that’s a great idea. And it’s an idea where some people are willing to put their money because mass transit is a fabulous

idea in which they will never partake personally. So something like mass transit is an issue that also needs three or four good questions to be fully understood through polling data.

We also find that residential development is something that must be teased out in a couple of different questions. In the past, people believed that the solution for overdevelopment, residentially, was to build more high-density houses. But there are counties in this country where people just don't want to hear that. Do you know why? Because they've figured out that you're saving space by creating high-density housing – but then you're inviting that many more people to sit on the roads, to clog up the highways, to deplete the resources, to be with them on the bike paths and in the parks. They've figured out that by mandating that single-family homes be on a larger lot, you gave up a little more property but you can control and plan the people who can actually live in the county. Very curious what's going on, and it's nothing that you'll ever read about in the national newspapers, it's nothing you'll ever hear out of a candidate for president's mouth. Are you kidding? Who's going to throw money at them for saying that? Yet most people are concerned about environmental issues closer to home.

In my view, many environmentalists really missed a tremendous opportunity over the last two and a half years to lay down a little bit of their pride and ego, and a ton of their self-interest, and get involved in homeland security and international global security. There's a tremendous role for environmental activists to play in these arenas, since the number one environmental concern for people is drinking water and the number two concern is air quality. This demands a higher level of engagement among so-called "first responders" and those individuals and organizations who can somehow elevate awareness and action in ensuring that our air and water supplies are protected from acts of terrorism.

Second from last on the list of environmental concerns according to polls is global warming. The fact is you had the U.S. Senate voting on the Kyoto Protocol 95-to-0, including John Kerry and Ted Kennedy as part of that 95. Here in Connecticut, Democratic Senators Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman were a part of the 95. Everybody you can imagine. Strom Thurmond was a part of the 95. Ninety-five to zero. Well if it's 95 to 0, it doesn't show it was a winning issue – it shows that it was a lack of priority. People are telling you drinking water and air quality are their top priority. That is truer now after 9/11. Americans are scared about contamination of the air supply, of the food supply, and of the water supply. These are real concerns for people. And yet they often communicate that in a non-environmental fashion.

The environment is also a proxy for compassion – and I don't say that because it's a word that the President uses. If you go back to my document in the '90s, when many Republicans had no idea who George Bush or Karl Rove were, you will see that that word was in there then, too. It's the whole idea that you can show that you care about something that literally is common and usual. Just showing up and giving some voice and visibility to the environment enhances your credibility as someone who cares about something other than the traditional matrix of issues . . . tax reform, education, campaign finance reform, and Social Security . . . This is something bigger than that and it really enhances the trust factor if you can say it and mean it. People look at you and they believe that you're comfortable in your own skin in conveying the message.

We've got good examples of local government agencies doing what is right on the environment. I'll give you a *great* example, because they're in the news often these days at the Supreme Court level, but also in the Florida newspapers on a daily basis. In Florida, the South Florida Water Management District represents 16 counties. One of their major tasks is the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project. It is the largest project of its kind in the entire world. It is a multi-billion dollar project that's meant to restore the Everglades. It is mandated by Congress. It is a federal and state partnership – the Army Corps of Engineers is involved, the Congress is involved, and the state government of Florida is involved. The list of partners goes on and on, and it's been through several different ideologically inclined administrations in Florida and the Congress. The project has been able to

reduce phosphorus levels by more than 25 percent more than people had anticipated. That is so significant because what was being demanded was far less than that.

ENVIRONMENT AS A THEME

In the end, I think the environment fits very nicely into what many Americans are looking for now in themes rather than in issues. In describing these broader themes, we refer to it as FAST, the “FAST track” – Fairness, Affordability, Security, Truth in Advertising. These are the four themes that, through tons of research, qualitative and quantitative, we’ve arrived at as being the ones that people care about.

With respect to “fairness” – fairness has replaced equality as a core governing value in this country – you hear far less about “equal” than you do about “fair” – which is being applied to reasonable environmental considerations where property rates concerns are being balanced along with ecosystem concerns. Fairness is also favored in the non-environmental arena in ideas about legal integration, school choice, across-the-board tax relief or the flat tax.

The second theme is “affordability.” That takes into account kitchen-table economic considerations. People often say, “How affordable is it to us?” That also means affordable in terms of time, hassle factor, and (of course) money, for example, the affordability of quality education, alternative education, college education, graduate school education and the affordability of retirement when you *choose* to. Not just the affordability of saving for a rainy day, but the affordability for providing for a sunny day *now* – not having to sock away every penny but being able to enjoy your money now. The affordability component of these themes is being applied by more and more local governments and by more and more *voters* (if not *Americans*) to their calculation of whether a particular regulation or recommendation makes sense. They are no longer willing to write a blank check to fund something that sounds good or is “for the kids” or is “for the birds” – which is why, I think, you’re seeing a halt to many of what was a very crisp, energetic, muscular passage of multiple pieces of legislative initiatives over the last decade or two decades.

You see, people now say, “When you put a price tag on it” or “You tell me it’s going to Peter, not Paul, and I like Paul better” or “Paul is

my program,” then they take a step back. I think part of that, too, is that Americans are more sophisticated than they’ve ever been. They’re stakeholders; they’re part of the ownership class. The majority of Americans own their own home – and that includes every racial and ethnic group in this country. That is an amazing thing – it’s the new American dream personified. You have an increase in home ownership and those people have a tremendous sensitivity to regulation policy and environmental concerns. So the affordability touches into concerns of the environment.

The “S” part of the FAST track – security – is certainly the most prominent and dominant theme in this entire matrix. But you hear so many people talk about security day in and day out, and they’re usually talking about the war on terror or the rebuilding of Iraq or homeland security. Of course it starts with international and homeland security, but the discussion goes much further. Security to people is also the security to allow things to stay the way you know them to be, want them, and expect that they will remain. That’s security to people. I would call it status quo or “static-ism,” but we like to say “security” as Americans and it means that we still love change and revolution, but what we enjoy is our own respective versions of the status quo. Security allows us to have things that are very placid and very normal and very expected in a world that is filled with insecurity and inconsistency.

Security and balance are also very important to the environment. The fact is that inertia is a very powerful force unless it is overtaken by friction – and that’s why so many Americans politically will just sort of shrug their shoulders or flick their wrists and say, “I don’t know” or “I don’t care” or “Whatever.” As an aside, every time Bob Dole ended a sentence with “whatever,” when he ran for President in 1996, I’m thinking, *if he can just make that his campaign slogan, he might get somewhere.* Because the rest of the country is saying “Whatever.” But it just didn’t fly when you had the candidate of the party ending sentences with “Whatever.”

The whole matter of converting the somewhat interested into the very engaged is a really tough row to hoe on the environment because it means asking people to do some-

thing about it, to actualize their frustration. And if people feel the way that 69 percent of them report, “very” or “some-what” satisfied with the environment, it’s difficult enough to get them to run to the ballot box out of fear, frustration, anger, or protest to make a change or ignite a revolution. And it’s very difficult to get people to go to the ballot box when they think something’s going well just to pull the lever as a way of saying “Atta, boy. Keep going with that.”

The final theme is Truth in Advertising. I think the “T” part of these themes that are so important to Americans are all issues of the environment. The truth has really taken a beating on the matter of environmental debate in the last several years. Everybody has very subjective scientific standards and they roll out their own experts and academics to support them empirically. We have shoddy polling numbers and sketchy economic numbers being put out there to scare people.

Americans don’t like being scared right now. They just don’t like it. I would say that to anyone who’s trying to scare them about the war. I would say that about anyone trying to scare them about the environment. We aren’t going to buy it this time because the world around us is depressing enough. We don’t need politicians to tell us, “You have to be ready about this or we could all die tomorrow,” or “Don’t drink that water.” Instead, talk about something that’s speaking to the culture such as bottled water. You pay more for a gallon of bottled water than you do for a gallon of gas, although that could change. (But you could not have told people 15 years ago that you were going to pay money to buy something that you could get for free, like water. And we get it now; it’s just our way as Americans.)

I would say that maybe the greatest evidence that politicians believe that voters don’t care about the environment is that if you just pick up ten different direct-mail pieces, or if you just randomly watch, scan or even peruse 15 TV ads of candidates at any level, you’d be really hard-pressed to find environmental concerns mentioned in the first two or three things that they say. But listen more closely. They may not use the word “environment,” but they are saying “open-space preservation” or “reducing traffic and congestion” or “improving infrastructure

concerns.” Or they are saying, “making it easier for people to live in this county and want to live here” to enhance the quality of life. That’s all environment just said in a different way.

On this matter of how much the environment is being talked about, when I debated former EPA Administrator Browner on National Public Radio, I told her that I was glad that she’s running a 527 now. I think that any of these groups that are quasi-advocacy should be out there saying, “We’re an advocacy group,” therefore “We think George W. Bush should win” or “We think George W. Bush should lose” – whatever it is.

I did ask – and I would ask – why is the environment so conspicuous by its absence in what the Democrats have talked about this year? You get a little bit of nibbling here and there, you get them once in a while standing by a tree, saying “I’m doing something useful,” but not to the extent – never to the extent – that you hear those candidates talking about things like the war, or health care, or Social Security. It is never discussed to that extent. And they all have good pollsters. I know all of their pollsters. They are quality, wonderful professionals at their craft, albeit on the other side of the aisle. But they must be seeing something in their polls, something that dissuades them from talking about the environment.

I actually think it’s a very ripe time if the Republican Party wants to take advantage of the fact that the Democratic Party is taking for granted its primacy of position and credibility on the environment as the party that is trusted most. It would be a very good time for the Republican party to swoop in there and try to pick off some voters and property owners who may be “gettable,” particularly through its governors.

INDEPENDENTS: THE VOTERS TO WATCH

The thing about the environment is that it has the potential to have tri-partisan support. It really is one of those areas – unlike abortion, guns, gay marriage, or even tax reform – where a reasonable common-sense policy about environmental concerns is able to magnetically attract Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.

And those Independents. The Independents are not the tens of thousands of people I've interviewed who say, "I'm for the person, not the party." I politely think to myself, "They're not even voting. Next?" For years they were people who weren't registered to vote when you asked them to sign a petition. Those are the people basically complaining about something at the cocktail parties – or the modern equivalent, the cappuccino counters. They're the ones sitting on their butts at home in a chat room online emailing about everything that's wrong with the world and Western civilization and all of a sudden they say, "Ooh, boy. It's Wednesday, November 5. Was the election yesterday?" And they miss it completely.

Today, that's not as true. There are a vast number of Americans – millions and millions of Americans – who don't just call themselves Independents because they don't know much about politics. These are people who have thought carefully about it. These are people who have decided to declare their independence from both political parties and their candidates, who have decided not to pledge their allegiance to either one. Instead, they have even gone to the city registrar or city hall or voter registrar and have either registered as an independent for the first time, or have actually changed a registration to independent or unaffiliated. For years, New Jersey and Massachusetts were the only two states that had a majority of independent or unaffiliated voters. There are now a dozen states that can claim close to a majority if not a plurality of unaffiliated independent voters.

The largest number of independents are young voters. Everybody runs around and says young voters are apathetic and angry and over-educated and underemployed and wearing goatees and on their scooters and sipping lattes. That's just not true, and you ought to remind them. Because it is a conscientious decision in today's day and age to go and register as an independent and to mean it. It actually means that you're withholding judgment. What's the empirical evidence we have for that?

About 13 to 15 percent of voters across the country are registered independents. That may not sound like a big number but it's huge. It's saying that we do have a third party movement in this country – we just don't realize it. It's why that 49-

49 nation, as it's called, is so important. Because it's not even 49-49. I try to tell people it's actually 41-41, and the rest are these true independents. Not self-identified – but actualized, that is, having it on the actual voter registration card, and yet still believing in casting a vote. Independents in this country have a real chance in the next five to ten years of converting the environmental issue from a sleeper issue into one to be contended with.

We just have to feel like it appeals to our selfish stakeholding, appeals to the fact that we're investors now, and appeals to the fact that we're homeowners. We have to treat the environment as something that has something to do with our kids' quality of education and public education or to do with the burdens of illegal immigration.

In other words, we have to tie it to something that is already connected to the heartstrings or the angry nerves of independents – either way.

These independents gave John McCain his victory in New Hampshire in 2000. They certainly gave Howard Dean a great start this year online, if not offline. They're a huge force to be reckoned with. And given their age alone, it's significant, because they will vote in more elections than anyone else who's alive. I would argue that the connection between the age of the average registered independent and the cultural changes that I'm talking about with the cartoons, the Jiffy-Lube oil, the adopt-a-highway programs, the plastic or paper grocery bags and Captain Planet – those together mean that the environment (if this group wants) could be an issue such that five to ten years from now you're not saying that voters don't care about it – instead you're asking which voters care about it, and "What does that mean?"

Q & A

Q: Many would say that there's a problem in the Bush administration's handling of environmental policies regarding "truth in advertising" (i.e. marketing environmental programs with catchy names that don't always reflect the integrity of the policies). Do you think that voters care about this phenomenon?

A: That depends on how much they care about the issue. Healthy Forests, Clear Skies, everybody loves it, it's wonderful stuff, it's like if you say "Health Care Security." President Clinton made an announcement about health care security in 1993 and everybody said "Wow." It then took two months for people to say, "Oh, I meant for someone else. I like mine. I didn't know it was going to cost that much!" So, people need to know how the issue connects to them in order for them to actually care about it and do any kind of research beyond it. The reason that more people vote on the American Idol finalists than in the presidential elections is because they care more about it. It's entertaining, they see it on TV, and it's easy to get on the phone and vote for them. If you want to vote for president, you have to register, you have to think about it weeks before the election to get your ballot if you're out of state. I use this as an example because you might say that people look past it, but only if they care enough to. Only some will say, "What do you mean by healthy forests?"

Generally speaking, people have a presumptive distrust of anybody at the highest echelon, so for environmentalists who attack Republicans automatically, it's looking as if no matter what we do, we aren't going to mollify the environmentalists. There's not one thing we could possibly do that would make them happy. Do you know how much money the Sierra Club gave the Republicans last year? Zero. That's not bipartisan support.

Q: Do voters respond negatively to fear? For example, when scientists talk about the implications of global warming, are voters turned off by that message? How would you suggest that we convey that knowledge?

A: You have to put it in non-political terms. You need to try to sell a brand and a message, and you should not market it like a political message, because 50 percent of the country is not participating. If you do that then you can probably reach a fair number of people who otherwise don't think of themselves as environmentalists. In terms of

fear, there are a lot of people out there who say, “I hate negative advertising.” Well, these are the same people, who when asked if they planned to watch Barbara Walters interview Monica Lewinsky, said, “Oh, no”. But then that program got the highest ratings in history. There are two ways to deliver a message – you either shock the conscience or you warm the heart, and I think that the environment has examples of both.

Q: We’ve talked a lot about swing states and states where the environment might come into play. From your polling work, are there states where that’s the case? If so, how would you advise the candidates about these states?

A: I agree that the environment is a “sleeper” issue. It could make or break the election *in certain areas*. That’s why it’s important to talk about locality. In 2000, Slade Gordon was running for re-election to the U.S. Senate in Washington State and Maria Cantwell beat him in a very tight race. It turned out that he carried every county except two of them, which were huge counties, and basically he lost it on the environment. The environment was a big issue.

There are certain areas of states where environment can be a key issue, not in whole states, but in parts of states. Everyone talks about blue states and red states, but my argument is that there are blue states that have red blobs and there are red states that have big blue stripes in them, and the trick is to fatten the strips or widen the blobs. You can do that with issues but you’re not going to win on the environment across the board. Environment differs from region to region – that’s why counties are important. In any state that has timber or mining or natural resources, it’s going to be important. In the really tight states like New Mexico, environment will be very important because it’s part of the lifestyle.

Political Organizing on the Environment

Deb Callahan

President, League of Conservation Voters

March 25, 2004

I want to give a message to those of you who have thought about dedicating your lives to this work and have a personal dream of making a difference in the world: I stand before you today to tell you that you can. Believe in yourself, and you can accomplish things that you really dream of doing. It's important today that we believe that we have the personal power to make a difference in the world. That's why I'm here today — to talk to you about the environment and campaigns and politics. They offer us an amazing way to reach out through the electoral process and really try to achieve change.

You're probably very familiar with the history of environmental politics. But I'd just like to take a moment and step back. We all know that in the 1970s the environment was an emerging area. When Richard Nixon was president, there were great Republicans leading the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council on Environmental Quality. There was bipartisan leadership in Congress, which accomplished great things like the passage of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act and the protection of great public lands areas. In the early days, environmentalists had some very simple ways of trying to support those elected officials who were doing good things.

The League of Conservation Voters basically did two things and continues to pursue those two strategies to this day. First, we work in campaigns and elections to elect good environmentalists to office and to un-elect people who are never going to be persuaded to vote for the environment. The second thing we do is work to hold elected members of Congress and federal officials accountable for their actions on the environment.

We're a federally focused organization. One thing that we put out every year – and we have for thirty-four years – is the National Environmental Scorecard. Every year, every member of Congress gets a grade on their environmental voting record. That is an important part of government accountability. It enables citizens to know how their elected officials are doing in Washington. For a typical citizen, it's very difficult to know how your elected official is voting on the wide array of issues included in "the environment." Our organization provides that information to citizens by giving each elected official a simple number from zero to one hundred percent every year.

In addition to our scorecards, we became involved in campaigns and elections. We started a political action committee, and we wrote PAC checks – which are just checks up to five thousand dollars – and we endorsed candidates. We also paid for people to go to work for those candidates' campaigns, in order to ensure that someone representing the environmental community was in the office every day working to elect that candidate. We really had a great grassroots spirit about elections in the early days of the environmental movement – that was our great strength. As the environmental movement grew over the years, we were able to build a great body of environmental law, which has been supported by both Republicans and Democrats until fairly recently.

In the 1990s, our organization started to do "remote control campaigning" to reach out to voters and educate them about candidates' environmental records. We started buying our election work. We started paying for television spots. We started paying for radio. We started paying for direct mail to be sent to voters. That was the way the campaigns were run, and we were doing the best we could to stay up with the electoral arms race. However, in 2000 and 2002, we witnessed the beginning of a real change in the way campaigns are run. We took some pretty bad losses, and sat down after the last election and talked to voters and people who had participated in our campaigns. We learned that voters are tuning out the TV spots. We learned that people are feeling very disconnected from the political process and the democratic process.

The other thing that we saw in the elections is a very closely divided country. In 2000, ten states were won by three and a half percent or less. Six states were won by one percent or less. New Mexico was even closer

than Florida in the presidential election in the year 2000. These close races instructed us that a few hundred or a few thousand votes would have turned the presidential election. This contradicts the rule of thumb in electoral politics that your mail and TV must reach about eight hundred thousand people if you're running in a Congressional race and millions of people if you're running for a statewide Senate seat.

What these numbers tell us is that the country is closely divided. We have equal numbers of people on the right and the left and fewer people in the middle. Our country is becoming more and more partisan. We expect to see this trend result in very, very close elections in 2004 and possibly into the next few sets of elections. So, the fact that a) we are seeing a diminishing return on our paid campaigns and b) political campaigns are being won in many key places by very, very narrow margins tells me that it might be time to go back to the grassroots — back to the future, back to what we did in the 1970s when we were just starting to get involved in campaigns and elections.

FOUR KINDS OF POWER IN POLITICS

What we've done is revisit the kinds of things we can do in an election. There are essentially four kinds of power in politics.

- There's the power of money. That's something we hear a lot about. And frankly, environmentalists will never have as much money as the corporate special interests. So, we're not going to win based on money in politics.
- Second, there's the power of incumbency. An incumbent has a great deal of power in the electoral process. But I don't happen to be an elected official, and actually there are very few environmentalists who run for office.
- The third kind of power in politics is the power of ideas — and that's something we are rich in as an environmental community. Frankly, we have, I believe, the right ideas. Science tells us that. The world around us tells us that. Economists, when they do honest, full accounting, tell us that.
- And the fourth kind of power in politics is people. And, again, that's what we're rich in. There are about eleven million unique

members of environmental organizations in this country today. That's national, state, and local organizations, as best we can tell. As a comparison, there are roughly thirteen million members of the AFL-CIO. Now, do you consider the environmental community to be nearly as powerful in the political game as organized labor and the AFL-CIO? No.

I believe this occurs for two reasons. First, we don't think of ourselves that way and, second, we aren't organized that way.

In this election cycle, it's time to reframe the way we think of ourselves, and it's time to get organized – to get political in the context of campaigns and elections. Therefore, our organization is making the decision to throw 80 percent of our money into grassroots operations, rather than into buying TV ads. We have targeted four states that are among the closest swing states in the country: Florida, New Mexico, Wisconsin and Oregon. Those happen to also be four of the states that have some of the strongest environmental citizens in the country. They also happen to be states where Ralph Nader is a factor.

I'll talk about Florida for just a second. While Bush won Florida by 537 votes, Ralph Nader received 97,000 votes. So, you can't say that Ralph Nader did not have an impact on the outcome in Florida.

We are going to invest between half a million and three quarters of a million dollars in each one of those states for grassroots organizing. We are planning on recruiting twenty-five thousand volunteers from around the country and getting them to work in one of those four states. On May 26th, we're starting our door-to-door canvasses in key areas of these four states, and we're going to run three waves of canvasses. We are going to start with a student canvass through the summer in these four states. In the fall, we will have a paid canvass, and then during the last month of the election we will recruit local people.

And during that election period from May 26th to November 3rd, we intend to knock on a million and a half doors in four states, which means a half a million doors, three times. And we're also going to be doing a lot of mail and a lot of events and a lot of free media. So this is going to be very exciting.

We're doing something different to figure out whom we should be talking to in these campaigns. Historically, what we've done is look at people who are members of environmental organizations as our constituency. But we've learned that such an approach is not necessarily best. The people we tend to approach may have very different interests, but they have something in common: they are joiners. They are the kind of people who write twenty-five dollar checks to be a member of the Sierra Club or the Audubon Society or the League of Conservation Voters. By focusing on these people, you're getting a certain slice of America. Frankly, that slice of America looks like this room – mostly white, middle-class, upper middle-class, college-educated. Those are joiners. And we're missing a lot of America if we're only talking to environmental members.

So what we've learned is that people who look like me aren't necessarily our strongest constituency. For example, when I worked for the Russ Feingold senatorial campaign in Wisconsin, we ran a poll to determine our target swing audience. You'd think in Wisconsin those targets would look like me. But guess what?

In Wisconsin, the swing audience that was most influenced by local environmental issues was Milwaukee's African-American and Latino communities. There is a lot of lead paint and air pollution in those communities, and people were very aware of quality of life issues.

You see the same phenomenon around the country. For example, one in four kids in Harlem today has asthma. You go to Harlem and you talk about air quality, and you really have an issue that has punch. In Washington, D.C., we've recently learned that the levels of lead in the drinking water exceed the federal standards and the city government waited a year to tell its citizens. That's an election issue for the African-American community in Washington, D.C.

What I want to do in this election is to get beyond our core constituency and talk to the other parts of America who care deeply about these issues. So how are we doing that? We're engaged in a very interesting voter profiles project. We are breaking states down into regions and doing very detailed polling. For example, we treat Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico as the southwest region. In this region, we have already performed a five thousand sample poll, which is over the top by two. We polled such an extraordinary number of people because we are trying to build a profile of what an environmental voter looks like. We asked five thousand people about their attitudes toward certain environmental issues. Our pollsters used the data to sort people into ten different categories. At the very top, you have the true-blue greens, and then you take a step down to the pea-greens, and then you go on down until you find the dark-browns. What we're going to do in this election is to talk to each layer of people differently. We are going to focus on the people in the layers below the true-blue greens, who may think about environmental issues when they vote. It's possible to reach these people if you choose the right issue.

It is important to bring these people into our conversation because we want to persuade them to vote for environmental candidates and we also hope that this election broadens our environmental constituency.

Once we have these ten categories of people, we will purchase commercially available lists of people who subscribe to *Outside* magazine or drive a Prius or own a Safeway check card. Although we may hate all this information that society is gathering on us today, the information is available and we're going to use it because the other side uses it, because it's legal, and because we have to win this election. Once we use this information to create profiles, we are going to cross them with the voter file. That way, we will know how often these people vote and whether they need to be registered. It will enable us to treat different voters differently. Based on this information, LCV will target about one hundred twenty-five thousand people across our four swing states. This is a very specific, very strategic campaign that we

will use throughout this election, and I think it's going to do a lot of good things for us.

In addition to pursuing this targeted, grassroots effort, the environmental community is working very closely with other communities in this election. Over the past ten years, we have been truly insular in who we've worked with. This recent trend deviates from the historical patterns of the environmental movement. For instance, in the 1970s, the United Steel Workers was one of organizations that founded The League of Conservation Voters. We used to work much more frequently with the oil and chemical and atomic workers on worker safety issues. We're hoping to restore these relationships in response to the new election procedures brought about through the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. This legislation has changed the laws in such a way that the national political parties can't raise the soft money that previously supported their get-out-the-vote activities. Since the parties cannot run these coordinated campaigns, the constituency groups have a larger responsibility. We are working with the AFL-CIO and Planned Parenthood and the NAACP and many other diverse organizations to ensure a strong get-out-the-vote effort.

We are collaborating so we know what the other groups are doing, when their press conferences are going to be, and what their messages are. We are focusing on the language we use to make sure that we don't alienate another group's constituency. For example, a group of environmentalists and labor union members just held two roundtables in Minnesota for the Kerry campaign. We were live on television and totally unscripted. During this conversation, it became clear that people in the labor movement are really worried about jobs. They understand that developing new energy technologies can create new jobs and new businesses in our country. Environmentalists clearly have a strong agenda that supports these alternative energy technologies, and we started to talk about wind power. One environmentalist described the potential for wind power in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, and he mentioned that it would avoid the need to build six more power plants. The AFL-CIO representative explained that the environmentalist's argument implied that the promotion of wind power would eliminate potential jobs in six power plants. The environmentalist learned to rephrase his argument to emphasize the new businesses and new jobs that will be

created due to the development of new energy sources. This exchange taught us that the environmental and labor communities tend to talk in two different ways about the same agenda item. It is critical to frame the conversation in a way that brings the communities together.

I will mention one other new activity that the League of Conservation Voters is pursuing in this election. We are going to be performing a lot of message work. Historically, polling on the environment has shown that three environmental issues may serve as election issues. These are the “backyard” issues of clean air, clean water, and toxic waste cleanup. However, our data shows that we may have a different kind of environmental debate in this election. I believe that the environment is an election issue, and it is right now being debated. I’m going to tell you right now how to listen to the dialogue so you understand.

You need to think about the environment as a category, not an issue. Lead in drinking water is an issue. Houston air pollution is an issue. Endangered species is an issue. These individual issues poll much more highly than “environment” as a category, and that is even before the issue is personalized to an individual community.

JOHN KERRY AS THE ENVIRONMENTAL CANDIDATE

And now let’s talk about John Kerry. He is someone who understands and really believes this stuff. He is someone my organization has endorsed. He is someone who has one of the strongest lifetime environmental voting records that we have seen in federal government today. At the time we endorsed him – about a month and a half ago – he had a ninety-six percent lifetime LCV rating. Most of the negative marks he received were due to the fact that he missed a vote because he was somewhere else.

Kerry has a nearly perfect environmental voting score. By comparison, Al Gore had a sixty-four percent lifetime LCV score. It's a magnitude different and it's a very important thing for people to understand.

The measure for me of a presidential candidate's commitment is: "Do you talk about my issue and do you talk about it in front of audiences that are friendly as well as audiences that are hostile?" First of all, John Kerry has stood up all over the country and talked about these issues. The one that really stands out in my mind is when he attended the Michigan Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. That is the big statewide Democratic fundraising dinner that costs two hundred and fifty bucks to get in. All the muckety-mucks are there. In Michigan, one of the biggest Democratic powers is the United Auto Workers, who have not been our best friends on fuel efficiency standards and climate change. John Kerry got up at that dinner and told them how we need to strengthen fuel efficiency standards. He said that we need to reach – as quickly as we possibly can – thirty-six miles per gallon and we need to close the SUV loophole. People's jaws just dropped. But it was a "truth to power" moment, which means a heck of a lot.

I've been with John Kerry on the campaign trail, and I've heard his stump speech, and it's very consistent. He's talking about the environment, but he's completely throwing out the rulebook. Instead of talking about what I would have told him to talk about – clean air, clean water, and toxic waste cleanup – he's tying these issues to the prominent issues of the day that are on the minds of Americans. He says five things, and I bet they're going to resonate.

- First – we don't want to send our sons and daughters over to wars in the Middle East because of our reliance on foreign oil here in the U.S., so we need to have new alternative technologies and efficient energy technologies in this country today. He says that in every speech.
- The second thing he says: we need more jobs in this country today because this current administration has lost a record number of jobs. One way the Kerry administration would increase new jobs

is by stimulating alternative energy technologies that we can market to other countries.

- Third, he talks about how this administration walked away from the table at Kyoto. Bush walked away from the international global warming treaty, and he uses that as an example of the American withdrawal from the rest of the world.
- The fourth thing he talks about is corporate special interests. He invariably talks about the rollbacks of environmental policies to appease corporate contributors.
- The fifth thing he talks about is drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which has become symbolic of saving public lands.

What I'm seeing is that this environmental dialogue is rolling out in a new way. I like it a lot because John Kerry is weaving these issues into the fabric of the other issues that society cares deeply about. Politically, it's a very smart way to reconnect the vast body of Americans to the environmental agenda. It's a way to help people understand that the local and global environmental agendas resonate in their everyday lives.

I'd like to raise one final issue before I open it up to Q&A. A three-way poll that was done last week shows Bush at 46 percent, Kerry at 41 percent, and Nader at 4 percent. Polls bump up and down a little bit, and another one that came out last week actually shows Nader at seven. Our pollster tells us that Nader draws nearly one hundred percent from Kerry. From an environmental perspective, my organization has endorsed John Kerry because he has the strongest environmental record of anybody who is running in this field. We will be making the case to environmentalists around the country that a vote for Nader is nothing but a vote for Bush. Although Ralph Nader only got 2.74 percent of the vote in 2000, he absolutely changed the face of that election.

In closing, I want to try and convince all of you that as individuals it is critical that you register and that you vote. It is critical that you pay attention and you are informed voters as environmentalists. As someone who runs an organization supporting Kerry, I believe it's absolutely critical that I weigh in on the debate. I will be advocating strongly on behalf of my candidate, whom I firmly believe to be the strongest environmental leader we've ever seen.

In June, when my organization put out a report card on the Bush White House, we gave Bush an F on the environment. That was the first F in our thirty-four year history. John Kerry has a ninety-six percent lifetime LCV score.

We have a chance here to un-elect the worst environmental president in the history of our country and to elect the strongest environmental president we will have ever seen in this country. Personally, I think we need someone who has that grasp of environmental politics and environmental policies to become president because our environmental laws over the last three and a half years have been under such assault. We need somebody who embraces these issues and knows how to rebuild and improve the policies and regulations that have been torn down. I'm very excited about that.

We have cards on the back table that say "Some things were never meant to be recycled," and they have George Bush's face in the middle. This is also our sign-up card for our Environmental Victory Project, which is the volunteer project that I was talking about. We'll not only be asking people to go to key states, but we are also going to have an internet program. So if you can't pick up and go to Florida, New Mexico, Wisconsin or Oregon, we would love to have you sign up for our list-serve, get information through our weekly reports, and find a way to volunteer.

Q & A

Q: You mentioned Kerry's discourse on environmental issues. Do you think he derived that strategy from his polling or from his advisors?

A: There is one option that you left out — it was an idea he actually had for himself! What a concept — they think for themselves!

First of all, we have not polled to test his message. My polls over the years have shown that clean air, clean water, toxic waste cleanup, and maybe local public lands issues are consistently the issues that the public seems to vote on. So I am observing that he's doing something entirely different. I think Kerry is doing this from instinct. I love that because it tells me that this is something that he believes, and that's why I have the confidence that he's going to stick with it.

You can compare this to Al Gore, who is a strong environmentalist. I was his National Field Director in 1988, the first time he ran for President. I traveled with him all over the country. As a campaign person, he drove me crazy, he talked about climate change so much. You'd stand him up in New Hampshire in front of a room of senior citizens at a retirement home and you'd think he was going to talk about health care and social security – but he talked about climate change. In comparison, he was very restrained in 2000. I personally believe that he would have won the election – he would have won Florida – if he had talked about the environment. Our numbers show that.

Another interesting thing our polls reveal is that Democrats have a huge advantage against the Republicans in response to the question: “Which party do you trust the most on the environment?” Given the Bush record, John Kerry has a lot of raw material to work with. There can't be a much greater distinction.

Q: Can you compare the power of the labor movement and the power of the environmental movement? What is the optimal organizational structure for collaboration among the different groups?

A: That's a great question. I compare the AFL-CIO and the environmental movement based on sheer numbers of members. That said, the labor movement is very different. For environmentalists, membership in the Sierra Club or The Nature Conservancy is not our bread and butter. But for people who belong to unions, it's about their paycheck and their health care benefits. So, the level of commitment within labor unions is much higher. Environmentalists often have an ideological tie, whereas unions have a much more personal connection. Our people write a lot more letters to Congress and testify – these are some of the most civic-minded people you'll ever meet! I think our base is actually much more engaged in the democratic process in some ways.

Perspectives from the Media

Eric Pianin

Washington Post

Elizabeth Shogren

Los Angeles Times

April 1, 2004

ERIC PIANIN

I've worked as a reporter for the *Washington Post* for more than 20 years. Much of that time was spent covering Congress for the paper's national staff. As a congressional reporter, I covered the federal budget and appropriations committees and had a lot of interesting experiences. After the 2000 election, my editor asked if I would consider switching assignments and moving to the environment beat. To be honest, I was reluctant to make the move, partly because I didn't know that much about the environment and partly because I thought it might be a dull assignment. So I resisted. Finally I decided to give it a try and it turned out to be a fascinating assignment. That was especially true during the first year of the Bush administration, with so much controversy over the president's efforts to roll back environmental regulations and the repeated clashes between the White House and the Democrats. It really turned out to be a great assignment and my reporting produced many page one stories.

I want to talk a little about the environment and politics and a little about the current campaign. Two years ago many of the nation's foremost environmental activists were certain that the Bush administration's controversial environmental policies would cost the Republicans dearly in the Congressional races.

It's sort of an axiom in politics that the party that controls the White House almost always loses House seats in the first mid-term election of a new president. Environmental leaders were therefore confident that the Democrats running in closely

contested races and swing states would capitalize on the President's seemingly dismal environmental record. After all, within months of taking office the President had repudiated the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, disavowed a campaign pledge to regulate carbon dioxide, challenged scores of Clinton administration regulations, including a tougher standard on arsenic in drinking water, and put in place policymakers throughout his bureaucracy who had strong ties to industry.

The Sierra Club and other environmental groups poured millions of dollars into the Congressional contests around the country, including the Colorado Senate race where freshman Republican Senator Wayne Allard, a conservative, held one of the worst voting records on the environment in Congress. Senator Allard was being challenged by Tom Strickland, a moderate Democrat and a darling of the environmental movement. Allard had the audacity to call himself the greatest environmental senator in Colorado's history, which is saying a lot for a state that produced Gary Hart, Tim Wirth and other prominent environmentalists. But the outcome of the November election was a debacle for the Democrats. Republicans captured control of the Congress, regaining power in the Senate and expanding their majority in the House. The GOP candidates rode the tide of Bush's popularity, and as for Allard, he easily whipped Strickland by a margin of 51 to 46 percent.

I'm reminded of that when I hear leaders of the League of Conservation Voters, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and other environmental groups speak with great confidence this year about how voter outrage over the Bush environmental record can tilt the scales in favor of John Kerry and the Democrats. The argument goes something like this: This year's election will be incredibly close, possibly a repeat of the 2000 contest between Bush and Gore. The outcome will likely turn on the votes in maybe eighteen swing states throughout the country. Voters are increasingly concerned about the quality of air and water and are troubled by pro-industry administration policies that allow power plants or refineries to

continue polluting. Power plants emit dangerous fine particulates, and mercury pollution poses dangerous health problems for citizens and developmental problems for pregnant women and children.

In many of these swing states, tens of thousands of voters who are closely aligned with the environmental cause didn't bother to vote in the last election. So according to this theory, even if a fraction of those non-voters turn out this time, they could tip the balance in favor of Kerry's campaign in such critical states as Florida, New Hampshire, Missouri, Ohio, and Nevada. I don't doubt that environmental concerns could play a role on the margin in some of these states, but they clearly aren't animating the election campaign.

Polling consistently shows that the economy, jobs, and the war in Iraq overshadow all other voter concerns and that the environment ranks fairly low on the totem pole in terms of voters' priorities. Americans have repeatedly expressed more confidence in the Democrats than the Republicans to be good stewards of the environment.

Bush certainly generated a firestorm of protests with his environmental policies in the first year or two of his administration. But I would argue that the administration has done more in the past year or two to spruce up his environmental image and undercut his critics than the Democrats have done in capitalizing on Bush's missteps. Part of this is a function of clever packaging and sort of Orwellian labeling by the Administration. The President's proposal for rewriting, and in some cases weakening, the Clean Air Act is called the "Clear Skies" initiative. His new forest management program to give logging companies greater access to old growth trees is benignly called the "Healthy Forest" initiative. But the White House has taken other more substantive steps.

In January the President pleasantly surprised environmentalists by abandoning efforts to rewrite the Clean Water Act to sharply reduce the number of streams or wetlands protected from commercial or residential development. Bush halted that rulemaking process several

days after he met with officials of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and other groups representing nearly 40 million hunters, fishermen, and conservationists who opposed the rule change because it would lead to the destruction of hunting and fishing habitats.

The Administration has been widely criticized for attempting to gut Clean Air enforcement regulations in the utility industry known as New Source Review, but in February while the new rule was being challenged in court, the Administration sued an eastern Kentucky power cooperative for violations of the Clean Air Act, making good on a pledge to get tough with polluters in the utility industry.

The EPA was also sharply criticized by environmentalists and public health advocates for producing a new rule to regulate mercury pollution that many thought was highly favorable to the utility industry. Last month, Mike Leavitt, the new EPA administrator, acknowledged that the proposed administration rule was too weak and indicated a willingness to consider developing a tougher plan.

It seems to me that in a national election, the economy invariably trumps the environment in terms of voter concerns. The President's recent emphasis on jobs over environmental restrictions in industry comes as poll numbers indicate that Americans increasingly are concerned about jobs, and the exporting of jobs overseas. The Democrats have had little choice but to mute or to tailor their environmental stance when they conflict with the message of economic growth and prosperity. Al Gore was probably the most pro-environmental presidential candidate since Teddy Roosevelt. Yet during the 2000 campaign he downplayed his views on global warming and environmental controls in a bid to gain support in industrial and coal producing states. Even so, he lost West Virginia, which may have cost him the election.

This year John Kerry, another strong environmentalist, has attacked Bush for having as he describes it, "the worst environmental administration that I have ever seen," asserting that the administration is going backward, not forward, on clean air and clean water issues. But Kerry and other presidential candidates had relatively little to say about the environment throughout the primary season. What we're seeing now is a kind of Democratic transmutation of environmental issues into slogans and proposals, very different from traditional environmental messages.

The Democrats are reluctant to fight the old battles with industry and corporate America. Kerry is stressing the relationship between progressive environmental policy and the development of alternative sources of energy on the one hand and job creation, economic expansion, and energy security on the other. He contends that Bush has promoted a false dichotomy between tough environmental protection and economic development, just as Bush opposed the Kyoto Protocol because he said it would hurt the U.S. economy.

Some of Kerry's primary campaign efforts were very effective in making the case that if we have these new progressive policies in place then U.S. troops wouldn't have to die in the Middle East fighting for oil. Frank Luntz, the GOP political consultant, warned his party that Kerry was making real headway with those ads. But you don't see those ads on the air now, at least I don't. Instead Kerry is raising complicated, double-edged issues like soaring gasoline prices and automobile Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards. By doing so, he is forced to defend old positions he took on raising gasoline taxes or trying to reduce Americans' dependence on very popular but gas guzzling SUVs and pick up trucks.

Things can always turn around in this very protracted campaign season, but for now it seems to me the environment is one of the weakest political weapons in the Democrats' political arsenal.

ELIZABETH SHOGREN

One of the moments in the last two years that really helped to encapsulate the issues Eric Pianin was talking about for me was when I was in the Capitol, going down in an elevator with two of the staunchest advocates for the environment in the Senate, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Senator Jim Jeffords (I-VT).

I had just been in a press conference where they were talking about environmental issues and trying to get the press all riled up about a string of decisions that the Bush administration had made during the

summer that reduced environmental protections. The changes included a major reversal in a Clean Air Act rule regarding whether or not older coal-fired power plants have to install new pollution control devices. Another change that the administration made was the ability of companies to sell PCB-tainted sites without first cleaning them up. So the senators were trying to hammer on these issues, making very strong statements in front of the cameras, and then we got into the elevator, where I asked them how they thought it was going.

They both looked at me and were so downcast and the gist of what they said was: "Nobody cares. We just can't get anybody to care. This is so important. People's lives are changing, and people's lives are at risk, air pollution is getting greater. These issues are massive and nobody is paying attention to us." And I thought it was a really interesting kind of view into what it has been like for those people in Washington who have been trying to fight against the Bush administration's policies on the environment. They feel like they're getting absolutely no traction under their feet.

As we come to the election campaign, of course, those efforts are being increased. Even today, back in Washington, there was a letter signed by those two senators and a bunch of other senators that's being sent to Mike Leavitt, the new EPA Administrator, on the issue of mercury air pollution. That letter is telling Mr. Leavitt that his plan for dealing with the problem is not doing what the Clean Air Act requires him to do, and it's a really bad idea. They're also trying to press on this issue as part of the presidential campaign. I think that out of all the environmental policies that have caused controversy during the Bush administration, mercury is the most notable. The environmentalists are doing a good job focusing on this issue as a way to show that the Bush administration is hurting our environment.

I don't know if you know about mercury air pollution, but the biggest source of it is from coal-fired power plants. It is released into the air and then eventually falls into lakes and rivers, gets absorbed by the fish, the fish are then eaten by animals or people, and then the mercury pollution can be particularly threatening to newborns. So that's the problem in a nutshell. It didn't take me long to explain it to you here, but the problem with environmental issues as campaign issues is that you can't fit that little description into a commercial. So unless you already know why you should be worried about mercury

pollution, it's not a very good campaign ad. This is why, although environmental groups are very hopeful that they can use the issue of mercury, I think it's very difficult for them to hang a campaign on it.

That doesn't mean that the environment isn't going to be an issue in the future, but I completely agree that the environment is not going to be the issue that runs the campaign or even one of the top couple of issues that run the big campaign.

One thing that demonstrates it is that nobody is talking about it. John Kerry's ads don't talk about the environment. The main Democratic Party ads don't talk about the environment and John Kerry doesn't bring it up. Of course it's not a big issue for the Bush administration to bring up either. So I think if it's going to become one of the top issues the media covers, the candidates themselves need to start sparring over it. Once they start arguing about an issue, it becomes a big issue in the media.

Another way an issue becomes big in the media is when the media seems to have uncovered something that nobody knew was happening. You can respond by asking the question: why doesn't the media uncover something about the Bush administration's environmental policies that nobody knew was happening? I do think there will be some of that going on in the next several months.

You will see stories that say things like: "Bush administration officials were former lobbyists for industry and now they are environmental officials and they've gone out and helped their industries." The problem with these stories is that they will have a hint of something new, but they will sound a little bit like what everybody already knows by now.

I don't think they will have the sting that they need, and I'm not sure they would get as much attention from editors as they would have. That makes it harder for environmental issues to become much of a campaign issue.

When you look at the issues the candidates have to talk about, one of the issues where the candidates are farthest apart and where the public believes that the candidates are farthest apart is on the environment. But it just falls too far down on the list of issues most important to respondents of public opinion polls.

I looked at some of our polls before I came here and most of the polls showed that about three percent of people answered that the environment was the most important issue to them, and many other issues came before that. That's not to say that people don't think it's important. In fact the polling also shows that the vast majority of Americans want stronger environmental protections, as many as 75 percent. Even the majority of Republicans want stronger environmental protection. It doesn't seem to be the issue that is top on people's minds because even though they say it's very important to them it's not the issue that seems to run the campaign.

That said, I think there are some places where the environment does become very important. This campaign is not being run throughout the whole country, because there are many states where both the Democrats and Republicans know how people are going to vote. There are other states – the swing states where nobody knows which way voters are going to go – where they're still battling, and in some of those states the environment could possibly be an issue. There are some reasons that I think the environment could be an issue in these states.

In New Mexico one of the very hot issues is an environmental issue, the issue of drilling in a place called Otera Mesa. The governor of New Mexico has said that this is going to be a campaign issue, and he's bringing together a coalition of unusual comrades to work together on the issue, including very conservative ranchers, lots of hunting and fishing enthusiasts, and the environmental community.

These comrades include Republicans and Democrats who are all concerned about a Bush administration plan to develop this area, a broad stretch of desert that is very popular, and so there are local

people, lots of New Mexicans, and people from out of state that don't want it to be developed as an oil and gas field.

It will be interesting to see what happens in an area like New Mexico, where there's an issue that people care about and the Bush administration has a very strong policy that is affecting that area. It will be interesting to see whether it can change the way the election turns. I think it will be a fascinating thing to watch. Will the issue really catch on? Will it matter? Or will it come down to jobs like it does in much of the rest of the country?

Another place where there could be such an issue, in fact I might argue an even stronger issue, is West Virginia. West Virginia is another swing state where the Bush administration has changed policies very dramatically on an issue that affects a lot of people who live there – the issue of Mountaintop Removal Mining. What happens with this practice is that the coal companies come in and take layers of the mountain off and take the coal seams from between the layers. Then they have to put the mountain back together. They have a lot of leftover dirt and rock from this practice, and they put it in the valleys.

I went on a little flight over this area and it's just incredible to see. If you fly over West Virginia there are dozens and dozens of these mountaintops that have already been taken apart, and the Bush administration has made a couple of big rule changes that make it easier to keep doing this. They've also squashed some legal challenges that would have stopped the practice or slowed it down. So you could imagine that this issue, which has an impact on people's lives across West Virginia, could catch on.

But the truth is that even in West Virginia it hasn't become a very big political issue, even when they're electing their own officials. You can imagine that an issue like that, with an environmentally damaging practice that's so closely tied to the Administration's policies, could make a difference in the election. In that particular case, however, I

don't think it will, even though there are a number of people who are very, very concerned about it. It's another issue that will be really interesting to look out for.

One of the ways that the environment will be an issue, even if it isn't an issue that the candidates claim this time, is that the rules for money and politics have changed since the last election, so there's an expectation that a lot of the money that would normally go to the candidates is now going to go to interest groups. People will give interest groups money, and a number of environmental groups will be springing up to take advantage of this change in the way that money in politics is spent.

One of the groups is called Environment 2004 and it's full of old Clinton administration officials. Another one is called Wild Pack and they are the old standbys like the Sierra Club. They'll be buying ad time and telling people not to vote for Bush basically because Kerry will be better for the environment. So it'll be interesting to see what this phenomenon does in this election.

Will they be able to get enough money to buy ads and make a difference? They're targeting a few states that they think are most likely to be able to listen to their complaints. One of the top states is Florida, which we all know is where the last election was won and lost. So they are hoping that Floridians who care about the environment will listen to these ads and vote, and at least those in the middle will end up voting against Bush.

From the very beginning, however, the Bush administration has taken Florida as a different case when it comes to environmental issues, especially those big issues that people might change their votes on. One of the biggest issues has been offshore oil drilling. You can imagine that, if you live in Florida, what you look out at in the ocean might be very important to you. So while the Bush administration was pushing for offshore drilling to come back to California, they were helping Jeb Bush keep offshore drilling away from the Gulf of Mexico.

They were already working to try to make things easier for them in Florida, and I think that in some ways they defused that issue.

That's not to say that they are not already defensive about the ads that are coming out. There was an ad that recently came out – MoveOn.org paid for this ad – talking about the mercury issue and denouncing the Bush administration's role on the issue. Recently I received an e-mail from the EPA, a long explanation from Mike Leavitt about how this MoveOn.org ad was wrong. So the government, without even being asked about it, was sending out a response to the ad. Clearly they're taking this at least a little bit seriously. So it will be interesting, I think it will really interesting, to see some of these issues bubble up even if they're not a main issue.

Maybe there can be more debate on the issue of environment again. It was great to cover the environment in the first year of the Bush administration because everybody paid a lot of attention to the issues. That always makes it more fun for a reporter to cover because your editor likes to produce stories on the front page. But they also give you more time to work on the stories and maybe that can happen again. We won't get the kind of attention we had during the beginning of the Bush administration, but maybe at least in some of the states these issues will bubble up a bit.

RESPONSE: ERIC PIANIN

To pick up a little on Elizabeth's last point, the reason why a lot of these horror stories about environmental rollbacks aren't having the kind of impact that you would expect them to have, or that they may once have had, is the fact that environmental issues have become so polarized that people on all sides of the issue have pretty much made up their minds. You're not going to shock people into altering their view of things at this point, and I think that's especially true in the Congress where I have been sort of amazed at the lack of compromise, or potential grounds for compromise.

It just seems that all sides have pretty much staked out their positions, especially in areas like clean air policy where no one can find any kind of consensus. The Bush administration has been promoting their Clear Skies legislation for two years and they can't even get support from most Republicans for the plan. It's because clean air is such a

complicated issue. It breaks down more by region than by political party. Power plant operators in the Midwest have a very different view of the controversy than government officials or residents downstream from those plants who happen to live in the Northeast where a lot of the Midwest pollution migrates. So there's really no way to try to resolve a lot of these issues democratically in Congress. That's why this Administration in particular has been doing so much rulemaking. When they're frustrated trying to get their bills through on the Hill, they turn to rulemaking within the agencies to accomplish a lot of what they set out to do.

The rulemaking process, which in many ways is a lot easier for them than passing legislation, may be more time-consuming, but they can pretty much foreordain the outcome. And that's what you're seeing on a lot of these clean air issues and mercury pollution issues. The only recourse the environmentalists have now is going into court and suing the government to try and prevent a lot of this stuff from happening. They've had a fair amount of success in a number of areas, including tying up the whole effort to revise New Source Review or blocking mining efforts in the Southwest and in the Rocky Mountains. Right now the courts are the environmentalists' last line of defense.

Q & A

Q: You hear a lot of stories about the Bush administration bullying reporters into reporting or not reporting on specific issues, and I'm curious to hear your response to that. Have you had experiences with the Bush administration in this manner?

PIANIN: Any reporter covering government officials, members of Congress, or outside advocacy groups invariably will run into major complaints — yelling sometimes, outraged e-mails from officials who feel that they've been wronged in your story, or that their position has been misrepresented. Yes, I've had rather ugly conversations with some officials at the EPA and the White House over my interpretation of what they are doing. I've had members of Congress yell at me or refuse to talk to me for a while, although eventually they have to come back to you, especially if you work for a major news organization. It's sort of the nature of the beast when you're dealing with very complicated issues. On controversial issues everyone has a different read on

it and the stakes — financial and political stakes — are enormous for industry, for public health advocates, for politicians running for re-election. What people read in the newspaper or read on their websites or see on TV heavily influences their thinking, so obviously there is real sensitivity to what you report. It just goes with the territory.

SHOGREN: I have had instances like that with Bush administration officials, but I don't think they are any worse than other administrations or businesses or people that I cover. For that matter, I think my biggest complaint about the Bush administration and in dealing with them is that invariably when they are announcing a new regulation — which is a rule that they get to make all on their own — they do it late in the evening on a Friday. Okay, I don't like that because I'd rather do something social that evening, but that's not the only problem. It leaves you with a very short amount of time to understand the issue, to write about it, and to get everybody's viewpoints. It happened more at the beginning of the Bush administration, but it still happens at times now, and I think that's a technique they use to manage the press.

There was one time when they decided to announce an issue regarding aging coal-fired power plants by calling each reporter individually to tell them about the rule. Because I worked for the *Los Angeles Times*, they decided they could put me at the end of the list, so they called me at 5:00 pm to talk to me about it. It was an issue that was going to be a front-page story.

I later talked to an EPA official who was part of their decision to do that. This was not a political appointee, this was just somebody who was an EPA official. I said, "You know that was really annoying the way you guys did that. Why didn't you just have a press conference?" The gist of his response was "Did you read the coverage? We got all the reporters to write the stories just the way we wanted them to write them. We handled the press so well on that. You cannot argue with the way we did that." This was not a political appointee and clearly they were pleased as punch because they had gone out to manage the press and they thought they had successfully done it. I think there is a very aggressive effort to manage the media, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.

PIANIN: That is true, this has been a very secretive administration. I think from the President on down they put very high value on basi-

cally keeping your mouth shut, not speaking out of school, not being disloyal to the President. And talking honestly and openly sometimes is considered being disloyal. I thought frankly, particularly in the first year, it was very foolhardy because they essentially refused to talk to the press in any kind of meaningful way about what it is they were trying to do or make people available so that you could actually begin to understand why they were challenging all of these new regulations and trying to rollback existing policies. Why, for example, were they questioning the new standard for arsenic in drinking water levels, why were they rethinking mining regulations, and so on? In a sense they created a vacuum that the environmentalists very happily rushed in to fill and explain in the darkest terms, the most conspiratorial terms, what they thought the Administration was doing. The fact of the matter is that it wasn't all black and white, and the Administration had some valid points in many of these cases – but they were so silly in not bringing forth knowledgeable people to talk about it. Instead, they relied on public relations people, who a lot of times were totally ignorant of what the policy was if you started asking them questions. They could answer a few of them, but if you tried to probe any deeper, they were in over their heads.

I think that really hurt them immensely. The first year of the Bush administration was a public relations disaster from start to finish. All the press coverage angered a lot of voters, angered people on Capitol Hill, it enraged our European allies, and they really had heavy-duty problems. And then 9/11 came along and all of these issues were just sort of swept aside, along with most other domestic policy issues. The war and the attack on the U.S. became the all-consuming story, and I think in terms of interest and attention, the environmental issues, like a lot of other domestic policy issues, never recovered.

Q: A few weeks ago a Democratic pollster spoke to us about polling and the environment and he brought up that one of the things he's seen come out of his polling data is that Americans simply believe that George W. Bush's record on the environment is too bad to be true, and they have sort of tuned themselves off to it and stopped even thinking about it because they just can't believe it. What do you think is your role as reporters is in trying to break that down and trying to make it believable to the American public?

PIANIN: That's a very good question. That's really a challenging dilemma for a lot of environmental reporters. The way I approach the beat is to constantly be on the government's case so that I can explain these policy changes as they come along – not always waiting for the opportunity to do a big story that sort of weaves it all together, although that's very important, but chipping away at the story, because if you think about what constitutes environmental policy in this country, it covers an enormous range of things.

As reporters, Elizabeth and I cover the EPA, which is a big sprawling bureaucracy that conducts research, oversees environmental impact statements, and issue regulations all the time. Then there's the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management with their responsibilities for hundreds of millions of acres of federal lands throughout the country. They're the world's largest landlords, if you will. The relationship between the Administration and these agencies, and whether policymaking is top down or bottom up, is a major question. Then you have the Congress, which has a huge say in policy both in the authorization process and in the appropriations process. Every year Congress passes spending bills, and they attach amendments that dictate a policy for a year's time on a wide-range of environmental issues, energy issues, and so on. Then there are all these environmentalists and they all have their own agendas and they're all churning up reports, studies, and advocating stuff. As a reporter you have to clear away 95 percent of what is confronting you because either it's extraneous or it's not that important. Then you figure out that there are two or three things that are most important and you're given a week to write about them.

I think the big criticism of the press is that we've let the Bush administration off the hook, and we haven't told Americans what is really going on. The fact of the matter is there are a lot of policy makers from industry now calling the shots, which is a little scary. And you have an Administration that came into office with the mandate of being industry-friendly and they had a lot of promises and campaign pledges to make good on. West Virginia helped elect the President, so guess what? One of the first things the Administration did was signal that there was going to be a revival of the coal industry and that coal production would be a lot easier. They're not going to go after these mining companies that do mountaintop removal, which is really a

horrendous thing. Elizabeth is right. It's just destroying the terrain of this gorgeous state for limited economic benefit to the state. Once they mine that coal, that's it. Those companies are out of there and those jobs are gone. So the bottom line is that it's a tough job for a reporter to be the arbiter of what is actually going on. We're just ordinary human beings trying to understand the stuff and explain it in a way that readers can follow.

SHOGREN: This is more a commentary from me than a direct answer to your question, having my nose in these issues for a long time. One of the reasons I think people say that the Bush administration's record on the environment can't be as bad as they say it is, is because that's true. If you pick up the Sierra Club magazine or some other environmentalist group's version of the Bush administration's policies, they're going to write everything to the extreme and they're going to say that everything the administration's done is bad, when in fact that's not true. There are some things that the Bush administration has done for the environment that are exceedingly positive. The biggest example is diesel emission regulations from the buses and trucks that spew smoke as they go down the street. They didn't write that rule, but they decided to keep that rule on the books when they could have jettisoned it.

I'm not trying to say that the Bush administration is just wonderful for the environment, but I think that when somebody exaggerates, people tend to not believe them and I think sometimes the environmental groups hurt themselves by overstating things. At least it works that way with me when I'm trying to figure out whom to believe when I write a story.

Q: Early in your talk you said that during the primary season the Kerry campaign did seem to get some traction on the issue of merging energy security with environmental concerns. Why do you think they dropped it and do you think it might be something that might come back?

PIANIN: I sense that the focus of his message is shifting away from that to what he thinks are major opportunities for exploitation, including the soaring gasoline prices and the whole issue of CAFE standards, but what I'm saying is that that pushes you into a swamp.

You get into those issues and they're so complicated. The reality is that it's easy to say: "Why hasn't President Bush done more about gas prices? I can't believe I'm spending two dollars for a gallon of gas." The reality is that there is very little any sitting policy maker can do in the short-run to affect gasoline prices. You can jawbone OPEC or you can monkey with the oil reserve a little and put a little more in the commercial market or you can do something about lowering gasoline taxes. That's about it. For Kerry, when he raises this as an issue, he opens the door for the administration saying "Well let's go back and look at your record for the last twenty years. Where were you on the gasoline tax? Oh, you proposed raising the gasoline tax fifty cents a gallon in 1994! Isn't that interesting!" Or, "You want to take SUVs away from soccer moms in the suburbs? Well, how un-American can you be? You thought you had a great issue going and now you have to explain some of these things. So now the Administration is doing a tap dance on you. Something isn't quite right about that political strategy.

Republicans and the Environment: Dispelling Myths

Chris Henick

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Deputy to the Senior Advisor*

April 8, 2004

Thank you, it is a pleasure being here. It's fabulous to have a chance to come up here and talk to you about the environment. I'm not an expert on the environmental issues you address daily, but over the last thirty years this has been the most exciting and fascinating field in which to be involved. Your future careers will be driven by challenges faced by industry and government, as well as the politics that have dominated the environmental front. So, along those lines, I would like to share a few points of history.

REPUBLICAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Although Mr. Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster, advises Republicans not to talk about the past, I would like to start off with history. I'll spare you Ulysses S. Grant's founding of Yellowstone Park, William McKinley's Lacey Act, Gerald Ford's drinking water policies, and the Reagan/Bush years, but those experiences provide you with an idea of why Republicans feel that they have a history of environmental protection.

Recent history, beginning with the Congressional elections of 1994, provides an even clearer picture of Republican environmental commitments. Since the 104th Congress, there have been about 75 pro-environment measures passed by Congress.

These do not even include measures aimed at specific rivers, lakes, wilderness regions, or conservation areas. All of these measures are amazing. I will not list all of them, but they include the Water Resources Development Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the conservation title of the Farm Bill, the Everglades Protection Amendments, the Battery Recycling Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the completion of the Appalachian Trail, the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act, the Water Resources Development Act of 1999, and the establishment of Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where Walter Anderson became an artist. This list goes on and on and continues through this year with the passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

I would also like to address Republican environmental progress on the international front. In this election year, I know you often hear the Democrats cite our lack of accomplishments. But I want to share with you the Republican standpoint on where we think the Bush administration and the rest of the Republican Party have made headway. This international focus expands well beyond the Kyoto Protocol, which Russia and China and many other countries do not support. First, the U.S. hosted the first Earth Observation Summit, in which thirty nations participated. This climate monitoring system will be able to accurately track climate change. Second, the U.S. will devote \$970 million over the next three years to support the Millennium Development Goals – this illustrates a clear focus on drinking water. Next, this administration has supported the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Treaty. I remember growing up in the floods of '73-'74, when DDT was rampant in the Mississippi Delta. The areas where I fish have still not completely recovered, reinforcing the need to eliminate these POPs from the environment. Another key focus for this Administration is the decommissioning and dismantling of Russian nuclear submarines. We've worked with Great Britain to provide \$441 million to Russia this year alone to dismantle the fleets that are located in the Red Sea and risk severe contamination of coastal regions.

I will quickly run through how Republicans perceive the Bush administration's environmental performance on the domestic front. This EPA has proposed an off-road diesel rule, which will cut sulfur dioxide emissions from diesel engines used in agriculture and construction from 3,000 to 15 parts per million per day by 2010.

Emissions of soot will be reduced 95 percent, and nitrogen oxide emissions will be 90 percent lower than those of today's engines. The Administration believes that the rule will significantly help metropolitan areas reduce smog and ozone and enable them to reach EPA's attainment standards. I am sure that you are familiar with the Healthy Forests Initiative, which provides treatment for over 70 million acres of forests and rangelands that are at an extreme risk of catastrophic wildfires. The Initiative will protect 20 million acres annually, including pristine wildlife habitat. President Bush has requested \$760 million this year for wildlife fire management. He has also requested \$44.9 billion – a \$1.4 billion increase over last year – for conservation programs, management, maintenance, key forest grasslands, wetlands, and other habitats.

The Administration has proposed several initiatives related to clean air and climate change. First, the Administration has proposed the Clear Skies bill, which is still in the Senate. This proposal will cut sulfur dioxide emissions by 73 percent, nitrogen oxide emissions by 67 percent, and mercury emissions by 69 percent by 2018. In addition, the Climate Vision program will reduce greenhouse gas intensity by about 18 percent over the next ten years. This is the equivalent of taking 70 million cars off the road here in the U.S.

It also includes provisions to assist other nations in reducing their own emissions. Another fascinating initiative is the International Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum Charter, which was signed on June 25, 2003, by a wide range of countries including China, India, and Brazil.

President Bush has launched a \$1.7 billion proposal to develop environmentally friendly hydrogen fuel cells as power sources for vehicles. In fact, the *New York Times* ran a segment yesterday on all the new cars and other vehicles that are coming out. You'll be pleased to see that all the Ford Broncos are very environmentally sound. The Administration's hydrogen and Freedom Car proposals represent the first partnerships between government and private businesses to develop affordable hydrogen-powered vehicles.

Through the National Parks Legacy Project, the Administration has allocated \$2.8 billion to eliminate the maintenance backlog. The Administration requested an additional \$1.1 billion in the budget this year for the National Park Service.

Finally, on the topic of clean water, the Water 2025 program seeks to balance competing demands to provide the right amount of water in infrastructure systems. President Bush has requested \$21 million, a \$13.3 million increase for these programs.

THE POLITICS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

At this point, I'd like to talk just a little bit about the politics of the environment. Every Tuesday, Gallup publishes data on national trends and polling. Just this week, these Gallup numbers were released, which show how worried Americans are about the environment.

Despite the constant criticism of the Administration's environmental policies, Americans are less worried about the environment than in the years prior to September 11th. Six in ten Americans, approximately 62 percent, say they worry a great deal or a fair amount about the quality of the environment. These figures are down from 77 percent of people who worried this much in March 2001. Most of this drop, 11 out of 15 points, occurred between March 2001 and March 2002.

A Republican pollster, Bob Moore, of Oregon asked a question to groups in the Pacific Northwest, which gives you at least some sense of partisan attitudes towards environmental groups. When given the statement "environmental groups usually push for solutions which are too extreme for me," Republicans and Independents disagreed at 36 percent, Democratic men disagree 40 percent, Democratic women disagree 53 percent.

In March, Gallup asked Americans about their greatest concerns. The availability of a full bill of health care leads at 62 percent, then

crime and violence at 46 percent, drug use at 46 percent, the possibility of future terrorist attacks in the U.S. at 42 percent, the economy at 41 percent, illegal immigration at 37 percent, unemployment at 36 percent, hunger and homelessness at 35 percent, affordability of energy at 35 percent, the quality of the environment at 35 percent, and race relations at 19 percent. This same poll asked Americans whether President Bush was doing a good job or a poor job protecting the environment, and responses came back at 41 percent and 46 percent, respectively.

The environmental tactics used in this election are going to be fascinating to watch. In 2002, Democrats were surprised at the Republican gains, and they decided that they needed to change their tactics of relying on television to get their message out. So I think a lot of Democrats and environmental groups are going to focus on grassroots organizing rather than television. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is going to spend 75 percent of their funding on something called the Environmental Victory Project. It's going to focus on four states that were breathtakingly close but went Democratic, with the exception of Florida.

LCV and the Sierra Club are so focused on the presidential campaign that they have neglected the Senate and Congressional races. In doing so, they have lost their strategic focus. They claim to target electing environmental politicians, but, in recent years, they have almost exclusively supported Democrats.

Their endorsements in 1996 were 86 percent Democrats, in 1998, 82 percent, and in 2000, 80 percent. Their advertising contributions have been even more partisan: 99 percent of national PAC money and 100 percent of state money went to Democrats. LCV argues that Republicans have not been supportive of environmental issues and therefore are not positioned to receive contributions.

LCV tries to point to its own environmental scorecard as proof of its unbiased methodology, but they do not acknowledge that the scorecard leaves out consensus action. By doing so, they intentionally highlight the partisan issues. For instance, here are several examples of consensus actions that were not included in the LCV scorecard: the Safe Water Drinking Act, the National Marine Sanctuary Preservation Act, the African and Asian Elephant Conservation Acts, the Tropical Forests Restoration Act, the Estuaries and Clean Waters Act, the National Monument Act, and the Lower Chesapeake Bay Reauthorization Act. There are hundreds of others like these.

At the other extreme, the LCV scorecard includes partisan “litmus test” issues such as international family planning, regulatory reform, the nominations of two members of the Bush administration, and even campaign finance reform.

In addition to LCV and the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife has reactivated its political branch. Defenders, which is best known for its campaign to reintroduce wolves into Yellowstone National Park, now plans to issue a Congressional report. Outside of the traditional environmental groups, several former Clinton administration environmental officials have formed Environment 2004.

These groups are all trying to influence what issues will be discussed in the election. Mercury certainly will be a significant topic. A story on the new rule ran in the *New York Times* yesterday, and this issue will continue to be in the headlines. This Administration prioritizes the proposed 70 percent mercury reductions, and we feel that no other Administration has adequately addressed the issue.

All of these issues are fascinating from a political perspective, even the proposed EPA budget cut of 8.9 percent overall in fiscal year 2005. Governor Leavitt pitched the “cuts” as a request for a \$133 million increase compared with the earmarks established in the last Congress. However, if you look deeper, you will see increased spending by \$35 million for cleanup of contaminated sediments in the Great Lakes.

That proposal will not be dismissed by Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, or other key states in 2004.

I'm going to close with the remarks Administrator Leavitt made at the National Association of Manufacturers when he first took office. He opened his comments by repeating the four questions that President Bush asked him when he joined the Cabinet: Is the air cleaner? Is the water more pure? Is the land better protected? And are we doing it in a way that keeps us competitive economically? Those are the four questions by which this Administration will be judged both internally and externally. Now I am curious about what is on the minds of the Yale community.

Q & A

Q: Most of us see a problem with just about everything we look at in the environment, it's our job. But from someone with a different perspective, what kinds of environmental issues really concern you the most?

A: I think personally, the difference lies in whether you consider yourself an environmentalist or a conservationist (i.e., do you fish and hunt?). I think that a lot of people personally who aren't scientists, who don't know anything from sulfur to mercury to carbon, have to feel that this is something that we have got to do. You can imagine what William Ruckelshaus, the first EPA administrator, had to face thirty years ago – business people, utility presidents were saying that this is just a fad, environment is just a fad. It's going to go away. Well thankfully it wasn't a fad.

Q: Many people have commented that the Bush administration is weakest on the environment. Do you think there is recognition in the administration that that's the case?

A: This may be a problem in a lot of swing areas. I think clearly in suburbs it's an issue that people like soccer moms care about. It used to be that Republicans had to be credible on education, and if they thought you were credible on education, they'd look at you a second time and move on to other issues. Now, it just very well may be the environment, since Republicans have now focused on No Child Left

Behind. You may very well see that the environment may become that type of an issue where people look at you first as a Republican, and then ask, how credible are you? In 1986 when I managed a Congressional race in Charlotte, North Carolina, Jim Broyhill of the family of furniture fame was running for U.S. Senate, and Terry Sanford had come back to run for the U.S. Senate. Sanford beat Broyhill clearly on the environment alone. To some extent you don't see that happen statewide. It's not to say that it couldn't emerge as a swing issue.

Q: On the issue of the environment, is your argument that there is no difference among Democrats and Republicans? If there is a difference, how would you distill philosophically the difference between Republicans and Democrats?

A: What I am arguing is that, since 1995 and the Congressional Republicans in the 104th Congress up until this White House and the re-election campaign, there has been huge bipartisan consensus. This environmental legislation could not have been passed without Democratic support and even Democratic origins, as you well know. It is an agenda that clearly we know we've been behind – the most meaningfully in domestic areas. This is why you've seen so much change. It's almost like these are social, not economic issues. It's almost turned into a social issue the way we've seen other social issues in the Republican Party. My point about the LCVs' scorecard is that you don't hear about consensus and, in fact, from our standpoint, we're having to fight to stay alive to focus in other areas on the environment where our accomplishments have been. So we have certainly no choice but to highlight consensus. We just wish – there's no such thing as wish in politics – but it would be a good new focus because if you just have a partisan difference, you eliminate a lot of the focus.

It's going to be fascinating to see where Clear Skies goes in the Senate. If it doesn't pass you'll see this Administration come back, look at it, focus on it. It may very well be like Social Security legislation. If Clear Skies doesn't pass it could very well be one of the key major points in the second Bush term. A lot of these issues will be the focus.

Q: How do you see yourself as different from the Democrats philosophically?

A: I think it's less about philosophy and more about more practical implementation in many respects. Republicans just can't stand silent on issues such as the environment, but frankly the issue really matters in the northeast and the far west where Republican nominees have a record on the environment.

Q: Some Republicans in the Senate are very staunch environmentalists. Do you think the Bush White House is out of sync with the Senate, and specifically these Republicans, on environmental issues?

A: I don't know. In fact, we've put a lot of pressure on the Senate to push the issue and push the agenda. I don't think out of sync as much as you'll see that legislation, such as the energy bill, was a disappointment and there may be some fallout from that. I know you'll see a focus on environment electorally and you may even see improvement on the George W. Bush website about the environment issue.

The Climate Emergency

Al Gore

Vice President of the United States 1992-2000

April 13, 2004

I'm Al Gore. I used to be the next president of the United States. This has been an interesting period of my life. I wanted to start by inviting you to put yourselves in my shoes for a minute. It hasn't been easy, you know. For eight years I flew on Air Force II, and now I have to take off my shoes to get on an airplane.

Not long after Tipper and I left the White House, we were driving from our home in Nashville to a small farm we have fifty miles east of Nashville. We were driving ourselves. I looked in the rear view mirror and all of a sudden it just hit me that there was no motorcade. Some of you may have heard of phantom limb pain.

It was mealtime, so we looked for a place to eat. We pulled off the interstate highway and finally found a Shoney's Restaurant, a low-cost, family restaurant chain. We walked in and sat down. The waitress came over and made a big commotion over Tipper. She took our order and then went to the couple in the booth next to us, and lowered her voice so much I had to really strain to hear what she was saying: "Yes, that's former Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper." And the man said, "He's come down a long way, hasn't he?"

The very next day, continuing a true story, I got on a plane and flew to Africa, to Nigeria, to the city of Lagos, to make a speech about energy. I began my speech by telling that story, that had just happened the day before back in Tennessee, and I told it pretty much the same way I just told it here. They laughed. Then I went on and gave my speech and went back to the airport and flew back toward the U.S. I fell asleep on the plane, and was awakened in the middle of the night when we were landing on the Azores Islands out in the middle of the Atlantic. They opened the door of the plane to let some fresh air in, and I looked out, and here came a man running across the runway waving a piece of paper saying "Call Washington, call Washington."

I thought – what in the world, in the middle of the night, in the middle of the Atlantic, what in the world could be wrong in Washington? And then I remembered it could be a bunch of things. But what it turned out to be was that my staff back in Washington was very, very upset. A wire service reporter in Lagos had written a story about my speech, and it had already been transmitted to the U.S. and printed all over the country. The story began: “Former Vice President Al Gore announced in Nigeria yesterday ‘My wife Tipper and I opened a low-cost family restaurant named Shoney’s and we are running it ourselves.’” Before I could get back to U.S. soil, the late-night comics Leno and Letterman had already started in on me. They had me in a big white chef’s hat and Tipper was taking orders – “One more with fries!” Three days later I got a nice long handwritten letter from my friend Bill Clinton that said “Congratulations on the new restaurant, Al!” We like to celebrate each other’s successes in life.

Anyway, it really is an honor to be here and to share some words about the climate issue. The title I chose for this speech is not a misprint. The phrase “climate emergency” is intended to convey what it conveys – that this is a crisis with an unusual sense of urgency attached to it, and we should see it as an emergency. The fact that we don’t, or that most people don’t, is part of what I want to cover here.

CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPACTS AND EVIDENCE

There is a very famous picture called Earth Rise. A young astronaut named William Anders took it on December 24, 1968. This mission, Apollo 7, was the first one to go around the moon. It went on Christmas Eve, and they had just been on the dark side of the moon, coming back around, seeing the earth for the first time. Anders – the rookie astronaut, without a big fancy camera – took this snapshot and it instantly became an icon. Many people believe that this one picture, Earth Rise, in many ways was responsible for the birth of the modern environmental movement. Less than two years after this picture was printed, the first Earth Day was organized. This picture became a powerful force in changing the way people thought about the earth and about the environment.

The environment is often felt to be relatively invulnerable because the earth is so big. People tend to assume that the earth is so big that

we as human beings can't possibly have any impact on it. That is a mistake. The most vulnerable part of earth's environment is the atmosphere. It's astonishingly thin, as any image from space shows. The space is so small that we are able to fill it up with greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, which form a thick blanket of gas surrounding the earth, trapping some of the sun's radiation. This process, called the "greenhouse effect," is what leads to increased global temperatures or what most refer to as climate change.

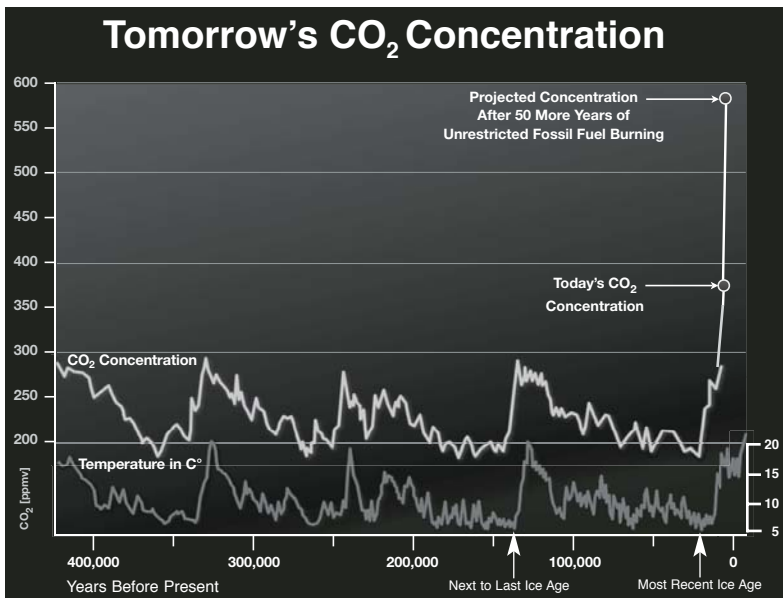
In Europe during the summer of 2003, we experienced an extreme heat wave that killed an estimated 20,000 people, and many predict such events will be much more commonplace as a result of increasing temperatures. The anomaly was extreme, particularly in France, with consequences that were well reported in the press. Year-to-year, decade-to-decade there's variation, but the overall upward trend worldwide since the American Civil War is really clear and really obvious, at least to me.

If you look at the glaciers around the world, you see that many are melting away. A friend of mine named Lonnie Thompson of Ohio State studies glaciers, and he reports that 15 to 20 years from now there will be no more snows of Kilimanjaro. This shrinking of glaciers is happening all around the world, including Latin America, China, and the U.S. In our own Glacier National Park, all of the glaciers are predicted to be gone within 15 to 20 years.

One of the remarkable things about glaciers is that they really could care less about politics. They either melt or freeze. Rhetoric has no impact on them whatsoever. A few years ago some hikers in the Alps between Austria and Italy were walking along and they ran across what looked like a 5,000-year-old man. Actually he was from 3,000 BCE, and you don't see that every day. The reason you don't is that the ice there hasn't melted for 5,000 years. Every mountain glacier in the entire world, with the exception of a few in Scandinavia that are affected by the Gulf Stream patterns, is melting rapidly.

Lonnie Thompson and his team of researchers don't just watch glaciers melt. They drill down into the glaciers and pull up columns of ice. Then they study the bubbles of air trapped in the ice, and they can do that year by year because every year there's a new layer. In Antarctica the layers are paper-thin and they stack up 400,000 years back. Ninety-five percent of all the fresh water in the world is locked up as ice in Antarctica. It's two miles high.

When Lonnie and his team drill down through Antarctica, they're able to get 400,000 years worth of ice. They can then look at the little bubbles of atmosphere and measure the CO₂ content, and they can also measure temperature by comparing the ratio of different oxygen isotopes. However that works, it's extremely accurate and not controversial. And here's what that record shows where carbon dioxide is concerned:



Now, there are two points here. The first is: Do those lines – the line for level of temperature and the line for concentration of CO₂ – look like they go together to you? They do to me. The second point is: Here in New Haven, on the temperature line, the difference of approximately 15°C of average temperature is the difference between a nice day and having one mile of ice over your head. What has been happening lately is that the concentration of CO₂ is approaching 380 parts per million. So that's way, way above anything that has been seen for as far

back as we can measure – 400,000 years. And within fifty years it's going to approach 600 parts per million. So if a difference of approximately 200 parts per million of CO₂ on the cold side is a mile of ice over your head, what does that much difference represent on the warm side?

Or to state the question another way, is it perfectly sane and rational and reasonable to go ahead and do this? Or is it in fact crazy? It is crazy, but that is what the world is doing right now. And fifty years is not a long time. Unless we make decisions very soon, we will reach much higher levels. So, when I use the phrase *climate emergency*, I have partly in mind the fact that this is happening right now. And it carries with it, unless we do something, catastrophic consequences for all civilization.

In Antarctica you've heard about ice shelves the size of Rhode Island coming off and calving. There are actually a bunch of them in the Antarctic, and also in Greenland. Incidentally, there was a flurry of publicity on April 9th about a new study showing that if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at current rates the disappearance of Greenland's ice sheet is inevitable, unless we act fairly soon.

When ice melts in mountains and in Antarctica and Greenland – when land-based ice melts – it raises sea level. When you have rivers that are close to the ocean like the Thames River in London, the water level goes up, and it threatens the lower lying areas. London, in 1983, built barriers to protect the city against flooding from higher sea level and thus higher storm surges. These barriers had to be closed only once in 1983. Twenty years later, in 2003, they were closed 19 times. Again, the same pattern shows up wherever you look.

An area of Bangladesh is due to be flooded where ten million people live. A large area of Florida is due to be flooded. The Florida Keys are very much at risk. The Everglades are at risk.

Now the Arctic is very different from the Antarctic because, while the Antarctic is land surrounded by ocean, the Arctic is ocean

surrounded by land. And the ice in the Arctic is floating on top of the ocean, so it doesn't get nearly as thick. Instead of two miles thick, it's only ten feet thick – that is, it used to be ten feet. Just in the last few decades it has melted quite a bit. I went up there twice in a submarine. They have these specially designed submarines where the wings rotate vertically so that they can cut through the ice. Ice in water, or thinner ice, melts more rapidly and leads to temperature increases because, as soon as a little bit of ice melts, the water absorbs a lot more temperature. This effect is now happening to the entire Arctic Ocean. The Arctic ice cap has thinned by 40 percent in the last 40 years. Let me repeat that. Listen to that number. The Arctic ice cap has thinned 40 percent in 40 years. Within 50 years it may be entirely gone.

That's a big problem because when the sun hits the ice cap, 95 percent of the energy bounces off like a big mirror. But when it hits the open ocean more than 90 percent is absorbed. So it's a phase change, it's not a gradual change. Ice is that way – the difference between 33F° and 31F° is not just two degrees. That puts more energy into the system and it changes the amount of evaporation off the oceans, so you get more rain and snow but it comes at different times and you get more soil erosion as well. You get simultaneously more flooding and more droughts, which is really a bad thing. You get more precipitation in one-time storm events. More of it comes at one time in big storms.

The trend is very clear. What's behind it all? I've come to believe that global warming, the disappearance of the ocean fisheries, the destruction of the rain forests, the stratospheric ozone depletion problem, the extinction crisis, all of these are really symptoms of an underlying cause. The underlying cause is a collision between our civilization and the earth. The relationship between the human species and our planet has been completely changed. All of our culture, all of our literature, all of our history, everything we've learned, was premised on one relationship between the earth and us, and now we have a different one.

THREE LEADING CAUSES: POPULATION GROWTH, TECHNOLOGY, AND OUR WAY OF THINKING

The new relationship between humankind and the earth has been caused by a confluence of three factors.

The first is population, which has been growing rapidly. The population crisis has actually been a success story in some ways. We've slowed it down, but the momentum of the population increases is really incredible. Say the scientists are right and we emerged as a species 160,000 years ago. It took from that time, almost 160,000 years until the end of World War II, before we got to a population of 2 billion. Since I've been alive, as part of the baby boom generation, it has gone from 2 billion to 6.3 billion. So if it takes more than 10,000 generations to reach 2 billion and one human lifetime to go from 2 to 6, and if I live to the demographic average of the baby boom generation, it'll go close to 9 billion. That is one of the reasons why the relationship between our species and the earth is different now than ever before.

Some of the other global patterns, species loss for example, match the human population pattern. Most importantly, however, the increase in the population of developing nations is driving food demand, water demand, and energy demand, creating intense pressures on human resources. We are seeing a pattern of devastation and destruction that is simply driven by those factors. And it really is a political issue. We in the U.S. are responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than Africa, South America, Central America, India, and China combined. The world average is way below where we are. Just to recap – this is 1,000 years of carbon emissions, CO₂ concentrations, and temperature. This is not rocket science. Those lines match up.

The second factor that changes the relationship between humans and the earth is technology. In many ways, it is more powerful and significant than the population explosion because new technologies have increased our power beyond imagination. That's a good thing often in areas like medicine or communications – you can fill in the blanks. There are all kinds of great things that represent progress. Even cleaning up the environment with new technology. There are a lot of great things that have come out of this, but when we don't examine habits that have persisted for a long time, and then use the same habits

with new technology and don't take into account the new power that we have, then the consequences can get away from us. One quick example: warfare was one thing with swords and bows and arrows and even muskets, but when nuclear weapons were created, the consequences of war were utterly transformed. So we had to think differently about war. And what happened? The cold war emerged and unfortunately the other kind didn't completely go away, but we're in the midst of rethinking that age-old habit of warfare. We just have to, because the new technologies make it unthinkable to continue as we were doing in the past.

Now think about that pattern: old habits, new technologies. Think about the subsistence that we have always drawn from the earth. The plow was a great advance, as was irrigation. But then we began to get more powerful with these tools. At the Aral Sea in Russia, something as simple as irrigation on a large scale led to the virtual disappearance of the fourth largest inland body of water in the world. We're changing the surface of the earth, and technology sometimes seems to dwarf our human scale. We now have to try to change this pattern.

The third factor is our way of thinking. We have to change our way of thinking. One illustration comes from the fact that, as I said earlier, we have these big assumptions that we don't question. I had a classmate in the sixth grade. Every time our geography teacher put a map of the world up he would mutter. One time, he got up his courage and pointed to the outline of South America and the outline of Africa and said, "Did they ever fit together?" And the teacher said "Of course not. That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard." In fact, until about the 1960s, the guy who talked about continental drift was thought to be a kook because he said that Africa and South America fit together. It turns out that they did, but the teacher in this story had an assumption in his mind. Continents are so big they obviously don't move, thereby illustrating the old philosopher's saying that "What gets

us into trouble is not what we don't know. It's what we know for sure that just ain't so" (Yogi Berra). We know for sure that the earth is so big we can't have a big impact on it, but that's just not so.

You know this cliché, I'm sure: That a frog's nervous system is such that if it's dropped into a pot of boiling water it will jump right out because it perceives the contrast, but if it's put in a pot of tepid water which is slowly heated, it doesn't jump out unless it's rescued. Here's the deeper meaning of that cliché: the frog did perceive the sudden boiling water, but did not perceive the slow process.

Global warming seems to be gradual in the context of a human life, but it is actually fairly sudden. Another problem with our thinking is that there are people who are paid money by some coal companies and oil companies to go out and pretend that the science says something that it doesn't say. These are scientific camp followers who are willing to do things for money. And some of the very same individuals who are doing this now (i.e., trying to persuade people that global warming is not a problem) were some of the same people who took money from the tobacco companies after the Surgeon General's report came out warning of the dangers of smoking. The tobacco companies hired these scientific camp followers to go out and try to confuse the public into thinking that the science wasn't clear. They produced marketing campaigns like "More doctors smoke Camels." On a similar note, the Republican pollster Frank Luntz advised the White House that the issue of the environment is important, but the way to deal with it is to make the lack of scientific certainty a primary issue by finding people who are willing to say that it's confusing when it's really not.

There's another assumption that needs to be questioned. In contrast to the idea that the earth is so big that we can't have any impact on it, there are others who assume that the climate change problem is so big we can't solve it. I, however, believe that we can if we put our minds to it. We had a problem with the ozone hole, a big global problem that seemed too big to solve. In response, we had political leadership and the world passed a treaty outlawing chlorofluorocarbons, the chemicals that caused this problem.

The United States led the way, and we brought about a dramatic drop in CFCs and are now in the process of solving that problem. We now have the ability to buy hybrid cars like the Toyota Prius and the marketplace for new sources of energy is increasing dramatically. We're also seeing new efficiencies with energy savings. If we have political leadership and the collective political will to say it is important to solve this problem, we can not only solve it, we can create more jobs, we can create higher incomes, a better way of life, and a higher quality of life by solving the problem.

And finally, it's an issue of values. Back when I was in the Senate, the first President Bush was trying to fend off some of the attacks by myself and many others in Congress who were saying we have to solve this global warming problem. So they had a White House conference on global stewardship. One of their view graphs caught my attention. Their view of the global environmental crisis was represented by a scale with money, in the form of gold bars on one side, and on the other side of the scales was the entire planet. The point they were trying to make was that we have to find a balance between our monetary wealth and the well being of the entire planet. Boy, that's a tough one! It's a false choice – because you're not going to have much wealth if you lose the planet and there is wealth to be made in saving it. We have to get our perspective right.

Everything we have ever known – and Carl Sagan made a beautiful long statement about this – all the wars, all the heartbreak, all the romance, every triumph, every mistake, everything we've ever known is contained in this small planet. If we keep the right perspective and keep our eyes on the prize, we *can* solve this problem, we *will* solve this problem, we *must* solve this problem. It really is up to you.

Q & A

Q: Getting legislation through the U.S. Congress involves constructing political coalitions. Who are the potential strategic allies that could make a coalition in support of mandatory climate change legislation? How do we get that done?

A: The environment used to be more of a bipartisan issue. Back 34 years ago, in 1970, Richard Nixon was president, preparing, he thought, to face a challenge in the presidential election in 1972 from Senator Ed Muskie, who was the leading environmentalist in the Senate. President Nixon tried to co-opt the environment as an issue – and the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and a lot of other legislation really passed on a bipartisan basis with votes from senators in both parties during that period. What’s different now, among other things, is that the right wing of the Republican Party is so completely in control of that party.

Now, I’m a Democrat, I’m very biased, and you’ll have to take it with a grain of salt, but I hear the same thing from moderate Republicans who are deeply concerned. Many of them are afraid to say it anymore because their campaign funding is now controlled by the campaign committees, which are in turn controlled by the right wing. Now the right wing has, as a part of its coalition, companies that try to convince us there’s no problem. And so they fight tooth and nail against any type of progress on the environment. They’re trying to roll back protections against mercury pollution. They have actually blacked out statements of warning from the EPA on the subject of climate change and substituted language paid for by Exxon/Mobil and other companies that try to cloud the issue.

That’s not leadership – that’s sabotage. That’s a betrayal of the American people. Bipartisanship depends on having enough health and responsiveness in both political parties to have a genuine dialogue based on the rule of reason.

Examine the facts, agree or disagree, debate, try to persuade each other – that’s the American way. But the rule of reason has been tossed aside by many in the current Republican Party and, instead, the rule of power has been substituted.

Wealth and power have been used in combination to undercut rational debate, to censor the evidence, confuse the people, and avoid the real problem.

I'm really troubled by it and I'm hopeful that it'll change, but one of the reasons I make speeches like this around the country is to do what little I can to try to get evidence before people and say look, be a part of the solution. Because the only way things are going to change is if you decide that you want them to change. Mahatma Gandhi said you must become the change you wish to see in the world. Be that change; manifest it, fight for it, struggle for it. Then we'll get these kinds of coalitions.

Q: What environmental messages resonate most with voters and what environmental issues should the Democrats raise in the campaign? Should they stress the climate issue?

A: I think they should, but I think the pollsters will say that the issues which test most effectively and are found year in and year out to be most persuasive are those that people can feel an immediate tangible connection to, like the pollution of water they drink, air they breathe. There are a lot of people who try to find ways to make clear the connections between the climate issue and those issues because, in fact, the same air pollution that causes respiratory disease also causes global warming. One of the challenges that those of us who care about the environment face is that, because of the successes we have had, we've actually seen a sharp reduction in the amount of pollution in water and air in most communities in the United States. That causes a false sense of reassurance, when in fact the problem has been shifted to the global arena.

Q: You mentioned in your talk a couple of times about individual responses by citizens, how they can help. Can you elaborate on this?

A: Well, I've seen a lot of examples. I'm now a recovering politician, but during the 25 years or so that I was in elected office, I saw many, many examples of individuals being determined, educating themselves, and making a tremendous difference. There was a young woman in Tennessee who wrote a letter to me about her water tasting

funny. The well water turned out to have been poisoned by chemical waste that had been dumped three miles away by a company trucking it in from Memphis seventy miles away. One thing led to another, hearings were held, and other examples of such contamination were brought to light, including one that had previously come out in upstate New York at Love Canal. Legislation came out to create the Superfund, the Resource Conservation Recovery Act, and in many ways that young woman in rural Tennessee helped to bring it about. I daresay it might not have occurred if she had not been as determined and persistent as she was. It's only one example and maybe it sounds corny, or maybe it sounds like a cliché, but I'm telling you, I've seen this over and over again.

If you feel strongly about an issue and if you're really willing to educate yourself so that you understand it as well or better than anybody does, and you decide you feel strongly enough about it, you're not going to give up. Then you will be amazed at how much you can accomplish if you will stay with it. And that's just a fact.

Q: Is the environment going to emerge as a major issue in the 2004 presidential campaign?

A: I hope it's a big issue in the campaign. I think that we do have a crisis in our democracy today. Voting participation has declined. Television now dominates the political dialogue and, as a medium, it is not accessible to the average person. Conglomerates that are not really porous to public opinion and individual expression control it and, as a result, a lot of issues like the environment don't get much attention. So politicians who make speeches on the environment often don't see them covered. They're not really reflected in the national dialogue. Senator Kerry has made a number of excellent speeches about the environment and they're almost invisible to the American people because there's an A list and a B list of issues, and the environment is not currently seen on the A list of issues, and it should be, because our future is very much at stake.

Republican Leadership for Environmental Progress: A Lost Legacy?

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I see that there are a number of instruments in front of me that will record everything that I say. So, promptly on my return to Florida, I'm going to check my liability insurance – because I'm going to tell you how I think Al Gore lost the 2000 presidential election. I'm also going to tell you why I went to Washington long ago to work on environmental matters with President Richard Nixon, what happened to me during my tenure in Washington, and a bit about why I think the present situation is the gravest probably since the onslaught of resource decimation in the late nineteenth century.

ENVIRONMENT AS THE DECISIVE ISSUE IN THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN FLORIDA

Although the last election is far behind us, I should say that Deb Callahan and I are just beginning to speak again. She is, as you know, president of the League of Conservation Voters (see her chapter in this book). As a leader in the environmental community during the Gore campaign, Deb made, in my opinion, a great error. She gave Gore complete support early in his campaign without getting back a single promise. And I hope the environmental community never makes that kind of mistake again.

What were the promises that meant so much to me? There was one, concerning a major environmental issue in South Florida, where I live. And I think that issue turned the last election against Vice President Al Gore.

At issue was the conversion of Homestead Air Force Base in Southern Dade County from an active U.S. Air Force Base to *whatever*. And the *whatever* could be a vast variety of different projects – from an aquarium to a science center to headquarters for the Army to a major privately owned airport surrounded by intensive commercial development.

Homestead Air Force Base had been destroyed by Hurricane Andrew. The Air Force decided it didn't need it anymore – decided that Castro did not pose a significant military threat, and that any threat could be handled out of Tampa with long-range fighter aircraft.

What were the issues surrounding the redevelopment of the airfield area into a major airport and other developments? Its location was critical. The airfield sits on the banks of Biscayne National Park. So you have toxic waste from jet engines that spill fuel into the bay. And because the wind is predominantly southeast, all aircraft landing in Homestead must fly over the Everglades. How can you have a national park with 747s taking off and flying directly over your park? You can't.

Any effort by the environmental community to win an acceptable conversion of Homestead Air Force Base was going to be partly political, because “well connected” developers had plans. The Air Force wrote a long environmental impact statement that said there would be no problem transforming the Air Force base into a commercial airfield. Two syndicates of Cuban-Americans, extraordinarily wealthy, began to vie with each other for the opportunity of obtaining Homestead to turn it into a major transportation hub. Their plan looked profitable because at that time Miami International Airport was running into trouble with the volume of passengers and goods arriving from Central and South America – food, flowers, and so on.

Both syndicates had excellent connections with Florida's governor, Jeb Bush, and they were trying to get excellent connections with both presidential candidates, George W. Bush and Al Gore. Gore was enormously attracted to the strong showing among Cuban-Americans that President Clinton had made in 1996 when he defeated Bob Dole. No Democrat before had attracted such a large percentage of that vote, and I'm not sure one will again.

Candidate Gore was accepting major campaign contributions from one of the key syndicates. Candidate Bush was accepting major, major, major campaign contributions from the other syndicate. The environmental leadership including myself had met repeatedly with

Gore and his campaign staff. We told them and him that under no circumstances could he avoid the Homestead issue.

Following major criticism, the Clinton administration found the Air Force's environmental impact statement "insufficient." Clinton's staff recognized the political importance of the Homestead issue, then had it rewritten by a very good team, who would obviously find flaw in allowing continued use by airplanes over national parks. Attempting to help Gore, the President delayed the publication of the revised environmental impact statement. When the revised EIS was reviewed by the White House staff, it said, as predicted, that the transformation of Homestead into a major commercial field would be an environmental disaster. The President decided to delay any decision until after the election. We made a plea, saying that the polls were showing that the Homestead issue was the predominant environmental issue in Florida, especially in south Florida where the polls showed the race was narrowing. An early Bush lead was evaporating.

One of the strange things about the Hispanic population in south Florida is that, whereas the Cuban-Americans are almost always Republicans to the right of Genghis Khan, we now have a million non-Cuban Hispanics living in Florida who are voting Democratic. They're concerned about health, education, and strangely enough, the environment. They don't want to live in a crummy neighborhood. And they understand the impact of a jet plane flying over a national park.

