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National Action Plan

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cc: McGinty
FVI

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

August 26, 1993

Dear Senator ~~Wax~~ ^{Wax} Caucus:

Your letter to President Clinton on July 30, 1993, that discussed the National Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions raised a number of important issues. You correctly noted that funding priorities need to be closely aligned with our needs in these times of tight budgets. However, your suggestion of delaying or suspending some of the research conducted by the USGCRP and transferring part of the USGCRP funding to the EPA green programs troubles me. The scientific underpinning needed to understand global climate change well enough to enable major policy commitments is still beyond reach. To reduce research funding now as a way to support mitigation options could be seen as "penny-wise but pound-foolish".

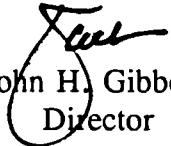
We urgently need to improve our understanding of changes in climate at the regional (sub-continental) level, and to understand the consequences of those changes to human health, ecological and socio-economic systems. If the current climate models are close to being correct, then significant changes in global and regional climate would occur even with the emissions controls currently being discussed by OECD countries (a cap on emissions from OECD countries at 1990 levels, not a global cap). A cap of OECD greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels, without a significant reduction in the expected rate of growth of emissions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, will only slightly decrease the predicted rate of climate change. Consequently, mitigation measures by the U.S. and other OECD countries, essential as they are, will at best delay an effective doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations by a relatively small number of decades. Even a global stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels (probably not achievable), would still result in an effective doubling of carbon dioxide before the end of the next century.

Therefore, in addition to reducing U.S. and global emissions of greenhouse gases, the human race must prepare to adapt to climate change. This will require a significant improvement in our ability to predict the form and extent of regional climate changes and to quantify the consequences. There is a clear need to expand the scope of the USGCRP by placing a greater emphasis on impact, adaptation and mitigation research, key goals of an expanded USGCRP. Consequently, a decrease in funding for the USGCRP may be counterproductive.

There is also a need for an improved dialogue between the scientific managers of the USGCRP and relevant policymakers within the White House and agencies, including EPA, DOE, Commerce, DOI and DOS. I have initiated an interagency process for senior level research managers and policymakers to discuss near- and long-term scientific, technical and implementation needs. This ongoing process will provide the Administration with the information needed to prioritize funding requests based on a consensus view of the needs.

I would be delighted to meet with you to discuss the issue of climate change, measures to reduce U.S. and global emissions of greenhouse gases, and funding priorities for research and development activities.

Sincerely,



John H. Gibbons
Director

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-8175

July 30, 1993

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

Thank you for writing to request my thoughts on how to achieve, in the National Action Plan now being formulated, stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions at their 1990 levels. I want to take this opportunity to let you know how strongly I feel that we need a tough and effective national plan, and that Congress needs to have a significant opportunity to review the draft plan once it is completed, and before it is made public.

There are several issues about which I feel particularly strongly. First, I am concerned that the Administration's priorities regarding resources may be out of line with its stated objectives. According to the Office of Management and Budget, almost \$1.5 billion dollars has been requested in 1994 to conduct research on only the scientific aspects of global climate change. I understand that this is a well-coordinated effort with no overlap in the work being performed by the nine agencies involved. I also appreciate that there are still many questions regarding the dynamics of climate change to be answered.

However, the answers to these scientific questions will not be available in the short term, and therefore, will not impact your goal for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Consequently, a greater emphasis should be placed on mitigation efforts -- and that means more money should be devoted to mitigation research and programs. In these times of shrinking resources, some of the scientific research on global climate change should be delayed or suspended in order to pay for the critical mitigation work that needs to be done immediately and for which there is little public funding. Specifically, I urge you to increase resources for state programs and EPA's Green Programs as a part of the strategy. The National Action Plan will not succeed until these funding priorities are straightened out.

The Honorable Bill Clinton
July 30, 1993
Page 2

Second, as difficult as the task might be, joint implementation projects should be taken into account when determining whether the U.S. has met your goal. Joint implementation projects represent a significant opportunity for U.S. businesses to make a difference abroad, and reflect the increasingly global nature of our economy. While I agree that the National Action Plan must keep the pressure on U.S. business to look for ways to achieve the maximum greenhouse gas reductions here at home, domestic solutions cannot be the only means for achieving the goal.

Joint implementation offers this country more than just a means for achieving significant and inexpensive greenhouse gas reductions, however. It will also create a powerful new tool for promoting U.S. technology innovation and for facilitating global demand for these technologies. At the same time, by embracing joint implementation in the National Action Plan, the U.S. will be able to provide critical world leadership in dealing with the global warming problem. In addition, it will encourage private investment in developing countries and allow those countries to participate in the achievement of global greenhouse gas reductions.

Finally, I urge you to ensure that the Environmental Protection Agency plays a strong leadership role in the implementation of the National Action Plan. While many agencies will necessarily be involved in making the Action Plan a reality, one agency, the EPA, should be given the ultimate authority to execute the Plan. That was Congress' intention in passing the Global Climate Protection Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-204) which provides that the President, "through the Environmental Protection Agency, shall be responsible for developing and proposing to Congress a coordinated national policy on global climate change."

Lines of authority in the National Action Plan must be clear - when they are not, problems arise. Section 1605 of the National Energy Policy Act of 1992 is a perfect example of how ambiguity in this area leads to bureaucratic infighting. That provision establishes a mechanism for taking inventory of the national aggregate of emissions of greenhouse gasses for both 1987-90 and each subsequent year. This accounting of the baseline and how much the U.S. needs to reduce emissions is critical to joint implementation efforts and to domestic reductions as well. The Department of Energy is required by the statute to consult with the Environmental Protection Agency in

The Honorable Bill Clinton
July 30, 1993
Page 3

conducting its research, and it was envisioned that the data would be supplied by the EPA.

However, it is my understanding that EPA's expertise in developing greenhouse gas emissions inventories is not being adequately utilized, and that a duplication of efforts is occurring. I am concerned by this lack of cooperation, and I fear that these sorts of inter-agency disputes will hinder efforts to implement the National Action Plan. I therefore recommend that this project receive high level review by the White House to ensure that it is being accomplished in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the law.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on global climate change policy prior to the completion of the National Action Plan. I would like to request a briefing by your staff for myself and my staff just prior to release of the draft plan. I plan to hold a hearing of the Environment and Public Works Committee shortly after its release to discuss the National Action Plan. In the meantime, I would appreciate it if you would keep me informed on the timing of the release of the draft plan.

With best personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Baucus", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Max Baucus

cc: Vice President Albert Gore, Jr.
Honorable Carol M. Browner
Honorable Hazel O'Leary
Honorable Timothy Wirth
Kathleen McGinty



United States Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

rec'd 8/5/93

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FROM: Senator Baucus DATE: July 30

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MESSAGE/COMMENTS:

KMI
Latho

cc Jack Gibbons
H.G. Gauthier
Marc Chupka

ACTION ITEMS: