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Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records
Subgroup/Office of Origin: WH Task Force on Climate Change
Series/Staff Member: Roger Ballentine; Paul Bledsoe; Julie Anderson
Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 41300
FolderID:

Folder Title:
Letters to the Editor

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Hazards of **AD** Diesel Exhaust

■ Re "Diesel Exhaust Found to Pose Strong Cancer Risk," April 23: It's amazing that the astounding discovery of findings by a group of scientists stated that emissions from diesel-fueled buses, trucks, etc. cause cancer and other diseases and are generally depicted to cause extremely unhealthy conditions.

Frankly, anyone living in the Los Angeles Basin would only take about 10 seconds to make the same discovery after sitting behind one of these vehicles on the road. It is appalling that our lawmakers allow the air to be poisoned by these vehicles.

When are they going to wise up and correct this harmful problem?

FRANK ABRAMOFF
Beverly Hills

■ Wait just one minute! Of those 14,850 who could die due to secondhand exposure to diesel smoke, how many are also a part of the 232,572 who may die from second-hand cigarette smoke?

These so-called statisticians are just playing into a government seeking more and more taxes to pursue top-down programs which ultimately can buy votes.

How about a \$2.50-per-gallon tax on diesel fuel? That should make them happy.

SAMUEL L. CLARK II
Redondo Beach

The New York Times

Circ: 1,187,950

Don't Cut the Gas Tax **A36**

To the Editor:

I take exception to Ronald Fraser's narrow approach in dealing with the problem of pork-barrel spending in the recently passed transportation bill (Op-Ed, April 28). He says that cutting the gasoline tax to 5 cents a gallon would eliminate pork. Yet taxes cannot be merely a revenue base; rather, they function as adjustments to markets and, as with taxes on gasoline, may also serve to compensate for a public "bad," in this case, air pollution.

Instead of cutting an already insufficient gasoline tax — far below that of countries like Germany, Italy and France — an even higher tax could encourage the use of cleaner fuels, contribute to improving public transportation and, most important, decrease the United States' demand for oil and dependence on oil-producing countries like Nigeria and Saudi Arabia.

JONATHAN FOX
New York, April 28, 1998

Lilco Takeover Plan **A36**

To the Editor:

Critics of Gov. George E. Pataki's plan to issue bonds for the takeover of the Long Island Lighting Company's electricity service continue to fault the \$7 billion debt and suggest that somehow the plan will stand in the way of electric competition (news article, April 23).

The Long Island Power Authority plan will allow for every electric ratepayer on Long Island to choose an electricity supplier within five years. Any rate reduction from competition will be on top of the 20 percent average reduction that the Governor's plan brings to every Long Islander immediately. Compare this with competition in other states, where most people are shying away from choosing an alternative supplier and total average rate reductions are less than 5 percent.

RICHARD M. KESSEL
Chmn., Long Island Power Authority
Uniondale, N.Y., April 24, 1998

LEVEL 1 - 2 OF 6 STORIES

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THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

July 20, 1998 Monday. METRO

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. A8

LENGTH: 154 words

HEADLINE: FULL OF HOT AIR

BODY:

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that Vice President Al Gore attempted to advance his political agenda by blaming Florida's recent fires on global warming. His comments trivialized the losses suffered by hundreds of Floridians whose homes went up in flames.

Florida farmers disagree with Gore's assertion that global warming is a scientific fact requiring drastic action now. Even if the climate is warming, the global-warming treaty supported by the vice president is the wrong medicine.

The treaty would require this country to reduce carbon dioxide emissions 30 percent below 1990 levels by 2010, while allowing such developing countries as China, India and Mexico to increase their emissions.

Instead of scapegoating to support his controversial agenda, Gore should focus on protecting the financial interests of American farmers and workers. Michael J. Stuart, President of Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, ORLANDO

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

COLUMN: LETTERS FROM READERS

LOAD-DATE: July 20, 1998

Circ: 852,262

Global Warming, Melting Glaciers A30

The sins of commission and omission in John K. Carlisle's "Global Warming: Watch the Glaciers" [letters, Nov. 17] are so extreme that the record needs to be set straight.

First, omission: Mr. Carlisle heads the Environmental Task Force of the National Center for Public Policy Research, a self-described "conservative/free-market foundation." I last saw Mr. Carlisle at the recent international global warming meeting in Buenos Aires handing out propaganda that, like his letter, disputes the international consensus that air pollution is causing global warming. (Ironically, in another article, "Sun to Blame for Global Warming," he concedes that the earth is hotter, but attributes

this to solar cycles.) Whatever his views may actually be, surely Mr. Carlisle's office and organization merited mention by The Post.

Second, commission: Mr. Carlisle contends that if the planet were warming, glaciers would be melting, but they aren't. He cites data from the World Glacier Monitoring Service in Zurich. "Clearly, glaciers show no evidence of global warming," he concludes. Trouble is, this directly contradicts the Glacier Service's own conclusion, as follows:

"One century of systematic observations clearly reveal a general shrinkage of mountain glaciers on a global scale. This general shrinkage remains one of the most reliable pieces of evidence for a worldwide secular warming trend."

Mr. Carlisle's obvious motives were to create confusion about global warming, thereby undercutting the credibility of not only environmental science but The Post's own reporter, Joby Warrick, whose original article "As Glaciers Melt, Talks on Warming Face Chill" [Nov. 2] was 100 percent accurate. For example, Mr. Carlisle claimed that Mr. Warrick's attribution of glacial melting to warming is "unsubstantiated" when, in fact, scientists throughout the world—Kenya, Java, the United States, Europe and Russia, to name but a few—have documented glacial shrinkage.

CURTIS A. MOORE
McLean

It's agreed to raise the Beanie bring-in limit to 30, but with conditions intended to protect its franchise — no more than three of a kind, none brought in for resale, none from counterfeit-Beanie makers in China, Korea or Indonesia.

In the meantime, what to do with all the seized Beanies? Usually, seized goods are destroyed. But, for reasons adults may never understand, these little critters also make kids happy. Even illegal Beanies deserve a chance to do just that. Surely the powers that be in government and business can find a way to get them in some needy little hands.

will try to sneak something past them that would implement the Kyoto agreement without a Senate vote.

If there is a notorious Clinton-Gore plot to do that, we have no doubt the legions of well-paid lobbyists for U.S. industry will detect it and alert Congress in plenty of time to block it. In the meantime, a gag rule on federal research and discussion of any science or technology issue is a very bad idea. So is any sweeping mandate to block anti-pollution measures that would be useful even if global warming doesn't exist.

It's hot out this week. That's no reason for panic on global warming. It's even less reason for some members of Congress to act as if the heat has addled their brains.

insulting to or browbeating the never-ending Don Barden/Michael Jackson capers, tactics and antics, which include accusing Mayor Dennis Archer of violating the spirit of casino bailout initiatives by not selecting a primary black casino developer. How ridiculous.

Perhaps anyone who happens to have been born Irish, Hispanic, Greek, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Italian or German should be highly offended and initiate petition drives for discrimination and exclusion in this casino developer choosing process.

The voters of Detroit are intelligent and sophisticated, and surely they can see right through the Darden/Jackson self-serving, opportunistic and sneaky game plan — motivated by pure greed.

Margaret LaRue
Detroit

Lavie Golenberg
Farmington Hills

The other three soon-to-be casino operators are in it for the money, too.

Build the amusement park

Don Barden has been a symbol for black success in this city. Growing up in Detroit, Barden knows what the city needs. He first made his fortune selling cable television service to the citizens of Detroit. He has a good idea of how businesses work, and he

Name game

Even though we are moving out to Ann Arbor, I wouldn't vote yes on Don Barden and Michael Jackson's Majestic Kingdom. Jackson is still too goofy, and Barden reminds me of a crooked politician. It's as if Barden is using Jackson's name to get people to vote yes on his casino proposal because he's a sore loser.

I commend Mayor Dennis Archer for sticking to his guns. Detroit finally has a mayor who's honest and has a good head on his shoulders.

Dawn R. Walendak
Detroit

COLLEGE BONDS

They'd be a smart investment in Macomb County

Macomb Community College is one of the area's more notable institutions at seeing a need and figuring out how to fill it. Under President Albert Loreanzo, the college has excelled in training for students and for workers in local business and industry. It has also forged closer links with state universities, the better to serve students who can't afford to live away from home while earning a four-year degree.

Now MCC wants to expand its on-line frontiers. The college is asking for a five-year, \$19.2-million technology bond issue. It's a good investment.

The money would pay for hardware

and software for Internet college courses, for on-line registration, for computer-based job training tailored to local employers, for an on-line job placement network open to anyone, and for computer labs and other specialized gear.