For Vice President Gore to avoid this decision fascinated me. I decided to devote seven months of my life to try to persuade the Vice President that this planned conversion of Homestead Air Force Base was of such paramount importance to the election in Florida that he couldn't avoid it. And I made myself a pain in the ass to him and to his campaign staff. I met with the Vice President at the big office at the Office of Management and Budget three times. I met with his campaign staff five times and spoke to eight members of his campaign staff an average of once every ten days.

I then became paranoid that the Republicans might make a deal on the air force base, so I decided that I had to defend the field from the Republicans. That turned out to be rather easy. I was invited to speak about the conversion to one of the richest communities in Florida, the Ocean Reef Club in North Key Largo, which luckily was in direct alignment for the aircraft taking off from Homestead Air Force Base. Whereas jet fighter planes leaving Homestead climbed at 5,000-7,000

feet a minute, I informed club members, a lumbering 747 would be roaring along at less than 1,000 feet as it went over their 500 homes worth more than \$10 million each. And I assured them that their windows would rattle. Because major Republican Party campaign donors from across the country winter at Ocean Reef, we soon heard from the Bush campaign that Homestead Air Force Base would not be allowed to be converted into a commercial airfield.

Gore dodged and dodged. I received five promises that any day he was going to come out in opposition to the transfer of Homestead to private owners. Ralph Nader pounded him, demanding a firm statement. September came around, and the polls showed that Nader had surprisingly large strength in Florida, principally because the vice president was not “green enough.” People felt a vote for Nader was a protest vote. I urged more polling, and the polling showed that the Homestead Air Force Base issue was the predominant issue among environmental groups. There was still no change in Gore’s position. I signed off in mid-October when one of his delightful campaign aides called and said: We had a long go with him last night and told him that, even if we landed the 82nd Airborne in downtown Havana tomorrow, he would not capture the Cuban-American vote in Miami. The only way he would pick up the really tough green vote in South Dade would be to come out in favor of closing the airfield and having it transformed into some other compatible land use.

In late October, I received an “emergency” telephone call from Kathleen McGinty – a respected environmentalist who had served as Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality with distinction. The Gore campaign managers wanted her to address the leaders of the Florida environmental groups – WWF, National Wildlife Federation, Audubon, Sierra, NPCA, etc. in an effort to mobilize the green vote for Gore. The polls showed that Nader’s campaign had surprising strength, especially in south Florida. I was so sick at heart over Gore’s failure of conviction that I stated, firmly, “Count me out of last minute ‘emergency’ appeals.” I did urge many of the environmental leaders to meet with Katie in Miami. From all reports, her appeal fell on deaf ears. Katie seemed “surprised” that the Homestead issue was such an important environmental issue. She was unable to give the attendees assurance that an elected Gore would defend Biscayne Bay National Park and refuse to transfer the field to a private syndicate of campaign

donors. Katie called me after the meeting. I told her “Too late, there is no way to minimize the Nader vote at this late date. No one would trust Vice President Gore when he failed a rather easy decision. Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt and Carol Browner, Administrator of the EPA, both never wavered in urging the Gore campaign to make a firm statement favoring federal retention of the airfield.

So now you know why I feel so bitterly about the election. And you now know what I believe to be an untold story of how Al Gore lost the presidency. Seventeen thousand votes went to Nader in South Dade County, and more than 90,000 went to Nader statewide. Al Gore lost Florida by approximately 537 votes. The polls showed Homestead Air Force Base was the number one environmental issue.

PRESIDENT NIXON’S ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY

Now that I’ve talked about the last election, I want to tell you a few things I learned long ago about how to work for the environment in Washington. Let me explain how I went to work for President Richard Nixon and why I accepted his invitation to become Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and National Parks.

I had finished five and a half years in state government in Florida, and was exhausted from working to establish the Florida Air and Water Pollution Control Administration, the predecessor of Department of Environmental Regulations. Hundreds and hundreds of complaints would come in saying that somebody’s plant was polluting the holy hell out of the neighborhood, and what was I going to do about it? I wanted to get back to national parks, to water, to critters.

My first meeting with President Nixon in April of 1971 was fascinating. He was in one of his dark moods. The meeting was scheduled for seven and a half minutes, and his first question to me was, “Are you coming to Washington to attend the cocktail party routine or to work?” I said, “Mr. President, I have three young children. I hate cock-

tail parties. If I'm confirmed, I have come to work." He said, "How refreshing." And he looked up and said, "Do you have any idea what your priorities are?" And I said, "Yes, Mr. President. I have a typed list that's in my pocket." He said, "Pull it out and read it to me."

I said, "I will have in your hands an executive order banning the use of poison 1080, the pesticide used to kill coyotes across the west that in turn kills everything that touches the dead coyote or any other animal that died of it." He looked up and said, "1080, oh God, the sheepherders will all be after me." I said, yes, the sheepherders will be after you. He said, "However, my wife speaks about 1080 all the time, so go ahead and get that executive order in my hands."

I said, "I'll have an executive order in your hands banning DDT. It's going to take a little longer." He said, "Oh God, my number one contributor is John Olin, and he makes DDT." I said, "Yes, John Olin does make DDT and he is your number one campaign financier, but you're going to ban DDT." He said, "All right, if you've got the science, I'll buy it."

I said, "You're going to remove millions of acres of the Alaska lands and make them into national parks and refuges." He said, "Oh God, Senator Stevens will kill me." He said "Reed, can't you find something that's going to bother the Democrats?" I said, "You're going to enforce the Endangered Species Act. You're going to support Clean Air and Water." John Ehrlichman, who had been a land-use lawyer in Seattle and was one of Nixon's senior staff members, was beaming. "You're going to support a resolution banning whaling. You're going to encourage the enlargement of the national parks system, and you're going to create a record number of national wildlife refuges. Nixon said, "For Christ's sake, stop."

I said, "There's one more thing. I'm going to enforce the Eagle Law, Mr. President. It hasn't been enforced and thousands of eagles are being killed every year. Some of them are being poisoned, but some of them are being shot and the penalty is only \$1,000 per bird. I'm going to be pressing for a much higher penalty. I'm going to start arresting people for killing eagles." He said, "Good show, goodbye." So that was the end of my meeting.

John Ehrlichman walked me out and said, "What are you going to do with your existing staff?" I said, "I'm going to say goodbye, thank you very much for serving the previous Assistant Secretary, and I wish you all godspeed."

He said, “What are you going to do to get staff?” I said, “I don’t know John, but I’ll tell you that if you call the National Republican Committee or if you send me a list of who you think I should hire, I’ll give you my word I won’t hire any of them. I’ll be damned if I’m coming up here and wasting my time without having a spectacular staff.” He said, “Well, you are a son of a bitch. Everyone says you’re a son of a bitch. Oh, go ahead.”

PLAYING POLITICS: HOW TO REALLY GET THINGS DONE IN WASHINGTON

Now I’m going to tell you an insider story. One of the great questions is: When you lose an argument in the Department of the Interior, how do you win the reversal of that decision? We developed a Machiavellian system. The Secretary of the Interior was Rogers C. B. Morton, a marvelous massive man, six foot eight inches tall, 230 pounds. He’d been a Congressman from the eastern shore of Maryland, a moderate Republican. He ate onions at luncheon, got pretty hot by late afternoon, and required violent exercise. There’s a game in Washington played in all of the buildings, including up on the Hill, called paddleball. You hit a rather fast moving rubber ball against a wall, and it’s two against two. You are in a complete sweat in eight minutes, and after an hour you are totally exhausted. I played against Morton every afternoon. The key was this little list that my staff passed to me – decisions that were very important or ones that we had lost that we felt were worth retrieving. The key was the shower. The secretary’s shower stall and my shower stall were adjacent. As the secretary was lathering up, I would say something like: “Rogers, have you really made a decision on that oil sale in the Alaskan Gulf? Did you know the gulf is the primary breeding area for halibut, and halibut is an \$80 million industry in Alaska?” He would say, “Nobody told me there was halibut,” so I would say, “I want to show you this data from the National Fisheries Service,” and so on and so forth. I won more arguments in the shower than any other place.

But seriously, if you're going to go into government, let me suggest the following few items that I think are essential.

- **If you're a staff member, learn to be a good staff member – work your butt off.**
 - **If you're in a leadership position, hire the best staff you can. Never be scared of bright assistants. A good manager always hires brighter people than he or she is and shares victories – and never blames them for failures.**
 - **The importance of delegation. Don't have too big a staff so they get restless over turf. I was allowed twelve positions. I only filled seven. I wanted everybody to go home exhausted.**
 - **Learn how to be a public speaker.**
 - **There is no substitute for honesty. You will never be forgiven if you're dishonest.**
 - **Know what you will not do. Know what would cause you to resign, and don't ever budge from it.**
 - **Remember that every day you are in a power position you can make a difference, and every day is golden.**
-

Q & A

Q: Why did the environment become such a polarizing issue?

A: It began with a tremendous change in the Republican Party. Although the western Republicans during the period that I served were often outraged by environmental progress, they were not in a position to do much about it. I noticed a change in about 1973 or 1974 when some of the questioning during testimony became personalized and rough. In the 1980s the Party turned further to the right under the Reagan administration. Reagan took no pleasure in seeing a smooth

government run. He ran against government – he derided government. We began a real slowdown under Reagan, with a crisis at the Department of the Interior under James Watt, and the Republicans lost their bearing on the issue. The environment became a Democratic issue because Carter and then Clinton made it part of their priorities.

Today, we moderate Republicans are out in the cold. The years when senior members of the Republican Congressional delegations worked with their Democratic counterparts to pass the astonishing litany of legislation that is the bedrock of our environmental progress are long gone.

Q: Who were the drivers behind the international engagement of the Nixon administration? It probably is the U.S. administration that has engaged most widely internationally.

A: Thank you. A good question. Two reasons. First, he was totally fascinated by international relations. That was his primary interest in life. He really wasn't interested in the national economy and for sure he wasn't interested in environmental issues. If you read any of Nixon's books, you never find the environment mentioned. Between Henry Kissinger and George Schultz and the other high-ranking members of his administration, we had Vietnam, we had 250 divisions of Soviet troops on the borders of Germany, and we had other problems around the world. Nixon was totally devoted to trying to find solutions and trying to make an indelible record in world history on those subjects. I think it was a fixation and a fascination and it was fed, very carefully fed, certainly by Kissinger and by others.

China is just one example of many, many opportunities for breaking new ground. There was also an extraordinary interplay between the Russian Ambassador to the U.S., Anatoly Dobrynin, and then Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Schlesinger. They went birding together every Saturday. I had to arrange for their birding. Helicopters had to take them to weird places. Imagine what the Counterintelligence Chiefs of the CIA thought of the Director of Central Intelligence birding with this Russian ambassador. I had to close portions of the C & O Canal during the warbler flights north.

Masses of secret service officers. The two of them walked arm and arm with binoculars. I even had to close a road in Virginia. God, the then Governor was pissed off at me – the helicopter landed on a closed state road because they had never seen a Prothonotary Warbler. It was in the Great Dismal Swamp. This road had to be closed for two and a half hours so a young ranger from the Virginia Wildlife Service – he was an expert birder – could take them down a path to find them a Prothonotary Warbler. They were so excited – both of them were missing it on their life lists of birds. So I had to get the Governor to close off the road. I said there was an accident, close the road off for miles in both directions. The Governor said, “You will pay for this Reed, you will pay for this.” It cost me a case of bourbon. But I got it done. They saw a Prothonotary Warbler.

I actually built Dobrynin a viewing station in Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge just outside of Washington on Maryland’s eastern shore. It’s a great big viewing station where he would go on Saturday mornings or Sunday mornings and he would have a big spotting scope and he would write extraordinary notes. He wrote a note to Rogers Morton saying, “I just looked at 6,000 canvasbacks and 4,500 of them were males and only 500 were females. Can you explain that?” And Rogers wrote back, “I was lying on my dock Sunday morning and I saw a flock that was either your flock or my flock and I can’t figure out what the hell has happened to the females so I assigned Nathaniel the responsibility of finding out.” They weren’t breeding. You may know, we had a terrific drought in the late 1960s and 1970s and the females were dying on their nests from predators so you had a total imbalance.

Q: Do you see any hope for moderate Republicans?

A: As a nation, we’re split so closely right now, that in order to win, a successful Republican contender has to reach out to the middle of the Republican Party. I have been among major industrialists in Ohio, I’ve been in Pennsylvania, I’ve been a lot of different places, and there’s a very strong feeling about the current administration’s policies – not only on the environment, but also on the deficit. No country in many years has produced \$490 million worth of paper that somebody’s going to buy, and we’ll repeat that figure very closely next year. We simply cannot be in that kind of debt. It will become an enormous issue. I feel rather confident that, unless there’s a tremendous gaffe by

Kerry, or some totally unexpected event that the President could take charge of, like a September 11, that the moderate Republicans are going to go with Kerry.

At the moment, national security, the economy, and healthcare are the three major campaign issues and will remain so, I think, most of your lifetimes unless solved. Homeland security is not going to go away for a good many years, if ever. I don't know how we're going to solve the healthcare problem. I have an employee who is the wife of a cattleman rancher, who has breast cancer and she has a bill of \$38,000 with no insurance. I asked the hospital comptroller what happens to people who cannot pay. He said we put liens against their property. I said "Do you really put them out on the street?" "No, but we do everything legally we can before we write it off as uncollectible."

I don't know how many other modern countries with apparently strong economies can survive without some kind of catastrophic health care. It's not my specialty. These are the problems that are going to confront us, and most importantly, *you* as you move forward in life. These are enormously vexing, difficult problems. The age of easy solutions if there ever was one is long behind us. That's why what you're doing here, educating yourselves, is so absolutely vital.

I look at all of you and say we're leaving a lot on your plate and the only people who are going to solve the problems of America are those that are educated. We have 23 major cities right now – this is from the National Geographic – 23 major cities in the United States that now have minority plurality in the school systems, and most of those school systems are suffering from lack of good education, over-crowded class rooms, often under qualified non-motivated teachers, uninvolved parents and inexcusable poor management. I'm really worried about an uneducated mass of Americans. You are, whether you like it or not, you are the limited elite. You better study hard and program yourselves to take on leadership positions in the country. And I mean that.

Reflections and Predictions: A Historical Perspective on the Rise and Fall of the Environment in American Politics

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Let me tell you a little bit about where I come from. I joined the *New York Times* in 1963, about six weeks before the Kennedy assassination. I spent a long time as a reporter at home and abroad and as an editor in New York. Then one day in the late 1980s, after having run the op-ed page for a few years, I was invited to join the editorial board as associate editor. It's been a wonderful ride, in part because it's enabled me to write about a bunch of stuff that I essentially knew nothing about when I arrived. One of those subjects is the environment, and I also write about energy, which is very closely related to environmental issues. When I arrived at the editorial page up on the 10th floor of the *Times* in 1989, we had let lapse, unfortunately, a robust tradition of commentary on environmental issues. It had been very strong under the late Johnny Oakes who ran the editorial page for about twenty years and was honored near his death by a special medal from the Natural Resources Defense Council and other environmental groups.

As Al Gore pointed out in his talk, the press has a way of dividing issues into categories: "A" issues, "B" issues, "C" issues. The "A" issues were always war and peace and the economy. Sometimes crime gets up there. Sometimes medical care gets up there. But the environment hardly ever does.

When I showed up I said: Let's see if we can recapture some of the energy on the environment issue that we once had. And then two things happened to jump start me. First, George Bush the elder came into office, following eight years of Reagan indifference, with a pledge to reform and update the Clean Air Act of 1970. That very quickly got

me acquainted with the complexities of environmental regulation. His proposals were on the whole excellent, and we supported them.

The second thing that happened was that Joe Hazelwood had a couple of extra drinks and piloted an oil tanker called the Exxon Valdez into the rocks of Prince William Sound – which quickly acquainted me with the degree to which people can screw up the environment. Those two things got me started and helped revive editorial interest in an issue we had long ignored.

Of course, by the time I joined the editorial board of the *Times* in 1989, the environmental movement was well launched. Nearly all our basic environmental statutes were in place. Though the current Presidential administration seems to have erased this fact from its memory, most of those statutes were enacted under a Republican, whom I covered for five years of my life, named Richard Nixon. It was under his auspices, with varying degrees of enthusiasm on his part, that we created the Environmental Protection Agency, passed the Clean Air Act, passed the Clean Water Act, and passed the Endangered Species Act.

Jimmy Carter added the Alaska Lands Act and Superfund, and together those two presidents created a body of environmental law with such widespread bipartisan support that it was able to survive eight years of indifference, if not actual hostility, from Ronald Reagan.

Following Reagan, George H. W. Bush started well and ended, in my view, less well. He appointed some good people, not the least Bill Reilly of the Environmental Protection Agency. The Clean Air Act Amendments, passed in 1990 with Reilly's help, was truly a significant piece of legislation because it introduced into the national conversation the whole idea of emissions trading, a market-based device for reducing air pollution. Emissions trading has done absolute wonders in terms of reducing sulfur dioxide pollution, which contributes to acid rain. And trading might indeed do wonders for reducing CO₂, the main global warming gas. Near the end of his administration, however, for reasons I have not fully understood, the President's advisors persuaded him that his environmental initiatives were (a) damaging to the economy and (b) hurting him with his base among the conservative Republicans. In the end, as I recall, George Bush had to be dragged kicking and screaming by Mr. Reilly to the first United Nations Summit on Environment and Development (the "Earth Summit") in Rio in 1992.

CLINTON’S ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY

Then in 1992 Bill Clinton was elected, and from my point of view the fun really began. History will show that Bill Clinton did not arrive in office a dedicated environmentalist. On the contrary, much of his campaign was underwritten by Tyson Foods, which had contributed aggressively to the pollution of lakes and streams in Arkansas. In addition, Clinton’s main issues were healthcare, reforming the welfare system, and getting the economy moving again. As a result, for the first two years of his Administration, virtually nothing happened on the environmental front.

But then Clinton, the environmental community, and the environment itself received an unexpected gift. That was the election in 1994 of Newt Gingrich and his Contract-With-America Republicans. They came to town determined to torpedo nearly a quarter of a century of environmental laws and regulations. They made a fatal mistake. Not only did they damage the Republican Party and their own reelection prospects two years further down the line, but they also created in Bill Clinton an aggressive, born-again environmentalist.

Suddenly Clinton was to be found defending the Clean Water Act in, of all places, Rock Creek Park, which is the closest body of water to the White House. Suddenly he was to be found defending the Clean Air Act, defending the Endangered Species Act, and using his Presidential pen to veto anti-environmental legislation, including an effort to open up the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Bill Clinton began behaving like a combination of Al Gore and Bruce Babbitt. I’ve often asked myself how much of this was a matter of principle and how much of it was politics, and as always in the case of Bill Clinton, I think a little bit of both.

But I will recall for you an episode involving Bruce Babbitt, Clinton’s Secretary of the Interior, who came to see me one day in 1995 when I was writing all those environmental editorials. Babbitt sat

down on my couch, and I said, “You know, we didn’t hear a peep out of Bill Clinton for a couple of years on these issues, and now we can’t shut him up. What actually happened?” Babbitt sat there with his long legs reaching out from the couch, a smile dancing around his lips, and he said: “You know I didn’t feel I had a friend in the White House until Dick Morris came along.”

Now some of you may recall Dick Morris as the controversial pollster in the Clinton White House who got in trouble during the Democratic Convention in Chicago for consorting with a person not named Mrs. Morris and engaging in all kinds of odd sexual practices that made page one in all the tabloids in the country. Well, Morris was also a brilliant pollster. He went out and asked the American people what they thought about Newt Gingrich and his rollback of environmental laws. And back came the resounding verdict that Gingrich was wrong. When Morris took those findings into the White House, Clinton brightened up as he always did when he saw a no-lose issue. He took to the hustings, and all of a sudden Bruce Babbitt — who hadn’t been able to get anywhere with his mining regulations and his grazing reforms — could get just about anything he asked for.

By the time Clinton was through, he had built one of the most impressive environmental records of any president. I’m not sure he’ll put this front and center in his autobiography, but it will be interesting to see where he ranks environment in his list of priorities. From where I sit, Clinton did as much to help the American environment as Nixon and Carter, maybe even Teddy Roosevelt. The EPA for example: Clinton not only didn’t resist, but encouraged Carol Browner, his chief of the Environmental Protection Agency, to hand down new health regulations for smog and for soot. He did not balk when she said she was going to ask the automobile companies and the oil companies to clean up their engines and their gasoline. He encouraged her when she put in some new rules to control pollution from power plants in the Midwest.

Meanwhile over at the Forest Service, with Jim Lyons moving the levers, new rules were written to protect the biological integrity of the national forests. There was the roadless rule, which — after I persuaded Jim to include the Tongass — gave new protections to the 60 million acres of what is now de facto wilderness, and there were new protections as well against oil and gas drilling in sensitive areas like the Rocky Mountain Front. Over at Interior, as I suggested earlier, Babbitt moved smartly ahead with his mining and grazing regulations

and pretty soon found himself presiding, at Clinton's urging, over the creation of nearly two dozen new national monuments.

There were other important initiatives. One of my particular hobbyhorses was the restoration of the Everglades. I wrote about twenty editorials about it until finally a fellow editor of mine said to me, "Do you have anything else you can write about?" Those editorials may have done some good by telling people in Florida that even the *New York Times* cares about the Everglades. But what was important is that the Clinton administration cared. There really wasn't a lot of political gain to be achieved by supporting the Everglades. The idea was trying to make amends for fifty years of abuse of one of the world's great ecosystems, and trying to replicate the natural water flow that kept the Everglades in wonderful shape until about 1947.

One episode in my career that pulls some of this together came when my wife Lisa and I went down to visit the Everglades. I'm kind of a fraud. I keep writing about places that I've never seen, including all these Everglades editorials, so I thought I better actually go there. Lisa and I went down in the fall of 1997 for the 50th anniversary of the founding of Everglades National Park and we stayed on Florida Bay. Our trip was timed so I could write something near the anniversary. Gore and Babbitt both flew in with their staffs and they all met at a football field near the Everglades. Gore went up to a podium and announced that he had secured from Congress a \$50 million appropriation to acquire something known as the Talisman tract, acreage belong to the sugar growers that was badly needed for water storage. Then Gore got back on the airplane and flew non-stop to Japan where he attended the Kyoto negotiations, which produced the first comprehensive global warming agreement. That one day — a day in which the administration celebrated the Everglades and moved on to do something about global warming — lingers in my memory as symbolic of the kind of energy that Bill Clinton finally gave to these subjects, once he saw that politically and as a matter of principle it was useful to defend the environment.

GEORGE W. BUSH'S ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD

Now we come to this Administration. I know you've had speakers here defending Bush, and I think you've had a number of people criticizing him. My thoughts are no secret because they're in the *New York Times*

all the time. Let's put it this way: I wish he had spent a little more time talking with his father about environmental issues before he made some of the appointments he did.

Frankly, the negativism of this Bush administration on the environment came as a surprise to me. I didn't see any of that in his campaign literature and I didn't see much of it in his campaign rhetoric. In fact, as you will recall, he made a commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions, the main global warming gas, a commitment he later rescinded. But the truth of the matter became apparent to me the moment I looked at his appointments. With the single shining exception of Christie Whitman at the Environmental Protection Agency, President Bush or whoever was doing his appointments for him at the White House filled every critical environmental post with either an industry lobbyist or with an ideological opponent of the very notion of federal stewardship of the public lands.

There's no sense in rehearsing all the things that have flowed from that. All you have to do is call up my editorials for the last three years. But I have lamented the roll backs of the Clean Air Act (which I don't think have been justified by the reasons set forward by the White House), the attempted roll back of the Clean Water Act, and the fact that other basic statutes are not being, in my view, as rigorously enforced as they could.

The Environmental Protection Agency has an interesting new man there, Mike Leavitt, and as far as I'm concerned the jury is still out. He's a smart guy, I think he's his own guy, and he might end up doing some very good stuff. But the one who disappoints me the most is Gale Norton at the Department of the Interior. Basically what she has done is not only open up all kinds of sensitive areas in Alaska for oil and gas drilling, which in my view will make no appreciable dent in our natural energy needs, but she has unilaterally renounced her statutory authority to create new wilderness. Now what we have here

— it’s no fun for me to sit around and beat up on anybody — but what I think we have here is an enormous swing of the ideological pendulum. Clinton sent it one way, and President Bush’s people are moving it back. If they stop here, that will be one thing; but I think, with the people he’s got in charge of the major agencies, they’re going further. And I think they have gone further than they had any need to go.

THE 2004 ELECTION

So the question of the day is this: Will any of this environmental back swing make a bit of difference in this campaign? Or will it be seen as a natural reaction to the Clinton years of very aggressive enforcement of our existing laws, and raising new issues? It’s entirely possible that the American people were worn out on environmental issues by Bill Clinton, but my suspicion is it will be an issue, if only a modest one.

My suspicion is that even among Republican voters there is a hunger for more protection, a hunger for more assertiveness in all levels of government to make sure we can continue to enjoy a reasonable quality of life in this country.

The political pollsters seem to think I am wrong. When I look back, one of the reasons I think George Bush the elder pedaled backward on issues after that vigorous beginning is that somebody got to him and said “You’re hurting yourself.” I suggested that earlier. Karl Rove has essentially said the same thing to this president: “Mr. Bush, these issues don’t fly. If you push environmental issues aggressively, you’re going to kill yourself with your base.” Apart from that kind of advice, I cannot explain this Administration’s insane effort to reintroduce snowmobiles to Yellowstone National Park. On the great scale of issues facing us, especially during a war in Iraq, I would say snowmobiling in Yellowstone ranks just about at the bottom. But I wrote seven editorials on the subject, so fixated am I on what I sense to be Karl Rove’s fixation on reintroducing snowmobiles to a place where they have no business being. The people in the Park Service don’t want them there, and most of the visitors don’t want them there. The

snowmobile industry isn't economically significant, and the dealers who would be hurt because they can no longer rent snowmobiles in the town of West Yellowstone can easily be compensated in cash.

Somehow Karl Rove has got it into his noggin that reintroducing snowmobiles in Yellowstone and overturning a Clinton rule is absolutely essential to preserving the integrity of the conservative base in America. To me it's idiotic. And it was this kind of thinking that I believe eventually influenced Bush I, and it has definitely influenced Bush II. Personally, I don't know this Bush well enough. I have a sense of who his father was — not a very intimate sense, but a guess. This guy — I just don't know how he feels about these issues. I think he's vulnerable to the last person who comes in and says we can't do this because it's going to kill us politically.

Again, the question of the day is: Will the environment make a difference in the election? I would say it depends on how you list things. If you ask the American people where the environment ranks in the terms of war and peace and in terms of the preservation of Social Security, jobs, Medicare, and so on, it's always going to be down there at the bottom. If you refine the question and ask it in a more specific way by asking "Do you believe that we should spend major federal dollars on clean air, on clean water, on endangered species, and on protecting the health of our forests?" — then the poll results would shoot straight up. So it's going to depend in this election on how John Kerry frames that question, and how detailed he's prepared to get, and in what states and what parts of the country he is willing to ask it.

The right question at the right time, in the right place, could make a difference. After all, Florida was decided by five hundred or so votes four years ago. New Mexico was close. Some of the northwestern states were close. So it could be a huge issue in states that could make a difference in terms of the electoral college. Frankly I hope the

environment does become a central issue in this campaign, because there are so many challenges that we've got to confront in the future that it seems idiotic not to make it part of the national conversation in a year when everybody is paying attention.

When Al Gore ran for president, like Kerry today, he had a lot of environmental information on his website. And like Kerry he mentioned it in individual speeches.

But just as individual speeches are different from websites, so a debate between two candidates is different from political speeches. There are orders of magnitudes of importance in the way that we campaign in this country. I think that if Kerry is willing to make the environment part of his continuing debate, one-on-one with George Bush, he might be able to make some headway.

TOP ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

If we let the national conversation go flat on the environment issue, we are not going to solve a whole range of problems that this country is going to have to confront sooner or later. Everybody has their favorite issue. Let me mention just two that I think are of paramount importance.

First, we have somehow got to solve what is called the fossil fuel equation. Oil is not in infinite supply. Natural gas, as we are now discovering when we look at prices, is not in infinite supply. What we have is a hell of a lot of coal, but coal is an extremely dangerous thing to burn so long as it puts out as much CO₂ as it does. If you care about global warming, then we've got to do something about coal. Not only is global warming a problem, but so is oil dependency. For both of those reasons we've got to figure out some way of backing out of all that oil that we're using, and probably a lot of the natural gas. That means finding serious substitutes for the fuels we now use.

The Bush administration has rightly moved to put aside substantial amounts of research money for hydrogen, but widespread use of hydrogen as fuel is way, way, way in the distance. I think if you're

talking about oil dependency and global warming you've got to be much more alert than that. So what we're talking about is a major effort to develop fuel alternatives, and I don't mean just Tom Daschle's corn farmers. I mean fuels from the forest, fuels from the land like grass — ways that we can replace one third of our existing gasoline supply. I'm looking for a major effort, even if it involves massive subsidies to the automobile companies in Detroit that are developing fuel efficient cars short of hybrid cars. I come from Detroit, and I don't want to see unemployment lines in Detroit or those companies lose their profits. We have got to move to a more fuel-efficient fleet in fairly short order, and if that means helping Detroit over the hump with subsidies, then that is fine with me.

The other big thing we've got to do, since we're faced with using coal, is to figure a way to clean up the coal. We've got hundreds of years' worth of coal sitting under the ground, and the Chinese do too, and they're going to use that coal. Cleaning coal could mean figuring out clean coal technology at the plant level. Or it could mean expensive ways of re-injecting the carbon into the ground. I don't know, but I do know that we need a major effort to figure out how to clean up the coal.

The fossil fuel equation is one big thing. The other one is quite different. It has to do more with the quality of life. And that is open space preservation.

I had breakfast at the Yale Club yesterday morning with a lawyer from Atlanta who told me that when he and his wife moved to Atlanta at the beginning of his law career, thirty years ago, the metropolitan area of the city was twenty miles across. It is now 150 miles across. That's a stunning statistic. They're running out of water in Atlanta, many people sit in traffic for two hours in Atlanta, and the air stinks in Atlanta. All the reasons that people went there in the first place have evaporated because so many people went there and the city never planned for such drastic population growth.

Now it's not just in our urban and suburban areas that overcrowding is taking place. It's taking place out west as well. We are in danger of cluttering up our wild spaces. The conversion of agricultural land to residential and commercial land is proceeding at a spectacular rate. I was reading in the *High Country News* the other day that 20 million acres in the western states had been converted from wild lands to residential areas by 1970. The figure is now up to 42 million. In other

words, the loss of landscape to commercial and residential development in the thirteen or so western states has more than doubled in the space of one generation. I don't know what you do about that, but I do know that saving open space is going to take some major dough. There aren't many Ted Turners with 500,000 acre ranches in this world. What we are going to need is a beefing up of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and of the agriculture programs, a lot of private money, a major effort with a number of land trusts around the country and so on and so forth. But it's got to be, I think, a national effort of some kind to hang on to some of the open space we have.

This is widely regarded as an elitist issue: closing the door after you get there so nobody else can get in. But it's not an elitist issue. All you have to do is ask those people in Atlanta about the kind of life they're living now in order to know that this is an issue that affects more and more of us every day. When I was researching this talk I looked at some of the numbers that the Trust for Public Land puts out, and in 2002 voters approved 92 of 107 conservation finance ventures, generating \$6.9 billion in local money, for open space conservation. I wish that Washington could do as well.

Let me just say in closing that I am honored to have been invited up here today. If these challenges are going to be met and these problems are going to be solved, I don't think it's going to be by editorial writing. It's going to be by people like yourselves, and I wish you the best of luck.

Q & A

Q: Can curbing consumption become a national issue in this campaign?

A: We had the Chairman of General Motors in the other day at the *New York Times*, and when we put the question to him about tightening up the fuel economy standards, he said that tougher standards would not change the buying habits of the American consumer. I'm not so sure that's true. If Detroit put the same energy into advertising medium-sized hybrid cars that they put into adding more bells and whistles onto SUVs, maybe they'd sell some more of the smaller cars. But you're absolutely right. Americans are not on a daily basis conscious of the hidden costs of their environmental decisions. I'm not. And if I'm not, then I don't know who is.

Take these Hollywood movie stars, for example. I was invited to go to the NRDC concert they had for the Rolling Stones and my wife was mad as hell when I told her it would be a conflict of interest so I couldn't go. Leonardo DiCaprio and a bunch of people showed up in their little green cars – but they all have Hummers in the garage. So there is a certain amount of hypocrisy at work. What Bill Ford and the Chairman of General Motors says is that the only way you are going to reach people is to tax big time. But it is interesting because fuel prices have hit records in absolute terms (not in inflation adjusted terms) in California and nobody is driving less. So it seems to me that unless you really hit someone in the pocketbook like a \$3 or \$4 gas tax where gasoline is five bucks a gallon instead of \$2, which is really nothing in terms of Europe and not that much historically compared to the 1970s oil embargo, you're not going to get them.

Q: To follow your comment that Gore didn't make the environment a big issue: In Gore's defense, when he came to speak to us he said that environment didn't become a big issue because, whenever he did mention it, George W. Bush said he agreed with him. I was wondering how someone working for the *New York Times* deals with issues that might be important but aren't creating conflict.

A: Well there are a couple of answers to that. The current incumbent in the White House is a master at defusing questions. Muhammad Ali the boxer had a technique called rope-a-dope, where he just leaned back against the ropes and let the other guy pound him until the guy wore out. Then Ali would knock the guy out. In a way that's how Bush played the debates in 2000, letting Gore get worn out and wrapped up in tortured detail about a specific issue. Furthermore, environmental issues are comfy. If one guy says I'm for open space, and the other guy says I'm for open space too, that's the end of it. So readers got the impression that Bush cares about it as much as Gore does. But I think right now the issues are drawn much more sharply than they were four years ago, and it might be possible for Kerry to draw a sharper contrast with Bush than Gore was able to draw.

I have to say this about Kerry. He's Al Gore without the sizzle. The Democrats have a way of putting up extremely thoughtful and extremely boring candidates. But I'm told that when Gore came here he made a wonderful speech. He was funny and self-assured, and

everybody in the room here said: “Where was this guy four years ago?” I would ask the same question.

But I think now, because Mr. Bush has allowed himself to be pushed, in my view, further to the right on environmental issues than I think his own instincts would have taken him, it is possible for Kerry to occupy the center on these issues.

Q: What do you think about Ralph Nader running again in 2004?

A: I wrote my share of anti-Nader editorials. I think he cost Gore the election, but on the other hand if you listen to Podesta, as I’m sure you did a few weeks ago, Podesta would have argued that if Gore had been true to himself, or his aides had wanted to be true to himself, he would have fended off Ralph Nader. So I don’t know where the truth is there.

My problem with Nader is that these problems are more complicated. You know what my problems are with Mr. Bush – I just think he is ideologically further away than he ought to be from facing the complexities of the issues. But Ralph Nader doesn’t face the complexities either.

Crimes Against Nature: A Perspective On the Bush Administration's Environmental Policies

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I have been an environmental advocate for twenty years, and during that time I've been very disciplined about being bipartisan in everything I do on the environment. I've supported Republicans – from the state of Connecticut, I've worked with Congressman Christopher Shays because we have been working on the same issues. I've worked very closely with and supported Governor Pataki from New York and senators like Olympia Snowe (R-ME), John Chaffee (R-RI), Lincoln Chaffee (R-RI) and my cousin Arnold Schwarzeneger, Governor of California.

I don't think it's good for our country or for the environment if the environment becomes the province of one party, and I don't think there is any such thing as Republican children and Democratic children.

REPUBLICANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

When Newt Gingrich and the 104th Congress took over in 1995, environmentalists had no support from the Republican Party, or very little, and the support we did receive from northeast congressional Republicans was critical to the movement. At the time, most of the environmental leaders got the message that we really needed to

cultivate strong support from both political parties. But five years ago, if you had asked leaders from the twenty largest environmental groups what the greatest threat to the global environment was, you would have received a range of answers: global warming, over-population, toxins, etc. Today you would get, almost unanimously, a single answer, and that would be George W. Bush. There's no way you can talk honestly about the environment today in almost any context without being critical of the president. This is the worst environmental president we've had in our history. If you look at the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC) website, you'll see that there are over 400 major environmental rollbacks that have either been passed over the past three years or are being promoted today.

If even a fraction of the rollbacks that are currently being promoted by this administration are implemented — and some of the worst ones already have been — by this time next year we will effectively have no significant federal environmental laws left in our country. That's not exaggeration. That's not hyperbole. It is a fact. Many of our laws will remain on the books in one form or another, but they will be unenforceable and we will be like Mexico, which has these wonderful poetic environmental laws but nobody knows about them and they are not enforced.

CLEAN AIR AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

There are many ways this is affecting our lives on the community level. About six months ago there was an article in the *New York Times* stating that one out of every four black children in New York City now has asthma. There was an article last week that said that one out of every two children in homeless shelters has asthma. Well, I have three boys with asthma, and I didn't have asthma in my generation, and we don't know where this asthma epidemic is coming from. I talked with Dr. Hugh Samson, who is a national authority on asthma, a couple of weeks ago, and he says the asthma levels have doubled again over the last five years. We don't know why this is happening, whether it's affecting all industrial nations or whether it's from hormones in our food, or antibiotics, or diesel or something that all of us are being subjected to that's causing this reaction in our children's immune systems. We don't know if it's happening at birth. But we do know that most asthma attacks are caused by two components of air pollution: ozone and particulate matter. We know that in the northeast approximately

50 percent of those materials are coming from 1,100 coal-burning power plants, those antiquated plants in the Ohio Valley that are discharging those components illegally. It's been illegal for many years and, in some cases, for ten or fifteen years or more.

The Clinton administration brought 51 criminal and civil prosecutions against 51 of those power companies. They had 70 criminal investigations ongoing when Clinton left office. But this is an industry that donated \$48 million to the Bush presidential campaign in 2000 and they've donated \$58 million since. As repayment, one of the first things the Bush administration did when they came into office was to drop all those lawsuits. A few weeks ago they officially announced that they were going to drop the New Source Performance Standards altogether. Nothing like this has ever happened in American history before – where an industry buys its way with a donation to a presidential candidate out of a criminal prosecution. Then the President threw out the New Source Performance Standards, which is the heart and soul of the Clean Air Act. That basically threw the Clean Air Act out of the government. Those plants will never, under the President's scheme, have to clean up their ozone and particulates. Never.

MERCURY POLLUTION FROM POWER PLANTS

I work on the New York City reservoir system, and I've worked on protecting New York City's drinking water for almost twenty years. New York's drinking water comes mainly from the Catskill Mountains, 120 miles north of the city. It's the largest unfiltered water supply of any municipality in the country and it's really good water. New York's water is bottled and sold in other cities. Those reservoir systems have been protected for one hundred years from any kind of industrial development. But about six months ago we learned that all the fish in the reservoir system are too contaminated with mercury to eat. I live two miles from the state of Connecticut. It's now unsafe to eat any freshwater fish in Connecticut with one exception – hatchery bred trout. The same is true in seventeen other states because of mercury contamination. Well, there's no geological source for that mercury here in the state of Connecticut. That mercury is coming down from the sky, and 40 percent of the mercury emissions in this country are being discharged by those same 1,100 power plants in the Ohio Valley and they are doing it illegally.

We've learned a lot about mercury and what it is doing to people over the past five or ten years. The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention came out with both of the major studies on mercury contamination, showing that one out of every 12 American women has so much mercury in her womb that her children are at risk for permanent brain damage, permanent causative impairment. I got my mercury levels tested recently. My levels are about 11 parts per billion, which is more than double that of the action levels when you would expect to see some kind of causative impairment in children. If women have those levels, the child is actually getting double those levels through the umbilical cord.

I asked Dr. David Carpenter from the Public Health School at the State University of New York in Albany, a national authority on mercury contamination, what it means that I have 11 parts per billion. He said that, as an adult male, it will probably have some impact ultimately on my memory, but if I were a woman of childbearing years and had a child, that child would have causative impairment. I said, "You mean they *might* have causative impairment?" and he responded "No, the science is really clear on this now that at those levels they almost certainly would have causative impairment – permanent IQ loss." Typically five to seven IQ points would be lost. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 600,000 children born in this country every year have been subjected to those levels of mercury, which also causes an inventory of other diseases including autism, blindness and heart disease, kidney and liver disease, etc.

The Clinton administration learned all these things about mercury and classified mercury as a Hazardous Air Pollutant under the Clean Air Act. That automatically triggered a section of the Act requiring those coal-burning power plants to remove 90 percent of mercury from their discharges within three and a half years. According to the utilities themselves, that would cost less than one percent of the value of those plants. That seems like a very good deal for the American people. But it's the same utilities and coal industries that gave all that money to the Bush administration.

The Bush administration came in and threw out those regulations and replaced them with regulations that were written verbatim by an industry law firm. The Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation at EPA came out of that law firm. This is one of the things that's happening with our government – the lobbyists for these regulated indus-

tries are now running regulatory agencies. The head of the Bureau of Land Management is a mining industry lobbyist. The head of the Forest Service is a timber industry lobbyist. The second in command at EPA is a Monsanto lobbyist, and if you look at all of the deputy secretaries, under secretaries, assistant secretaries, virtually all of those positions have now been filled by lobbyists from the very industries they are meant to regulate.

Here we are living in what I consider to be a science fiction nightmare, where we are bringing children into a world where the air is too poisonous for them to breathe and my children and the children of millions of other parents who live in seventeen states can't even eat fresh fish caught in their states.

Where millions of children who are living under those conditions, including all the children in Connecticut, could no longer engage in the central primal activity of American youth which is go fishing with their father or mother and come home and eat the fish, because the fish in this state are too contaminated to eat because somebody gave a contribution to a politician.

I live three and a half hours south of the Adirondacks. I go fishing in the Adirondacks all the time. The Adirondacks is the oldest protected wilderness area on the planet. It's been protected since 1888 as wilderness, forever wild. But today half of the Adirondacks are now sterilized because of acid rain, which has also ruined the forest cover on the high peaks of the Appalachians all the way from Georgia up to Canada. Acid rain is from the same coal burning power plants that the Bush administration has let off the hook from statutory requirements that would lower the emissions that cause acid rain.

COAL MINING IN APPALACHIA

In May I flew over the coalmines in Kentucky where the coal is coming from – this is the other half of the industry. If the American people could see what I saw in Kentucky, there would be a revolution in this country. If they tried to do this in California or any other place in the Rocky Mountains they couldn't get away with it, but they can get

away with it in Appalachia because of the nature of the communities there. They are literally cutting down mountain ranges. There is an area the size of Delaware that will be gone within ten years. They've already destroyed 500,000 acres, permanently destroyed them, and this isn't just damaged – this is gone forever. The streams are gone, the rivers are gone, the topography is gone, the forests are gone, and they will never return. They are using 25,000 tons of dynamite every single day and they are using these giant machines called Dragon Lines. They cost half a million dollars each and are so colossal that they can almost dispense with the need for human labor.

When I was a boy, my father was fighting coal mining and strip mining in Appalachia. He often told me about these machines that were being used to get rid of the unions, this new method of mining where they don't build tunnels and use men, but they cut down the whole mountain range to get the seam or the vein. At that time there were 120,000 miners in West Virginia. Today there are 14,000 mining the same amount of coal, but they don't belong to a union because these companies don't hire them. I flew *under* one of these Dragon Lines, twenty-two stories high. I could look up – I was in a little Cessna 172 – and I could look up and see the man in the cab driving it above me. They blow up the mountaintop and these machines are a giant backhoe. They just pile this stuff into the adjacent river valleys and bury the rivers. There are already 1,200 rivers gone. This is illegal. You cannot dump rock and debris into a river in this country. It's been illegal since we passed the Clean Water Act and in most states before that. But they were doing it anyway. Joe Lovett, my friend who is an attorney down there, brought a lawsuit, and a federal judge ruled that that this was illegal. They couldn't do it. He stopped all the mountaintop mining in Kentucky and West Virginia. Two days after they got that order, the Bush administration changed the law. They reversed 30 years of the Clean Water Act with a flick of the pen. Today, dumping debris into water basins is legal in this country.

SUPERFUND

I fought for twenty years to clean up PCBs in the Hudson River, and last year we finally got a conviction. We pressured EPA to order General Electric to clean up the PCBs in the Hudson and the science confirms that, if they clean them up, we will be able to eat some of the

fish in the Hudson within two years. If they don't clean them up, we won't be able to eat any of the species for over a hundred years. So we finally forced the EPA after three decades of battling to clean up the river, but our victory was short-lived.

In October, Superfund (a government fund created to support the clean up of toxic waste sites) went bankrupt because the Bush administration refused to renew the tax on the oil industry that supports it. Let me be clear. Nobody cares about this tax in the industry. It's infinitesimal, but it creates enough money to fund Superfund. A lot of people think that the purpose of the Superfund money is to clean up these sites. Actually the real purpose of Superfund is a leverage to force reluctant companies to clean up their own mess. If a big corporation refuses to clean up its Superfund site, EPA can go in and use Superfund money to clean it up itself and then bill the corporation to cover damages. That's the only reason any Superfund site is ever cleaned up in this country – because the EPA has that threat in its back pocket. Well, guess what? That threat doesn't exist any more because the Bush administration has allowed Superfund to go bankrupt.

I'm not fighting about the environment for the sake of the fishes and the birds, but because nature is the infrastructure of our community. We must create communities for our children that provide them with the same opportunities, dignity, and enrichment as the communities that our parents gave us. We've got to start by protecting our environmental infrastructure: i.e., the air we breathe, the water that we drink, the wildlife, the landscape that enriches and connects us to our environment. In the case of the Appalachians, we're taking down this historic mountain range where Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone rode and that connects us to our history and links us to generations of Americans. We're cutting them to the ground so that these coal companies can make a little bit more money and meanwhile poison the children here in Connecticut and the rest of us as well.

CONSERVING COMMUNITIES

I work for Riverkeeper and I work for a large environmental group called the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). I've worked for them both during the last twenty years, and the NRDC has been on the forefront of first helping to write our environmental laws and then defending them against this assault by the Bush administration. But the people that I work for at Riverkeeper were people who understood from the beginning that we're protecting our environment for the sake of our communities, for our livelihoods, and for our retirement. It was started back in the 1960s by a blue-collar coalition of commercial and recreational fishermen who both realized the importance of reclaiming the Hudson back from its polluters. We have on the Hudson one of the oldest commercial fisheries in North America, 350 years old. Many of the people I represent come from families who have been fishing the river continuously since Dutch Colonial times. It's a traditional era fishery. They use the same fishing nets, the small holes, ash holes, and gill nets that were taught by the Algonquin Indians to the original Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam and then passed down through the generations.

There's a little village called Crotonville, New York, which is 30 miles north of the city on the east bank of the Hudson River and is the heart of commercial fishing in the region. The people who lived there in 1966 — when I was your prototypical, tweed-jacketed, pipe smoking, bearded, affluent environmentalist who was trying to protect distant wilderness areas in the Rockies or Montana — were factory workers, carpenters, laborers, and electricians. Half the people in Crotonville made their living, or at least some part of it, fishing or crabbing on the Hudson. Most of them had little expectation that they would ever see environmentalists because we were mostly working on the national fronts. For them, the environment was their backyard. It was the days at the beaches, the swimming holes, the fishing holes in the Hudson. Then in 1966, Penn Central Railroad began pumping oil from Florida by pipeline and the oil went out the river with the tides, blackened the beaches, and shad tasted like diesel so they couldn't be sold to the fish market in the city.

In response, all the people in Crotonville got together in the American Legion Hall. This is a very patriotic community. In fact, they had a higher mortality rate during World War II than any community

in our country. Almost all the original founders, board members, and officers of Riverkeeper were former marines. They were combat veterans from World War II and Korea. These weren't radicals, they weren't militants, they were people whose patriotism was rooted in this part of our country. But that night they started talking about violence because they saw something that they thought they owned, which was the abundance of these fisheries that their parents had exploited for generations, and the purity of the Hudson's waters, and it was being robbed from them by large corporate entities over which they had no control. They had been to government agencies that are supposed to protect Americans from pollution – the Army Corps of Engineers, the Conservation Department, and the Coast Guard – and they were given the bum's rush. They got together in the American Legion Hall in March of 1966, and three hundred people were convinced (almost every resident of Crotonville was convinced) that the government was in collusion with the polluters and that the only way they were going to reclaim the river for themselves was if they confronted the polluters directly.

Somebody suggested that they put a match to the oil slick coming out of the Penn Central pipe or another pipe; somebody else said they should jam a mattress up the pipe and flood the rail yard with its own waste; somebody else suggested putting dynamite at the input power plant, which at that time was killing a million fish at the intakes and taking food off their family's tables. And then a guy stood up. His name was Bob Will. He was the outdoor editor of *Sports Illustrated* magazine and a Korean War veteran, and he had discovered an ancient navigational statute called the 1880 Rivers and Harbors Act while he was researching an article for *Sports Illustrated* about angling in the Hudson. Bob had written a half dozen books about angling and had come up with this ancient navigational statute that said it was illegal to pollute any waterway in the U.S. You'd have to pay a high penalty if you got caught, but there was also a bounty that said that anyone who turned in a violator would get half the fine.

When most of the community members were talking about violence, he stood up in front of them with a copy of this law and he said to them, "You know, we shouldn't talk about violence." He had actually sent a copy of this law to lawyers and they sent him a memo back saying that in eighty years it had never been enforced but it was still on the books. Bob Will stood up in front of them and said, "We

shouldn't be talking about breaking the law, we should be talking about *enforcing* it."

That evening they started a group that was then called the Hudson River Fishing Association and later became Riverkeeper, the group that would go out and track down and prosecute all the polluters on the Hudson. Eighteen months later they collected the first bounty under that law in U.S. history.

They shut down the Penn Central pipeline for good. There was two weeks of wild celebration in the town. They got to keep \$2,000. Spent it on beer. But in 1973 they collected the highest penalty in U.S. history against a corporate polluter. They got \$200,000 from Anaconda Wire and Cable and they used that money to construct a boat, called Riverkeeper, which today patrols the river tracking down polluters.

The Hudson at the time was a national joke. Today it's the richest water body in the North Atlantic. There's more pounds of fish per acre, more biomass per gallon, than in any other waterway. I started working for Riverkeeper in 1983 and since then we've brought over 300 successful law suits on the Hudson and forced polluters to spend more than \$3 billion remediating the river. The Hudson is now the last big river system left on both sides of the Atlantic that still has spawning sites for all its historical species of migratory fish. It is Noah's Ark, a species warehouse. The resurrection of the Hudson has inspired the creation of Riverkeepers all across our country. Most of our Riverkeeper groups are representing fishermen, and these are people that run the political spectrum, from rightwing Republicans to leftwing Democrats and everything in between. I go out on boats with the commercial fishermen sometimes. I go to the bait shacks on the Hudson at the end of the day and just listen to them talk.

Without exception, they see what's happening with the Bush White House as the greatest threat to their livelihood, not only their livelihood but also their sense of values, their sense of citizenship, and their sense of community.

What they invariably say is that choosing between economic prosperity on the one hand and environmental protection on the other is a false choice. In 100 percent of the situations, good environmental policy is identical to good economic

policy. If we want to measure our economy, we should measure it based on the dignity of the jobs over the generations and how they preserve the assets of our community.

If on the other hand, we do what they've urged us to do in the White House, which is to treat the planet as if it were a business liquidation, converting our natural resources into cash as quickly as possible, we could generate an instantaneous cash flow and the illusion of a prosperous economy. But our children are going to pay for our joy ride. And they're going to live with denuded landscapes, poor health, huge clean-up costs. And they're never going to be able to pay.

Environmental injury is deficit spending. It's a way of loading the costs of our generation's prosperity onto the backs of our children.

A LOOK BACK TO THE '60s AND '70s

We just celebrated the 34th anniversary of Earth Day; all of our environmental investments began on Earth Day. I remember what it was like before Earth Day. I remember the Ticonderoga River burning with flames that were eight stories high and nobody was able to put out. I remember that I couldn't swim in the Hudson, the Charles, the Potomac, when they declared them dead. I remember what the air smelled like in Washington, D.C., when I was a boy, which wasn't even an industrial city. We had to dust our home every day for the soot. Some days you couldn't see down the block because of the smog. Thousands of Americans died in our cities every year because of smog, yet these young policymakers don't remember that these days. They don't see the benefits our people have gotten through our investments in our environmental infrastructure. All they see is the costs of compliance and their campaign contributions.

I'll tell you another personal experience of mine. I'm a falconer, which means that I train hawks. I've been doing this since I was eleven.

I'm licensed, I'm a master falconer with the federal government, and I have written a book on falconry. I breed hawks, and of course I train them, and I have a rehabilitation center of my own for continued support. I have been interested in hawks – my mother says obsessed – since I was about three years old. Beginning when I was nine years old, I used to go to Washington maybe every two weeks with nine or ten of my brothers and sisters, eat lunch with my father at the Justice Department, or occasionally visit my uncle at the White House. Whenever I go to Washington, D.C. I always look down Pennsylvania Avenue to the old post office building, because on the roof there was a pair of Eastern Peregrine Falcons, the most spectacular predatory bird in North America. It was the most beautiful species, with salmon pink and beautiful white around its neck, and it could fly 240 miles an hour, the fastest bird on earth. There had been a pair at the old post office building for generations. I watched them fly off the roof of the post office and come down Pennsylvania Avenue with those speeds and pick pigeons out of the air, 40 feet above the heads of the magistrates, right in front of the White House, and then fly them back to the cupola at the top of the post office. To me, seeing a sight like that was far more exciting than seeing my uncle at the White House.

That's a sight my children will never see, because that bird went extinct in 1963 from DDT poisoning, the same year my uncle was killed. We do have falcons back on the east coast, but it's a different bird, it's a high-priced progeny of seventeen different sub-species that were mixed and matched and bred in captivity and released into the wild. It's nowhere near as spectacular in my mind as this creature, which took a million years to evolve and then disappeared in the blink of an eye because of ignorance and greed.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND A FREE MARKET ECONOMY

In 1970, this accumulation of insults drove 20 million Americans out in the street, 10 percent of our population, in the largest public demonstration in U.S. history, demanding that our political leaders return to the American people the ancient environmental rights that had been stolen from our citizens over the previous eighty years. And the political system responded. Republicans and Democrats got together and Nixon created the EPA, signed environmental laws, and for the next ten years we as a country passed 28 major environmental

laws to protect our air, water, and endangered species. Those laws in turn became a model for over 120 nations from around the world that have their own versions of them and began to make their own investments in their environmental infrastructures.

One of the other things they love to say on Capitol Hill is that we can get rid of the federal EPA, the federal environmental laws, and return control to the states and then we'll have state's rights, we'll have community control again, local control. You remember how well that worked for the civil rights movement. Local control, that's the essence of democracy, right? And the states are in the best position to control and police and protect their own environment, right? But the real outcome of that demolition will not be local control; it will be *corporate* control, because these large multinationals can so easily dominate state political landscapes. We remember the Hudson Valley in the 1960s before we had these federal environmental laws.

This general tale can be told 10,000 times across our country, everywhere and in every community. On the Hudson, General Electric came in to the poverty-stricken towns in upstate New York, Fort Edwards, Hudson Falls, and they said to the community leaders: "We're going to build you a spanking new factory and we're going to bring in 1,500 new jobs. We're going to raise your taxes and all you have to do is waive your environmental laws and let us dump our toxic PCB's in the Hudson. And if you don't do it, we're going to move to New Jersey and we'll do it from across the river and you'll still get the PCBs, but they'll get the jobs and taxes." Two decades later General Electric closed the factory, fired the workers, and left the Hudson Valley with their pockets stuffed with cash, the richest corporation in the history of mankind. They also left behind a \$2 billion clean-up bill that nobody in Hudson Valley can afford.

There are thousands of commercial fishermen, my clients, who are permanently out of work because, although the Hudson is loaded with

fish, the fish are still loaded with General Electric's PCBs and they are too toxic to legally sell on the market. Every woman between New York City and Albany now has elevated levels of PCBs in her breast milk, and everybody in the Hudson Valley has General Electric's PCBs in our flesh and in our water systems. My levels are about double that of what a normal person's would be who lived elsewhere.

The federal environmental laws were meant to put an end to that kind of corporate blackmail and to stop these corporations from coming in and slip-sliding one community against another in New Jersey or one in Connecticut against another in Rhode Island, to lower their environmental standards.

I want to make two more points. One is that there's no one who's a stronger advocate for free market capitalism than myself. I believe that the free market is the most efficient and democratic way to distribute the goods of the land. If we had a real free market economy in this country, we would not have pollution, it would be reduced enormously. The free market makes us use natural resources efficiently. It puts true value on those resources. Efficiency eliminates waste. Waste is pollution. The best thing that can happen for the environment is if we have a true free market economy.

Look at what General Electric did, what all polluters do. When General Electric dumped their PCBs in the Hudson, they were avoiding the full cost of bringing their product to market, which was the cost of properly disposing of a dangerous process chemical. By doing that, they beat their competitors and satisfied shareholders, but the cost didn't disappear. It went to the fish and it made the people sick, it put the men out of work and it dried up the barge traffic, it took land off the tax rolls and it forced all these communities on the Hudson to build expensive drug treatment plants, and all these impacts imposed costs on the rest of us. This surely isn't a true free market economy. But what GE did is what all polluters do – they use political clout to escape the discipline of the free market and force the public to pay their production costs.

What all federal environmental laws are meant to do is to establish a free market economy in America by forcing people to internalize the costs of production.

I don't even consider myself an environmentalist any more. I'm a free marketer and I go out into the marketplace and I catch the people who are cheating and I say to them, "We're going to force you to internalize your costs the same way you internalize your profits, because when somebody cheats the free market, it distorts the entire marketplace and none of us gets the benefits, the efficiencies, the democracy of a free market economy otherwise promised by our country."

CONCLUSION

As I said earlier, the reason we protect nature is not for the sake of the fishes and the birds. It's for our own sake, because nature enriches us. It's the infrastructure of our community, it's the base of our economy, and we forged that at our peril. But it also enriches us culturally, historically, and spiritually. Human beings have other appetites besides money, and if we don't feed them, we're not going to grow up. We're not going to become the kind of beings that our Creator intended us to become. When we destroy nature, we diminish ourselves. We impoverish our children.

You know those ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest? We're preserving those trees because we believe that trees have more value to humanity standing than if you cut them down. I fight for the Hudson not for the sake of the shad, the sturgeon, and the striped bass, but because I believe that my life will be richer and my children and my community will be richer if we live in a world where there are shads, sturgeons, and striped bass. My children can see the fish out of their tiny boats, doing what they have been doing for generations. They touch them when they come to shore to wait out the tides, and by doing that connect themselves to 350 years of New York State history and understand that they are part of something larger than themselves.

They are part of a continuum, part of a community. I want my children to grow up in a world where there are commercial fishing nets on the Hudson, not where 400-ton factory trawlers 100 miles off shore are strip-mining the ocean with no interface with humanity.

We've lost touch with the seasons and the tides and the things that connect us with 10,000 generations of human beings and connect us all to God. I don't believe that nature is God, but I do believe it is the way that God communicates with us. God talks to human beings through many factors – through organized religion, through the great books of those religions, through wise people, through art, literature, music, and poetry – but nowhere with such clarity and force and detail and texture and grace and joy as in nature.

Q & A

Q: I know Kerry is highly rated by the League of Conservation Voters, but how would he be appreciably better than the current regime?

A: John Kerry has the highest ranking of the League of Conservation Voters. The Republicans are saying in their ads that he doesn't stand for anything, but he has stood stronger on these issues than anybody else in the U.S. Senate since he got into the Senate. He has been our best friend, our champion. He has a 96 percent League of Conservation Voters lifetime approval rating compared to Al Gore's 64 percent. He organized Earth Day in 1970 in Massachusetts. He's been the Chairman on the Arctic Wildlife Federation. I can guarantee you that they would be drilling today in the Arctic if it weren't for John Kerry.

Kerry's also been a champion of the effort to increase the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards. There's nothing more that we can do, there's nothing better that we can do for this country right now than to increase these standards. Fifty percent of the energy we use in this country is wasted, and if we raise fuel efficiency by one mile a gallon it's two wildlife refuges of oil. If we raise it by 2.6 miles per gallon, that's all the oil in Iraq and Kuwait combined. If we raise it by 7.6 miles per gallon, that's all the oil that we import today from the Persian Gulf. We could eliminate 100 percent of the Persian Gulf imports by improving CAFE standards.

I drive a minivan that gets 22 miles per gallon and I spend \$3,000 a year on gasoline, which is a lot. Most people spend about \$1,200, but

if I had a 40 mile per gallon car, I would have \$1,300 in my pocket at the end of every year. Think about that kind of economic stimulus package. You remember when Bush sent us a \$300 check and that was supposed to be a stimulus? What if we were all getting \$400-\$500 every single year forever? Think about what that would do for our economy. Plus, if we weren't buying oil from the sheiks in the Gulf, we would not have been in the first Gulf War. And if we weren't in the first Gulf War, Osama Bin Laden would not have declared war on us and there wouldn't have been a trip to Saudi Arabia and the World Trade Center would still be standing, etc., etc., etc. You can play that out, and people will say that it is unfair to judge, but it isn't.

The choices we're making regarding how we use energy and how we regulate these big energy users in our country, like the automobile industry, have a profound impact socially and environmentally, but also on our foreign policy, our domestic policy, and our economy. It's the most important energy policy, the most important domestic policy, the most important foreign policy, to get rid of our dependence on foreign oil. The fastest way to do that is not drilling in the Arctic. We could never drill our way out of oil dependence in this country because we use 25 percent of the oil in the world and we only have two percent of the reserves. So we can't do it. It's impossible. But we can dramatically reduce our dependence by conservation. It's the quickest, easiest, cheapest and cleanest way to extract oil, which is to get it from the stuff we are already burning.

Politics and the Environment: Observations and Conclusions

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In creating the Yale course in the spring of 2004 on which this book is based, we and the student course organizers Heather Kaplan and Kathleen Campbell sought to answer some basic questions regarding the relationship between politics and the environment:

- If people say the environment matters to them, as millions of Americans do, does it matter when they vote?
- If the environment influences a proportion of voters, where might the environment matter in the 2004 elections?
- Do the environment and the candidates' concern for the environment affect political strategy in a closely contested presidential election?
- How is the relationship of politics and the environment understood by different organizations and people within them, including the many speakers who participated in our series of lectures and contributed to this volume – pollsters, reporters, leaders of non-profit advocacy organizations, members of Congress past and present, and officials who have worked in presidential administrations?

The observations that follow emerge thanks to the generosity of our speakers. They came from a wide range of political vantages, including Republican and Democrat, to contribute their insights to create a series of provocative lectures in the course at Yale, all captured in this book on the environment in the 2004 presidential election.

KEY FINDINGS:**POLLING ON THE ENVIRONMENT MAY UNDERSTATE ITS IMPORTANCE TO VOTERS**

Several contributors note that few polls put the environment on a top-ten list of issues that decide how someone will vote. When a poll asks what Kellyanne Conway, a Republican pollster, calls an open-ended question – such as “What’s the most important issue that influences your vote?” – the environment may receive “two, three, sometimes a whopping four percent. Sometimes that’s within the margin of error of the entire poll.” But such questions, she continues, lead us to think in terms of “our little circle” rather than our full “orbit.” Although such questions may lead voters to list the war or the economy as “most important,” she adds, “that doesn’t mean people don’t care about the environment.”

Chris Marshall, a Democratic pollster, offers a similar perspective. “Voters don’t normally volunteer the environment as their top issue. It is, however, an important issue.”

Numerous speakers in this volume discuss a memorandum, prepared by Republican pollster Frank Luntz, that was provided in 2003 to the *New York Times* by the Environmental Working Group, which posts the memo on its website. The so-called “Luntz memo,” which the *Times* suggested has influenced the current administration, opens with a dramatic claim: “The environment is probably the single issue on which Republicans in general – and President Bush in particular – are most vulnerable.”

Supporting the claim that the environment matters as an election issue, the websites for the Bush and Kerry campaigns prominently display the environmental records of each candidate.

THE EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Although voters tend to view Democrats as protectors of the environment – Chris Marshall discusses a recent Gallup poll that gives Democrats a 33 percent advantage on the environment over Republicans – many of our contributors give credit to Republicans for major initiatives that led to the laws, policies, and programs that constitute environmental policy today.

Jim DiPeso, Nat Reed, and others recall the history of the environmental movement and the role that Republicans such as Teddy Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford played in promoting a conservation philosophy and environmental concerns. In the fullest historical narrative in the book, DiPeso traces a line of leadership from Abraham Lincoln – the first Republican President, who signed legislation that set aside the Yosemite Valley as a public park – through Richard Nixon, who presided over creation of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

With the election of Ronald Reagan came a change, some speakers suggest, in Republican efforts on the environment. John Podesta observes that Republican leadership shifted “away from northeastern moderates and toward more reflexively anti-government conservatives in the South and in the West.” Podesta argues that advocates of the “Sagebrush Rebellion,” which pressed for state control of federal lands, assumed important leadership roles in the Reagan administration and that the Republican party’s ties to extractive industries like the oil, gas, and coal industries became stronger. “All of these factors conspired,” he continues, “to push Republicans like Jim Jeffords” – a moderate from Vermont – “first out of the policy-making loop and eventually out of the party entirely.”

Jim DiPeso notes that his organization of Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP America) was established to provide a voice for what he calls “Theodore Roosevelt Republicans” who retain a strong commitment to the conservation heritage of their party. But even when Roosevelt was fighting to protect national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges, says DiPeso, there existed “two strains of thought within the Republican Party, one viewing conservation as a necessary underpinning of national strength and well-being, the other viewing conservation skeptically as an impediment to freedom, enterprise, and prosperity.” Battling between those opposed views, says DiPeso, “gets to the nub of the environmental debates we have today. To what extent should we exploit natural resources to meet today’s wants and needs, and what should we do, if anything, to protect resources on behalf of unborn generations? These questions expose a fault line, within the Republican Party and within the nation at large.”

So the environmental movement evolved, away from its foundations within the Republican party and from the strong leadership of

certain Republican leaders, to become a bipartisan effort benefiting from close working relationships between political leaders of both parties who shared a concern for the environment. As the political center shifted further west, a more exploitive and less resource-protective philosophy appeared to take hold in the Republican Party. This appears to have laid the foundation for the partisan debates over environmental protection that have occurred in recent years.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL INTEREST AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

Another fault line, some speakers say, divides environmental interest from action. Kellyanne Conway observes that environmental concerns have been largely assimilated into our culture. At the grocery store, she notes, shoppers are asked if they would prefer paper or plastic bags for their groceries. Recycling is extensive in our culture, and mandatory in some communities. Even children's Saturday morning cartoons include environmental characters such as Captain Planet and Eco-Man.

But environmental assimilation, says Conway, seems not to impel the general public to environmental action. "The difference between people caring about the environment and voting on the environment is huge," she says. When asked, "Do you support the environment?" – a question that does not test intensity of commitment – 85 percent of Americans say yes. When asked to choose a level of intensity – active environmentalist; environmentalist but not active; or not concerned about the environment and not active – 69 percent of Americans place themselves in the middle category of inactive environmentalist. The environment shows "a larger gap between interest and engagement – between agreement and intensity – than other issues," says Conway.

This gap does not mean, however, that voters do not vote for environmental concerns. As stated by several speakers in the series, local initiatives now gather tremendous public support to preserve open space or to curb urban sprawl. Dan Glickman notes that in the 2003 election there were 77 initiatives nationwide that were intended to generate funds to protect parks, open space, and farmland as a means of reducing urban sprawl. Of these, 83 percent were passed by voters who thereby committed approximately \$1.5 billion for environmental protection at the local, county and state levels.

WHAT DOES THE “ENVIRONMENT” MEAN TO VOTERS?

The likelihood that candidates will target such environmental voters raises the question: What do voters mean by *environment*? Do they call themselves *environmentalists* if they want to protect wilderness or farmland? If they support pollution abatement or brownfield restoration? If they oppose development or seek to reduce the intensity of global warming?

A distinction between “the environment” and “environmental issues” was introduced by Deb Callahan, President of the League of Conservation Voters. “You need to think about the environment as a category,” she said, “not an issue. Lead in drinking water is an issue. Houston air pollution is an issue. Endangered species is an issue. These individual issues poll much more highly than ‘environment’ as a category, and that is even before the issue is personalized to an individual community.”

Many such issues emerge when people define society’s most important problems, as Chris Marshall explains. “Nobody doubts,” he says, that people care about “food, health, taxes, security, recreation, the influence of special interests, and the development that’s going on in their communities. Each of these might not be solely an environmental issue, but each one of these has a very important environmental component.”

MESSAGE MATTERS

How environmental issues can be presented to the voters attracted lengthy discussion, often beginning with the memo in which Frank Luntz warns that the environment is the single issue on which President Bush was “most vulnerable.” Jim DiPeso, Policy Director of Republicans for Environmental Protection, notes that:

Luntz calls on Republican candidates to talk about the issue more skillfully, in a way that doesn’t alienate swing voters or suburban Republican women. Don’t use scary words such as “roll-backs.” Instead, talk about “common sense” solutions grounded in “sound science.” Don’t talk about cost-effectiveness tests, which sound cold and heartless. Instead, talk about unnecessary regulations that hurt “moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas.”

The influence of the Luntz memo shows, according to DiPeso, in the President's proposed EPA budget, which he says states that "President Bush has focused on addressing these challenges in a common-sense, cost-effective manner based on sound science, and his 2005 budget builds on these successful principles." Every word is "carefully calibrated," DiPeso points out, to follow the Luntz memo.

Congressman Christopher Shays also discusses the influence of the Luntz memo, which suggests that the three words Americans look for in an environmental policy are "safer," "cleaner," and "healthier." A focus on rhetoric rather than reality, Shays suggests, might do more harm than good to Republican efforts to make progress in improving environmental policy. Shays states,

The Bush administration is masterful at framing its message on the environment with good titles like the "Clear Skies Initiative" and "Healthy Forests." But the truth is that many of the initiatives proposed by the White House exacerbate, rather than improve, the problems they target. This dichotomy of rhetoric and reality was clear throughout our debate on the energy bill, as well as in discussions of the Healthy Forests initiative and the Clear Skies initiative. In my mind, all three represent extraordinary missed opportunities to advance forward-looking, environmentally-progressive legislation.

Masterful framing by Frank Luntz extends to his presentation of an advantage held by Democrats who seek a message to attract environmental voters. "A caricature has taken hold in the public imagination," says Luntz:

Republicans seemingly in the pockets of corporate fat cats who rub their hands together and chuckle maniacally as they plot to pollute America for fun and profit. And only the Democrats and their goodhearted friends from Washington can save America from these sinister companies drooling at the prospect of strip mining every picturesque mountain range, drilling for oil on every white sand beach, and clear cutting every green forest.

Chris Marshall says that his group's polling shows that voters respond strongly to charges that Republicans side with what Luntz called *fat cats*. "Bush can be damaged on the environment," says Marshall, "particularly with a corporate/special interest message." He notes that in surveys conducted to determine what messages resonated with the public, "the number one message out of all the ones we tested was that 'Corporate polluters have too much influence.'"

The number two message, according to Marshall, makes what he called a *health and legacy* argument. Its themes include "protecting the health and safety of our families" and "leaving our children the legacy of a clean environment." Thinking also about future generations, Congressman Christopher Shays urges voters to push leaders to ask "what history will say of us." He draws on an analogy offered by a historian, David McCullough, concerning how we now judge American actions from before our Civil War. Much as we now wonder how humans could once have owned humans, said McCullough, a century from now we may wonder how residents of the earth could have abused the earth. "History," expects Shays, "will not be kind to us."

Economic pressures on working families lead some speakers to predict the greatest win-win message for any politician: We can create new jobs by developing new environmental technologies. Deb Callahan tells the story of a roundtable discussion in Minnesota with environmentalists and labor union officials. After one environmentalist who advocated encouraging wind power mentioned the potential to avoid building six power plants, a representative from the AFL-CIO responded that fewer power plants could translate to fewer jobs. Amending his message, the environmentalist suggested that developing new energy sources could create new jobs and new businesses. That interaction, says Callahan, shows the potential "to frame the conversation in a way that brings the communities together." Robert Semble of the *New York Times* credits the Bush administration for its work to encourage development of fuel cells (albeit, a solution that is "way, way, way in the distance") and asks for more efforts to help Detroit, with subsidies if needed, to move beyond gas-guzzlers to fuel-efficient vehicles. Jim DiPeso, after stating his worry that energy dependency could lead to global conflicts, in response to a question argued that the most promising tactic for uniting bipartisan environmental advocates would be to pursue economic development by pursuing clean energy.

