



NEWS

*U.S. Representative C.L. "Butch" Otter
First District - Idaho*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 15, 2004
www.house.gov/otter/

CONTACT: Mark Warbis
(208) 336-9831/866-0840

OPINION

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION REQUIRES BALANCE

BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS ADDRESSING IMMEDIATE NEEDS, FUTURE CONCERNS

By Congressman C.L. "Butch" Otter

Diversified. Well-rounded. Balanced. Those are sound goals, whether it's for economic development or child rearing, investment portfolios or personal behavior. They're sound because they reflect practicality, utility and common sense. They work.

The same principles apply to environmental policy. We all want clean water, clean air, pristine vistas and an unspoiled legacy for our children and grandchildren. But we also need to make a living, put food on the table and pay our taxes. Luckily, President Bush recognizes those realities, and his environmental policies reflect them.

The President's approach to the environment acknowledges that important as new technology will be, as much as we'd like to live in a perfect world without competing demands on money and resources, we can't ignore the very real, everyday needs of the American people.

Should we ask people to give up their cars while we develop hydrogen- or solar-powered vehicles? Should they huddle together for warmth to avoid using fossil fuels? Should they take up a hobby to fill the time they'll have when their jobs are eliminated?

Withdrawing from the Kyoto Accords is not the same as ignoring the issue of global warming. It only means the President recognizes that he has a primary responsibility to the American people. He is, and should be, unwilling to sacrifice sovereignty or national interest to an insidious form of cherry-picking internationalism promoted by those who seek to level the economic playing field at the expense of the American people.

Accusations from people like Al Gore that the President is indifferent or even hostile toward environmental protection, or global warming in particular, ignore the facts:

[MORE]

- The United States is spending more than all other nations combined on climate change research and new technology development.
- The United States is leading in international forums dedicated to making progress on climate change science and technology development, such as hydrogen and carbon sequestration.
- The science of climate change is uncertain at best, and we need to determine more precisely the impacts of human activity.
- The Kyoto Accords would inflict real economic hardship with no discernible benefits, a reality that a growing number of nations now acknowledge.

While blasting the President for not toeing the traditional environmentalist line, Mr. Gore's obstructionist allies in the Senate are standing in the way of a comprehensive national energy policy that includes progress on wind, solar and hydrogen research; the next generation of nuclear reactors; clean-coal technology and other real-world solutions.

Contrary to what Mr. Gore would have you believe, protecting the environment is not an either-or proposition. It can't be. Americans have too much ingenuity, too much entrepreneurial spirit and too much intellectual capacity to accept a future that involves living under the yoke of oppressive worldwide environmental protocols; pigeonholing the problem by adopting a nebulous, unenforceable and ultimately meaningless exercise in global bureaucracy; or surviving in a world being choked by greenhouse gases.

There is another way. And President Bush is charting that course. As a member of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality, I'm committed to working with the President and my colleagues in Congress to ensure we maintain a balanced approach to protecting our environment, as well as the livelihoods that allow us to enjoy it.

[30]