The bond issue would cost the average Macomb County home owner less than \$15 a year. It's a sensible proposal for a county whose prosperity is so closely tied to its thousands of technical jobs, and to the ability of its employers and workers to keeping into the high-tech age.

MCC's per-pupil budget is 25th among the 28 community colleges in the state. It has made itself a relevant, cost-effective institution. The bond issue will help it continue to be that. We recommend a YES vote Aug. 4 for the Macomb Community College technology bond proposal.

Election '98

ON-LINE HOAX

The cyber-virgins are revealed to be just a scam

Hate to say we told you so, but it turns out the two young virgins planning to have sex for the first time in full view of the Internet were just characters in an elaborate scheme to make money.

One of the computer-equipment folks involved has come clean, revealing that A) the plan was to charge viewers \$5 for access and then announce at the last minute that the two 18-year-olds decided they weren't ready; and B) the scenario was just made up anyway. The

promoters figured to take in \$5 million.

We were skeptical from the outset — not about live sex on the Internet, but about all the claims that this was about love and freedom of expression.

It would be nice to tell you that the hoax was exposed because of an attack of conscience, but the truth is the guy who talked feared public backlash that might hurt his main business, on-line adult entertainment and sex videos.

The other truth is that \$5 million was probably a low estimate.

Plug in electric deregulation carefully

Your July 9 editorial "Power Up: Fair competition should rule electricity market" was great. It captured perhaps the most important issue related to electric industry deregulation. As Michigan tackles deregulation, policy makers seem to be largely overlooking solutions to protect consumers from deregulated utility monopolies.

Electricity is not a luxury, but a necessity. Lawmakers must therefore ensure that utility deregulation policies create a truly open electric market and protect all customers, including those on limited incomes, from the anti-competitive business practices of utility monopolies.

As your editorial suggested, it is also important to re-examine programs in some

manner to help customers save energy in their homes and businesses. Well-designed energy-efficiency programs not only help customers lower their energy costs, but also reduce pollution, delay new power plant construction, and create new jobs.

Sally Billups
Policy Specialist
Michigan Environmental Council
Lansing

I would agree that if deregulation is to work, everyone should benefit. However, look what deregulation has done for the airlines at Metro Airport. One carrier dominates, and when start-up airlines try to compete, the major carrier cuts its fares and drives competition out.

As for stranded costs, many were incurred because of environmental regulations, both state and federal. These were government-approved investment costs. You wouldn't purchase a home without a contract. How would you react if the lending institution said you have to pay it off in two or three years?

Not enough transmission lines? Rate payers somewhere would have to pay for any new construction, which would be added to their bills.

From where is all this competitive power going to come? As was demonstrated last summer and again a few weeks ago, there is very little surplus power out there at any price. Deregulation must assure continued reliable power. If Ohio power can sell in Michigan, Michigan should be able to sell in Ohio and other states.

Malcolm G. Dugless
Grosse Ile

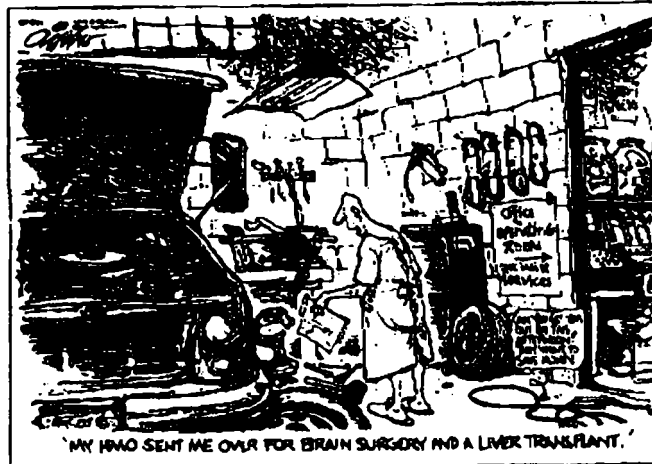
Contacts only if you need them

I am appalled by the number of teenagers who are buying contact lenses simply to augment the color of their eyes ("For appearances sake," July 13).

I first started wearing contact lenses as a 10th-grader in high school because glasses were too awkward to wear while playing basketball and because I wanted better vision. I would do almost anything to have 20/20 vision without the aid of contacts or glasses (without costly surgery).

I wonder if these kids have any idea how grateful they should be that they can see without some kind of vision aid. This is just another example of vain, egocentric teenagers being allowed to do whatever they want, regardless of the risks involved.