Discussion of energy and the environment leads some of our contributors to propose a message linking the environment to another issue that polls indicated was of significant concern to voters – security. Chris Marshall puts it this way:

Security has been a big thing during the Bush administration. A big part of that is oil from countries where people would like to blow us up, and there are a lot of people who'd like to promote higher gas mileage, for example, as a way to decrease that dependency. This makes the environment become a security issue.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of the Natural Resources Defense Council, offers a version of the security message: If the U.S. can raise the fuel efficiency of motor vehicles by 7.6 miles per gallon, he says, the fuel savings would equal “all the oil that we import today from the Persian Gulf.”

The security message extends, according to polling by Kellyanne Conway, beyond international and homeland security. “Security to people,” she says, “is also the security to allow things to stay the way you know them to be, want them, and expect that they will remain.” That link of environmental quality to personal security fits a story told by Robert Kennedy, Jr. who says he learned recently that his blood contains elevated levels of mercury, which he suggested may have been caused by consuming fish caught in the Northeast over many years. “A child born to a woman who had similar mercury levels would almost surely show permanent IQ loss,” he says. Much mercury reaches eastern waterways through atmospheric deposition and originates from coal-fired power plants in the midwest. Kennedy’s story, which included claims that the coal industry has donated more than \$100 million dollars in support of George W. Bush and that his administration has eased pressure on the coal industry to cut mercury emissions, pulled together a medley of messages including *fat cat*, *personal security*, *new jobs with new technologies* and *health and legacy*.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Linked to discussion of how to present a strong environmental message, one question was repeated more than any other during the lecture

series: Why in the 2000 election did Al Gore fail to deliver environmental messages as powerful as those in his book, *Earth in the Balance*?

Deb Callahan of the League of Conservation Voters, who was field director in 1988 for Gore's first campaign to win the presidential nomination, depicts him back then as a campaigner who drove her "crazy" with his focus on the environment. She would take him to "a room of senior citizens at a retirement home" in hopes he would discuss health care and social security, she says, "but he talked about climate change." John Podesta, chief of staff to President Clinton, supposes that Gore's advisors in 2000 urged him to avoid pushing the environment. Since that was Gore's passion, according to Podesta, his failure to raise it may have cost him twice. Voters who cared about the environment turned to Ralph Nader, candidate for the Green Party, and voters who cared about dynamism in a candidate saw Gore as wooden. Gore's advisors, "took his passion away from him," says Podesta. "Al Gore has a core," continues Podesta, and the environment, "is at the center of that core."

When Al Gore arrived at Yale, students in a class session before his formal talk had the chance to ask him what everyone wanted to know. One of the students, Elizabeth Wyman, writing soon afterward for her hometown newspaper in New Hampshire, the *Keene Sentinel*, reported the exchange:

In a private meeting with the former vice president, students probed Gore on his seemingly contradictory rhetoric and actions. One asked why candidate Gore seemed to evade the issue of the environment during his 2000 presidential bid against Governor George W. Bush. Gore replied that it wasn't he but the media who failed to address the issue. He contended that he did talk about the environment, but his words never made it through the 'media filter' to be covered by the newspapers and television networks. Gore attributed this lack of media coverage to a popular perception that there was no disagreement between himself and Bush on the issue. 'The Bush campaign lied about their basic posture on the environment,' Gore argued – including Bush's campaign pledge to regulate carbon dioxide, the primary culprit of global warming, a promise Bush abandoned shortly after taking office. 'Our system used to have antibodies in it that would eat up big lies,' Gore lamented.

Speaking later to an audience of 1,000 in Yale's Battell Chapel, Gore likened his experience with media filtering to experiences of John Kerry who, said Gore, has made speeches about the environment that are "almost invisible to the American people" because the media has an "A list and a B list of issues, and the environment is not currently seen on the A list."

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN REPORTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS

One issue raised by Gore surfaced often: the role of the media. Arriving the week after Gore's speech, Robert Semple of the *New York Times* told his audience that he had heard from students that Gore had made a "a wonderful speech. He was funny and self-assured, and everybody in the room here said: 'Where was this guy four years ago?' I would ask the same question."

Answering the critique that the media had filtered away Gore's environmental message, Semple compares methods of campaigning:

When Al Gore ran for president, like Kerry today, he had a lot of environmental information on his website. And like Kerry he mentioned it in individual speeches. But just as individual speeches are different from websites, so a debate between two candidates is different from political speeches. There are orders of magnitudes of importance in the way that we campaign in this country.

If Gore had wished to make the media see the environment as a campaign issue, Semple continues, Gore should have repeatedly made it a debate issue, as Kerry now can, "one-on-one with George W. Bush" in the presidential debates.

As noted by Elizabeth Shogren of the *Los Angeles Times* and Eric Pianin of the *Washington Post*, soon after the 2000 election the environment received a great deal of attention in the media – thanks largely to conflict that had been absent during the campaign. Within months of taking office, Pianin recalls:

The President had repudiated the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, disavowed a campaign pledge to regulate carbon

dioxide, challenged scores of Clinton administration regulations, including a tougher standard on arsenic in drinking water, and put in place policymakers throughout his bureaucracy who had strong ties to industry.

Such rapid repudiation of environmental efforts by the previous administration, Shogren said in response to a question, brought the environment to the front pages partly because newspapers look for change and conflict.

The Bush administration's refusal to give meaningful answers to press questions, says Pianin – such as why soften the standard for arsenic in drinking water? – helped make the Administration's first year what he called “a public relations disaster.” And then, he continues, the attacks of “9/11 came along, and all of these issues were just sort of swept aside, along with most other domestic policy issues.”

In the aftermath of 9/11, says Pianin, the Republican administration has handled environmental issues with increased skill and has done more to “spruce up” the President's “environmental image and undercut his critics than the Democrats have done in capitalizing on Bush's missteps.” Part of the Administration's spruce-up, continued Pianin, came from “clever packaging and sort of Orwellian labeling”:

The President's proposal for rewriting, and in some cases weakening, the Clean Air Act is called the “Clear Skies” Initiative. His new forest management program to give logging companies greater access to old-growth trees is benignly called the “Healthy Forest” Initiative.

When asked why more stories were not written about Bush administration environmental policy, Shogren said that newspapers expect the unexpected. When she presents an environmental story to her editor, she added, now he may say: “Oh, another roll back of an environmental regulation. We know that's what the Bush administration is all about.”

News coverage may be reduced, says Shogren, due to a practice by the Bush administration of announcing major environmental initiatives late on Friday afternoons. That timing, which can limit the opportunity for reporters to analyze policy and solicit commentary, “happened more at the beginning of the Bush administration, but it still happens at times now,” she says. “I think there is a very aggressive effort to manage the media, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.”

Both Shogren of the *Times* and Pianin of the *Post* warn that critics of the Bush administration can lose credibility through overstatement. “One of the reasons I think people say that the Bush administration’s record on the environment can’t be as bad” as critics say, says Shogren, is “because that’s true.” Pianin notes that the administration had recently taken substantive steps such as “abandoning efforts to rewrite the Clean Water Act to sharply reduce the number of streams or wetlands protected from commercial or residential development” after the President met with leaders of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and other organizations that represent millions of people who hunt and fish.

Like Semple of the *New York Times*, Shogren suggests that the environment is not likely to become “one of the top issues the media covers” unless the candidates themselves “start sparring over it. Once they start arguing about an issue, it becomes a big issue in the media.” Pianin adds that Kerry had been briefly effective in making a case – which he later seemed to drop – that creating a progressive environmental policy which developed alternative sources of energy might mean in future that, as Pianin puts it, “U.S. troops wouldn’t have to die in the Middle East fighting for oil.”

Shogren discusses several reasons to think that environmental debate could attract attention. Although polls show that few people name the environment their most important issue, polling also shows “that the vast majority of Americans want stronger environmental protections, as many as 75 percent. Even the majority of Republicans want stronger environmental protection.”

Americans also believe that “one of the issues where the candidates are farthest apart,” continues Shogren, “is on the environment.” That belief finds support in the much-discussed “LCV score,” given by the League of Conservation Voters to members of Congress since 1970 and also to other politicians as a report on their support for the environment. On his most recent LCV Presidential Report Card, President Bush received an F – the first failing grade given to a president in LCV’s history. In contrast, as Deb Callahan told her audience, as of early spring 2004 when her organization decided to endorse John Kerry for president, he had what amounted to a “nearly perfect environmental voting score”: a 96 percent lifetime rating. (Al Gore’s lifetime score, she added, was only 64 percent.) Such scores themselves are open to debate. Chris Henick, formerly Deputy

Assistant to President George W. Bush, objected that the LCV score failed to give sufficient credit to consensus action on the environment and included some issues, such as international family planning and campaign finance reform, that should not be called environmental. In any event, the contrast between John Kerry's nearly perfect score from the LCV and George Bush's Presidential F creates potential for the sort of conflict that in past has helped, Shogren says, bring the environment to the front pages.

IN A CLOSE ELECTION, THE ENVIRONMENT CAN MATTER

Many speakers contend that the environment may matter in the 2004 election because, like the 2000 presidential election, this year's seems likely to be close. When President Bush four years ago won the Electoral College but lost the popular vote, in six states the margin of victory was fewer than 8,000 votes. As the 2004 presidential election approaches, it appears, once again, that the margin of victory nationally, and in certain "swing" states – which analysts define based on such factors as closeness of the vote count in the 2000 election, number of registered Democrats and Republicans, or the votes for Ralph Nader in the 2000 election – could be extremely small.

Although polls may indicate that the environment is "not the highest priority issue in people's minds," says Dan Glickman, "selectively and on a targeted basis, I believe that environmental issues will be very significant in certain key states and among certain constituencies." Some environmental groups, such as the LCV, will target specific swing states precisely because they believe that the environment will matter there. On Earth Day 2004, President Bush traveled to Maine and Florida to discuss the Administration's initiatives on wetlands and the Everglades – visits that suggest he too is aiming environmental messages at swing states.

Polling indicates that the environment matters particularly to some groups of voters, including suburban women (often referred to in the 2000 election as "soccer moms") and women in general. Chris Marshall says that 60 percent of environmental voters are women.

Young voters, whose education often has exposed them to environmental issues, according to Kellyanne Conway, are swelling the ranks of voters who register as independents. "Now a dozen states," she says, "can claim close to a majority if not a plurality of unaffiliated inde-

pendent voters.” The importance of this trend, as it affects the environment and politics, is explained by Conway in this way: “The thing about the environment . . . is that it has the potential to have tripartisan support. It really is one of those areas – unlike abortion, guns, gay marriage, or even tax reform – where a reasonable common-sense policy about environmental concerns is able to attract magnetically Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.”

Although the environmental awareness and concern of voters such as young independents is not well tested in the context of a presidential election, Chris Marshall summed up their potential impact: “If you can target one percent or two percent of people” who will respond to environmental issues, “one or two percent of people can make all the difference in the world.” As evidence, he offered some much-discussed numbers from the 2000 presidential election: “In Florida, Al Gore lost by 537 votes while Ralph Nader was picking up 97,488 votes. If about a half a percent of Ralph Nader’s voters had voted for the real environmental candidate – Al Gore – George Bush would never have been elected President.”

Versions of Marshall’s claim, that a majority of Florida’s vote went to candidates whom voters viewed as defenders of the environment, ran through other talks. Looking beyond any one state, Kellyanne Conway suggested during discussion with students that Democratic failure to engage environmental voters had national implications: Gore’s expectation that he could count on his environmental reputation to lure environmental votes led him to fail nationwide to energize his strongest base of voters. Perhaps some felt too apathetic to vote for Gore. Perhaps some felt too uninspired to urge friends not to vote for Nader, running as the nominee of the Green Party – which had, along with a name that evokes the natural world, a platform that devoted many planks in 2000 to calls for “environmental sustainability.”

For the election of November 2004, contributors to this volume suggest, the environment is likely to be a key issue in Florida and other swing states where the margin of victory was small in the 2000 election and is likely to be so again. The votes in just these swing states, where some voters will scrutinize the candidates’ environmental records and their commitment to protect the environment, could decide the outcome of the 2004 presidential election.

The talks in this volume, taken together, suggest also that environmental issues could have national implications for the 2004 election.

Since Americans nationwide value the environment and seem to perceive the current candidates as far apart on how to protect it, voters may respond strongly to a candidate who communicates environmental values to the nation. The view that voters wish to hear candidates discuss the environment received new support in May 2004, after our speaker series ended, when the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies completed its first national poll on the environment. Most Americans, the poll suggests, want to hear more from candidates about plans for the environment.

A candidate who chooses to engage the issue of the environment one-on-one in presidential debates and other major venues may find, as suggested by Semple of the *New York Times* and Shogren of the *Los Angeles Times*, that such engagement lifts the environment to the front pages – raises it in the hierarchy that Semple, elaborating on comments by Al Gore, describes as categories of A issues, B issues, and C issues. Through prominent debate, national issues may arise: Who delivers sound science? What legacy should we pass to future generations? Which environmental solutions make common sense? Can we create new jobs by developing new environmental technologies? Is conservation, for which Republicans receive historic credit, still conservative? Is protecting our environment also good for our national security and our personal security? How will history judge Americans' treatment of our planet?

And if candidates do not engage in such debate, a related issue arises. Now that candidates have been scored as far apart as the grade of A from the grade of F on an environmental report card, will voters disdain a candidate who seems unable to contest or capitalize on so large a disparity? Will voters turn away from a candidate who cannot communicate what Podesta calls a "passion" for an issue about which they also care? Will they fail to turn out and vote in 2004 if the environment is not part of the core message of at least one of the presidential candidates?

If the environment has "magnetic" appeal to Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, as one Republican pollster claimed, who among the candidates in 2004 will generate the messages – whether about *fat cats*, *common sense*, *personal security*, *sound science*, *clean technologies*, *new jobs*, *good health*, *enduring legacies*, *history's verdict*, *clear skies* or something more powerful – that resonate with environmental voters and attract their votes? If Green

voters swung the last Presidential election, why would anyone suppose that green voters – or environmental voters, however defined – will not swing the presidential election of 2004?

CONTRIBUTORS

Deb Callahan, President of the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), has devoted her career to empowering voters to exercise their strength on Election Day. She brought that dedication to LCV, determined to mature the organization from the environmental community's Political Action Committee into a more complete political campaign organization. Callahan has doubled LCV's size and forged the organization into a potent, bipartisan political force with a national presence. She got her start in the most basic form of politics – grassroots organizing. As a field coordinator for a presidential campaign, she learned the value of politics with a personal touch. She began her first tour of duty with LCV as director of its political activities in New England. She went back to the campaign trail as deputy campaign manager for a U.S. Senate race in 1986 and in 1988 she became the national field director and deputy political director of another run for the White House. In 1990, Callahan managed a successful congressional re-election effort.

Kathleen E. Campbell received a Master of Environmental Science degree in 2004 from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where she was named a Teresa Heinz Scholar for Environmental Research. Prior to Yale, Campbell worked as a consultant on energy and environmental policy in Washington, D.C.

Kellyanne Conway is CEO and President of the polling company™ inc./Woman Trend in Washington, D.C., a privately-held, woman-owned corporation that maintains offices in New York City and San Francisco. The polling company™ inc. specializes in quantitative and qualitative research and analysis, and provides strategic counsel for a diverse portfolio of clients in the political, corporate, legal, public affairs, not-for-profit and media sectors. Conway has provided primary research and advice for clients in 46 of the 50 states and has directed hundreds of demographic and attitudinal survey projects for statewide and congressional political races, trade associations, and Fortune 100 companies, measuring voter attitudes, client satisfaction, and consumer opinion. A professionally trained moderator, she has personally directed more than 250 focus groups and other qualitative discussions, targeting prospective legislation, industry messages, Internet usage, consumer products, methods of crisis management,

and general communications techniques. Conway is also an attorney admitted to practice in four states, and appears on television frequently.

Jim DiPeso serves as the Policy Director of Republicans for Environmental Protection (www.REPAmerica.org), a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public and elected officials about the need to protect our environment and conserve our wildlands and natural resources. The organization advocates legislation to accomplish those goals while adhering to the basic Republican principles of fiscal responsibility and smaller government. He was one of REP America's earliest members, as well as one of its founding directors. From 1996 to 2000, DiPeso served as Secretary of the Board of Directors. In the spring of 2001, as DiPeso resigned from REP's board and became the organization's first communications director. In October 2002, he was promoted to Policy Director. Before joining REP America, DiPeso did communications and policy work for the Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center, the Northwest Energy Coalition, and the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

Daniel R. Glickman is the former Director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard University, and former Secretary of Agriculture in the Clinton administration (1995-2001). In July of 2004, Glickman left IOP to serve as President and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America. Under his leadership at the Department of Agriculture, the department modernized food-safety regulations, forged international trade agreements to expand U.S. markets, and improved its commitment to fairness and equality in civil rights. He led the effort to ensure that agricultural technology is governed by a regulatory approval process based on sound science. Prior to his appointment as agriculture secretary, Glickman served for 18 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Kansas' Fourth Congressional District, and served as a member of the House Agriculture Committee, including six years as chairman of the subcommittee that had jurisdiction over most federal farm policy issues.

Chris Henick served President George W. Bush in the White House as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy to the Senior Advisor

from January 2001 to December 2002. He assisted Karl Rove, the President's Senior Advisor, in overseeing the strategic planning, political affairs, intergovernmental, and public liaison efforts of the White House. In addition, he was the White House liaison to the entertainment industry in Hollywood and to the City and State of New York. Henick currently works at Giuliani Partners in New York. He served from 1995-2000 as Managing Director and Principal in the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Barbour Griffith & Rogers. He was Executive Director of the Republican Governors Association from 1991-1995.

Vice President Al Gore began his career in public service in 1976 when he was elected to represent Tennessee in the U.S. House of Representatives (1977-1985). He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1984 and was re-elected in 1990. A candidate for the Democratic nomination for President in 1988, he won more than three million votes and Democratic contests in seven states. Vice President Gore was inaugurated as the 45th Vice President of the United States on January 20, 1993. President Clinton and Vice President Gore were re-elected to a second term in 1996. Gore, who lost a presidential bid in 2000 to George W. Bush, has long been an advocate of stricter environmental measures, which he proposed in his 1992 book, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. Gore is now senior advisor to Google and serves on the board of directors of Apple Computers.

Heather S. Kaplan received a Master of Environmental Management degree in 2004 from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where she was named both a Switzer Environmental Fellow and a Gilman Ordway Environmental Scholar. Prior to Yale, she worked for three years in environmental communications at Earthjustice (formerly the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund), the nation's largest non-profit environmental law firm. Kaplan also has more than five years experience educating and activating the religious community on environmental issues. Her focus is in U.S. energy and climate policy and in promoting innovative policies and programs by forging strategic political alliances with religious and labor organizations, civil rights groups, social welfare advocates, and business leaders.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. is credited with leading the fight to protect New York City's water supply, but his reputation as a defender of the environment stems from many successful legal actions. The list includes winning numerous settlements for Riverkeeper, prosecuting governments and companies for polluting the Hudson River and Long Island Sound, arguing cases to expand citizen access to the shoreline, and suing treatment plants to force compliance with the Clean Water Act. Mr. Kennedy acts as Chief Prosecuting Attorney for Riverkeeper. He also serves as Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council and as President of the Waterkeeper Alliance. At Pace University School of Law, he is a Clinical Professor and Supervising Attorney at the Environmental Litigation Clinic in White Plains, New York. Earlier in his career, Mr. Kennedy served as Assistant District Attorney in New York City.

James R. Lyons is a Lecturer and Research Scholar at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Executive Director of the Casey Trees Endowment Fund in Washington, DC. Previously, Lyons was a Professor in the Practice of Natural Resource Management at Yale. For the eight years of the Clinton administration, he served as the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Chris Marshall, Senior Analyst at The Mellman Group, has worked with numerous political candidates both domestically and internationally, using a wide variety of cutting-edge quantitative research techniques. He also has extensive qualitative research experience, including focus groups, dial groups, and interviews. Marshall's most recent campaign work includes John Kerry's presidential effort, Jennifer Granholm's gubernatorial victory in Michigan, Zell Miller's senate victory in Georgia, and the re-election campaigns of Representatives Sandy Levin, Nita Lowey, and Bob Etheridge. He has also been at the center of the development of message strategy on behalf of numerous national environmental organizations. Prior to joining The Mellman Group, Marshall worked as a Senior Analyst at the polling firms of Lake Snell Perry & Associates and Cooper & Secrest Associates.

Eric Pianin has been a national reporter for the *Washington Post*, covering Bush administration environmental policy and land-use issues. He has had a broad range of experience at the *Post* as a reporter and editor. As a reporter on the metropolitan staff, he wrote extensively about District of Columbia government and politics. After moving to the national staff, he covered Congress throughout the Clinton administration, with primary responsibility for budget and economic issues. He served briefly as the paper's homeland security reporter following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and was a member of the *Post* team that investigated the Columbia space shuttle disaster. He is co-author with George Hager of *Balancing Act: Washington's Troubled Path to a Balanced Budget* (Vintage Books 1998), a book that tells the story of the budget wars between Republicans and Democrats throughout the administrations of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton.

John Podesta is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Progress Action Fund. He served as Chief of Staff to President William J. Clinton from October 1998 until January 2001, where he was responsible for directing, managing, and overseeing all policy development, daily operations, Congressional relations, and staff activities of the White House. Podesta is currently a Visiting Professor of Law on the faculty of the Georgetown University Law Center. He has taught courses on technology policy, congressional investigations, legislation, copyright and public interest law.

Nathaniel P. Reed served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks from 1971-77 under Presidents Nixon and Ford. In 1969, Reed was appointed chairman of the newly formed Florida Department of Air and Water Pollution Control, which evolved into the Department of Environmental Regulation. He returned to Florida following President Ford's defeat, where he has served seven governors on innumerable committees and commissions. He is best known as the Chairman of the Commission on Florida's Environmental Future. He is a former member and Vice Chairman of the National Audubon and The Nature Conservancy boards, and currently serves on the boards of the Natural Resources Defense Council, National Geographic Society, Hope Rural School (a nationally known school for the children of migrant workers), and the 1000 Friends of Florida.

Robert B. Semple, Jr. has been a reporter and editor at the *New York Times* for more than 40 years, serving in Washington, London and New York. Associate editor of the editorial page since 1988, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his writing on environmental issues in 1996. He lives in New York City.

Christopher Shays has represented Connecticut's Fourth District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1987 and is a leader among moderates in the Republican Party. He serves as Vice-Chairman of the House Budget Committee, Vice-Chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, Chairman of its Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, and sits on the Financial Services Committee. He was also a driving force behind the Congressional Accountability Act and a leader of the coalition supporting campaign finance reform. Serving as the U.S. Chairman of the Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE), Shays is a nationally recognized environmentalist and has been endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club for his strong support of Clean Water and Endangered Species legislation, as well as his aggressive stand in favor of strict new Clean Air regulations. As co-chair of the Animal Rights Caucus, he continues to be an outspoken advocate for the humane treatment of animals around the world.

Elizabeth Shogren covers environmental issues for the *Los Angeles Times* in the Washington bureau. Her previous national beats include the White House, Congress, and social policy and presidential campaigns. Before joining the Washington bureau in 1993, she covered the breakup of the Soviet Union for the *Los Angeles Times* from its Moscow bureau, starting in 1990. Prior to that she worked as a freelance reporter based in Moscow and covered the fall of the Berlin Wall and the peaceful revolution in Prague in 1989. Her first jobs in journalism were for the Associated Press in Chicago and United Press International in Albany, NY.

James Gustave Speth is Dean and Professor in the Practice of Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. He served as administrator of

the United Nations Development Programme from 1993-99 and chair of the UN Development Group. Prior to his service at the UN, he was founder and president of the World Resources Institute, professor of law at Georgetown University, chairman of the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality, and senior attorney and co-founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council. Among his awards are the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Environmental Law Institute and the Blue Planet Prize (2002). His most recent book is *Red Sky at Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment* (Yale University Press 2004).

Fred Strebeigh is a lecturer in the School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and in the Department of English at Yale. He has written for publications including *American Heritage*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Audubon*, *E: The Environmental Magazine*, *Legal Affairs*, *New Republic*, *Reader's Digest*, *Russian Life*, *Sierra*, *Smithsonian*, and the *New York Times Magazine*.