Mary Chmielewska
Farmington Hills



Detroit Free Press 7/21/98

Kazakhstan's Progress A20

The Post's Nov. 9 editorial "A Central Asian Czar" attempted to identify obstacles our young nation faces—including potential ethnic tensions, geopolitical pressures and environmental degradation. But these are the very areas in which Kazakhstan has built an exemplary record. With the most complex multiethnic population of any former Soviet republic, we have—all objective observers agree—established a remarkably open and tolerant society, without discrimination and with full freedom of religion.

As the world's first nation to unilaterally relinquish our nuclear arsenal, the third-largest on earth, we have been widely credited with being a "model state" for nonproliferation (as stated in a recent Carnegie Endowment study).

As regards democracy and political reform, we are encouraging the growth of a civil society, with more than 2,000 nongovernmental organizations now functioning. We have held four national elections, with two more scheduled for next year

that will be fully monitored by international observers and will be contested by multiple national political parties.

Of course, we have a long way to go. But our record in the first seven years of our independence stands as one of enormous progress when compared with virtually any other newly independent state, some of which have had 50 years to evolve, and others, like the United States's, more than 200. We have firmly set in place the framework for an open, democratic society based on tolerance and individual rights, and we are moving forward with concrete steps to bring further democratic and economic reform in compliance with our commitments as a participating state in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The Post's failure to acknowledge any of these nation-building achievements is troublesome. After 70 years under Soviet repression and 200 years under the yoke of the Russian czars, we find The Post's glib reference to our president as a czar not just factually erroneous but culturally insensitive. We do not use the title lightly, as we know what life was like for our forefathers during this long history of oppression. Our constitution provides that the president is elected on an alternative basis from a number of candidates in free and fair elections in which every citizen who votes will be choosing the destiny of our nation.

There certainly should be no doubt that the forthcoming elections in 1999 will meet the high standards of democratic pluralism.

BOLAT NURGALIYEV
Ambassador
Republic of Kazakhstan
Washington

No' to Kyoto A20

Fred Hiatt's Nov. 8 op-ed column, "Greening of the Board Rooms," missed a fundamental point in the complex climate debate: Interest by some U.S. companies in official credit for their voluntary efforts to limit greenhouse-gas emissions should not be confused with endorsing the Kyoto Protocol, which would cap family and business use of heating oil, electricity, coal, gasoline and natural gas. Nor is this really a debate about "early action." President Clinton announced his Climate Action Plan back in 1993. Since then, thousands of U.S. companies have improved energy efficiency, invested in energy technologies and re-thought strategic plans for new facilities.

Among these corporate activists are members of that "most retrograde industry group," the Global Climate Coalition, a name the author apparently cannot bear to

write. It is the largest, most diverse U.S. industry group involved in climate issues—and a staunch opponent of the Kyoto Protocol. The coalition ranks remain strong because business leaders know that implementing the protocol could cost 10 times what top White House officials claim, an annoying fact the U.S. Energy Information Administration acknowledged last month.

No doubt CEOs welcomed "this turn toward realism" by one federal agency, but expect the board room buzz on climate policy to remain about the same: Voluntary, yes. Credit, maybe. Kyoto, no.

THOMAS M. KIRLIN
Washington

The writer, a climate consultant, has the Global Climate Coalition among his clients.

Copyright 1998 Denver Publishing Company
The Rocky Mountain News (Denver, Co.)

December 16, 1998, Wednesday,

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Ed. F; Pg. 58A

LENGTH: 1229 words

HEADLINE: LETTERS PAGE

BODY:

Global-warming facts need to be put on table

Geneva Overholser, in her Dec. 4 column, urged serious discussion on the United Nations' Koyoto Protocol concerning the controversial global-warming theory. I agree that it's long overdue.

Overholser's appalling lack of knowledge on the subject, however, reinforces the necessity to get the scientific facts out on the table so the public will understand and support the Senate's overwhelming opinion that the Koyoto Protocol would not only be disastrous to the U.S. and the world economy, but is based on erroneous scientific theory and world-government politics.

Careful measurements over the last 20 years, the period most affected by "greenhouse gasses," actually show a trend of decreasing global temperatures, as reported by the Marshall Institute in the Astrophysical Journal. A trend line of wildly fluctuating annual temperatures does show an increase in atmospheric temperatures as the world recovers from the "Little Ice Age" of 300 years ago; however, there have been five extended periods where temperatures were much higher than today. Are humans responsible for these climatic changes also?

It appears that the best correlation of our climate to an outside influence is with solar activity, while strict scientific methodology indicates that increasing hydrocarbon emissions do not support a global warming hypothesis. Rationing hydrocarbons emissions, as called for under the Koyoto Protocol, would reduce America's standard of living drastically. The protocol is one more step along the path of subverting our nation to the dictates of the United Nations that President Clinton desires.

I belong to a John Birch Society chapter that has a large library of information on why we should not only reject the Koyoto Protocol, but also get our country out of the United Nations and the United Nations out of our country. E-mail jayveef@aol.com for an invitation to attend one of our monthly issues-and-answers sessions. Yes, as Overholser says, it's time to warm up the climate debate.

Jack Fried

Denver

Senator's book selection should cause us concern

It did not inspire confidence to read in the Books section soon after the election that Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell's choice of reading material is The Art of War by Sun Tzu, proving him to be a student of the Pat Robertson and Newt Gingrich school of politics.

Robertson has espoused the strategy of Chinese military tactician Sun Tzu, as revealed in The Art of War, in gaining political power, with the goal of a Republican-controlled Congress and White House by year 2000. Simultaneously, he has expressed admiration for powerful, corrupt political machines like New York's 19th century Tammany Hall.

Newt Gingrich, too, had his staff study military history from The Art of War for its political lessons, describing his strategy for traveling the ruthless road to political power thusly: "Be nasty . . . stand up and slug fast . . . we are fighting a war for power."

I think most of Campbell's Colorado constituency would rather he not be such an avid follower of religious-right political philosophy.

Rita Harper

Littleton

Jefferson's sage advice on doing what is right

"If ever you find yourself environed with difficulties and perplexing circumstances out of which you are at a loss how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and be assured that that will extricate you the best out of the worst situations. Though you cannot see when you take one step what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of the labyrinth in the easiest manner possible. The knot which you thought a Gordian one will untie itself before you. Nothing is so mistaken as the supposition that a person is to extricate himself from a difficulty by intrigue, by chicanery, by dissimulation, by trimming, by an untruth, by an injustice. This increases the difficulties tenfold; and those who pursue these methods get themselves so involved at length that they can turn no way but their infamy becomes more exposed." -Thomas Jefferson, 1785.

Now, that's good advice. For history, for posterity, for our children, do the right thing.

The Rocky Mountain News (Denver, Co.) , December 16, 1998

Tim Burns

Lakewood

Smaller government isn't what he has in mind

Gov.-elect Bill Owens, as quoted in Vincent Carroll's Dec. 6 column, predicts that we "can pass tax cuts and still keep the budget growing at 6 percent." As a Libertarian, I find the first part of this appealing and the second part appalling.

Do the math: Six percent annual growth means that at the end of Owens' four-year term, the budget will have grown by more than 26 percent. Two terms under this policy would give us nearly 60 percent growth, and three terms would be more than enough to double the budget. Clearly, a smaller, less intrusive state government is not what Owens has in mind, campaign rhetoric notwithstanding.

The Republicans may not mean what they say about reducing the scope of government, but the Libertarian Party does. Interested readers can find the details at [www.lp.org / platform](http://www.lp.org/platform).

Craig Stinson

Public Information Director

Libertarian Party of Colorado

Highlands Ranch

Think of consequences

If President Clinton had any integrity, he would resign. At this point, even his staunchest defenders no longer deny his perjury under oath. If perjury under oath is not a felony, then the people currently serving jail time for it should be released and the law against it should be rescinded. But can you imagine what would happen to our legal system if that occurred?

Polls tell us the majority of Americans do not want Clinton impeached. This then must mean that most Americans favor abolishing the law against perjury - unless they believe Clinton is above the law.

Is this how you feel? If not, let your elected representatives know where you stand on this issue. By remaining silent, you condone Clinton's reckless disregard for our American heritage.

Emile A. Rainold III

Greenwood Village

Too slow for our good?

With all the wrecks and deaths caused by road rage, one must ask: Do speed laws contribute to road rage?

For example, consider Sante Fe from Hampton to Mississippi, which is a six-lane gem of a road with few, if any, cross streets. The speed limit is 45 mph. If you go the speed limit, though, you are taking your life in your hands, with motorists passing you with angry looks and an occasional hand gesture. Or you are tailgated until you leave the road or break the law and speed.

Like Antigone in the 2,000-year-old play, you must decide whether to break an unrealistic speed law or obey the law and incur road rage. And, no, I've never gotten a ticket.

David Hester

Littleton

The freeing of Matt Grise

Kudos to the Denver Rocky Mountain News, Rep. Scott McInnis, Roger Gomez and all who helped in freeing Matt Grise from the juvenile detention compound in Louisiana. What a wonderful Christmas present for Matt and his family in Colorado.

We hope steps will now be taken to shut down the New Bethany compound and any others like it. Places like these cannot continue to be allowed to unjustly imprison and enslave young children.

Tracy and Randy Fullerton

Westminster

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 18, 1998

Circ: 852,262

Missed Opportunity for Cleaner Air ^{A20}

The Post's March 26 editorial "Hot Air and Climate Change" correctly points out that the Clinton administration's proposal to deregulate the electric utilities is woefully inadequate to bring about critical reductions in carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, the nation's largest industrial contributors of greenhouse gases.

Missing from the editorial was discussion of the plan's failure to protect public health and the environment from air pollution, which causes tens of thousands of hospitalizations and premature deaths each year. The electric power industry is responsible for fully one-third of the air pollution that causes ozone or smog and two-thirds of the sulfur emissions that form the fine particles that are deadly when inhaled by vulnerable people such as children and the elderly.

The vast majority of the electricity industry's air pollution comes from older, coal-burning power plants built in the 1950s and '60s, which are exempt from modern air-quality standards under the Clean Air Act. This loophole allows older plants to emit from 10 to 100 times the amount of pollution that a newer plant is permitted to emit. Under the Clinton plan, these older plants will enjoy a significant competitive advantage by virtue of their failure to invest in pollution controls.

Many observers predict that deregulation, without measures that mandate clean-up of the dirtiest

plants, would result in increased smog and particulate air pollution, and consequently more illness and premature death. By failing to set tough standards for air pollutants from the electric industry, the Clinton administration has missed a key opportunity to save American lives. I hope that Congress will recognize and correct this failure.

REBECCA STANFIELD
Washington

8 Countries Agree to Fight Environmental Crime

LEEDS CASTLE, England, April 5 (Reuters) — Ministers from Russia and the Group of Seven leading economies agreed today to step up their cooperation against environmental crime, a market estimated at \$20 billion a year.

"We want to declare war on the smugglers who trade illegally in banned products such as endangered species, the ozone-depleting substances and hazardous wastes," Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott of Britain said.

The meeting of environmental ministers from Britain, the United

States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and Russia was held in advance of a gathering of national leaders in England in May.

Mr. Prescott said he wanted to see the equivalent of an Interpol for environmental crime.

He said the illegal trade in endangered species was estimated at \$5 billion a year; the figure rises to \$20 billion when illegal fishing, logging and trade in bootleg chlorofluorocarbons are included. Those gases, which deplete the ozone layer, are still produced in Russia, China and some other countries. Environmen-

tal crimes can be as profitable as drug crimes, Mr. Prescott said.

The meeting highlighted continuing differences between the European Union and the United States about how governments should carry out the Kyoto conference agreement to cut emissions of greenhouse gases.

The pact, which Mr. Prescott helped negotiate in December, agreed that industrialized nations should cut emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average 5.2 percent between 2008 and 2012, with a 7 percent cut for the United States and 8 percent for the European Union.

Patents | Sabra Chartrand 02

Making Cars Run Cleaner

Four inventors who work at the Ford Research Laboratory in Dearborn, Mich., won praise for two patents that enable cars to run with cleaner emissions. The devices are especially designed for automobiles that run on natural gas. The technology is in use in California, where stringent new low-emission requirements are in place.

Exhaust is created when a mixture of air and fuel is ignited in an internal combustion engine. The inventions reduce the noxious chemicals that cars emit by first filtering hydrogen from the exhaust through a conditioning catalyst. The exhaust gases are then passed through an electronic sensor, which analyzes their oxygen concentration.

Determining the amount of oxygen in the exhaust allows more careful control over the air-fuel mixture being fed to the engine. The mixture can be adjusted in response to readings from the oxygen sensor so that a more efficient combination is used. With a more efficient mixture, the car's central catalyst can better reduce noxious gases to meet low-emission standards.

The inventors of the devices — Jeffrey Hepburn, Robert McCabe, Bela Povinger and Raymond Willey — received patents 5,433,071 and 5,474,054.

British Petroleum Sets Profit Goals, Plans Big Stock Repurchase

Increase of 25% Planned in Output

By BHUSHAN BAHREE

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

GENEVA—Despite low oil prices, British Petroleum PLC aims to make a lot more money than it already does and to reward its shareholders with share buy-backs, starting next year.

Chief Executive John Browne told analysts that the company aimed to increase underlying annual profit by \$2 billion within the next five years, to at least \$6 billion a year by 2002. BP reported net income of \$4.6 billion for 1997.

News from the analysts' meeting, at which Mr. Browne disclosed BP's intention to buy back \$2 billion of shares next year, lifted the company's shares on the London Stock Exchange. The stock jumped more

than 6% after the meeting, easing back to end the day up 1.7% at 895.5 pence (\$14.91), a gain of 15 pence.

But BP's message wasn't nearly as new for some analysts. "I've felt for some time that BP is a solid long-term growth story," said Paul Spedding, an analyst at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson in London. "They just confirmed that," he said.

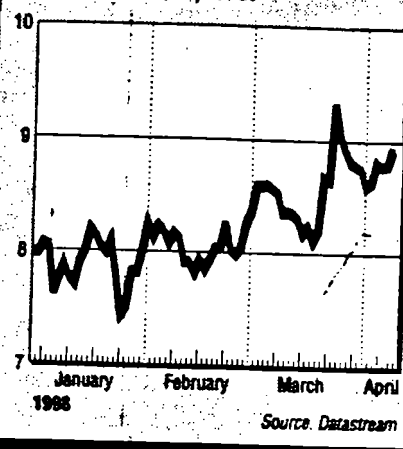
Mr. Browne said BP expects to meet the profit targets through both increased volume and cost reductions. The targets can be achieved, "perhaps with a small timing adjustment, even if oil prices remain at around \$14 a barrel," Mr. Browne said.

That price would be some \$2 a barrel lower than BP's current assumption of the price of North Sea benchmark Brent crude oil at \$16 a barrel. Mr. Browne said BP remained ready to adjust to a sustained period of lower prices.

Asked in a telephone interview whether hitting profit targets would put

Pumped Up

Daily closing price in London of British Petroleum shares, in pounds



BP far in front of its peers in profitability, Mr. Browne's reply suggested he wasn't under any illusions about the competition. "I don't expect anyone to stand still," he said.

For its part, BP plans to increase its output of oil and gas by some 25% in the next five years from the 2.7 billion barrels produced in the past five-year period. Already a major oil producer in Alaska, the North Sea and elsewhere, BP yesterday confirmed petroleum discoveries offshore Angola that will add 500 million barrels to the company's reserves.

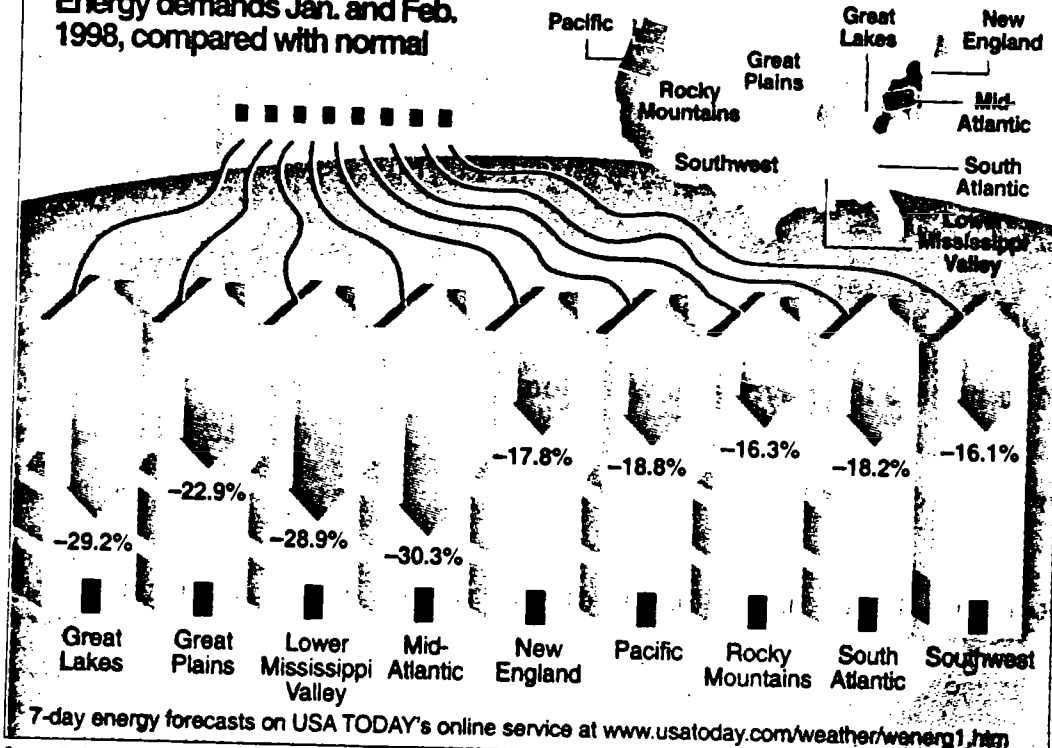
Mr. Browne said BP was looking at the next 15 years, not just the next five, by securing options to expand output in such areas as the Gulf of Mexico and Latin America, and build market positions in Europe and Asia, particularly in China. For the even longer term, Mr. Browne said BP was creating options to produce natural gas in eastern Siberia and oil in the Caspian Sea.

"We're beginning to create a new company, but I think we've only just begun to understand quite how much it could deliver," Mr. Browne said.

El Nino reduces energy demands

Energy demands for home heating and cooling averaged more than 25% below normal across the USA during the heart of this year's El Nino winter — January and February. While the North was warm, many southern cities that use air conditioning in winter were cool.

Energy demands Jan. and Feb. 1998, compared with normal



Source: CNG Energy Services Corp. and Consolidated Natural Gas Co.

By Elys A. McLean USA TODAY

Environment legislation left out in cold on Capitol Hill

By Charles Pope
CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY

A9

No matter its scope, its merits or its intentions, environmental legislation has earned little more than an icy stare in Congress this year.

Two-and-a-half months into the session, the most prominent stand-alone bills are barely breathing. These include legislation to overhaul the Superfund toxic waste cleanup program and to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act, as well as land use and timber measures.

Similarly, prospects for addressing the Kyoto treaty on global warming are so dim that the Clinton administration decided against even offering it this year.

Below the surface, however, the picture is different. Finding the front door blocked, Republicans are using the back door to push environmental or public land amendments to unrelated legislation. Most of the proposals are coming from conservatives eager to scale back environmental protections.

Such "riders" can trigger strong reactions. "Congress never has to resort to riders; it's an abomination of the legislative process and an abomination of the public's right to know," said Kathleen A.

McGinty, who chairs President Clinton's Council on Environmental Quality.

Indeed, legislative officers at the Interior Department now spend much of their time watching for what they call "guerrilla activity" that could affect the department.

Their attention is well-placed. Officials at the Interior Department counted at least 29 riders attached to the fiscal 1997 and 1998 Interior appropriations bills alone. Among the more controversial 1998 changes were provisions:

- Restoring taxpayer subsidies for Forest Service road construction.
- Overturning a federal court injunction against the Forest Service on more than one-half of the grazing leases in place at 11 national forests in Arizona and New Mexico.
- Postponing collection of higher "special use fees" based on property appraisals for people who own recreation homes on national forest land.

In fact, the practice has become so commonplace that Rep. Henry A. Waxman, California Democrat, introduced legislation in 1997 to require a separate vote on any rider that "reduces environmental protection." His bill hasn't gone

anywhere in the Republican-controlled Congress.

However, House GOP leaders, recognizing how often environmental issues have split Eastern and Western Republicans, have asked Reps. James C. Greenwood of Pennsylvania and Richard W. Pombo of California to head an effort to explore ways to heal the differences within the party.

This year's proposed environmental riders are more narrowly written than some in the last Congress, and therefore less likely to draw a presidential veto.

Democrats and environmentalists take no comfort in that. In fact, they are more nervous about these low-profile riders than those from the days when the Republicans were waging a full-scale, largely unsuccessful assault on environmental laws.

Republicans and lobbyists for business groups see riders as a powerful mechanism for roping in regulators who ignore congressional dictates.

"When agencies refuse to listen to the will of Congress, they are a useful tool," said Susan Eckerly, chief Senate lobbyist for the National Federation of Independent Businesses. "In some instances, it's appropriate."

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