

The overwhelming scientific evidence makes it clear that global warming is a real phenomenon, and that human activities play a significant role in causing climate change. We must act now to address global warming. Twenty of the hottest years in recorded history have occurred since the 1980's. Glaciers and permafrost are vanishing, weather patterns are shifting, and migration patterns are being disrupted.

Meanwhile, human output of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases has reached an unprecedented level. These gases trap excess heat within the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effect. In a response to the survey in last week's enewsletter, a constituent pointed out a [recent article](#) in Scientific American, which reported that the present level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the highest in the past 650,000 years!

A tremendous amount of carbon dioxide is released when we burn fossil fuels to run our cars, factories, and power plants. To fight global warming, dramatic changes will be needed in transportation, energy production, and public policy.

### **Good Science Makes Good Policy**

A soon to be released [UN report](#) details the impact that global warming will have on human existence and life on Earth if nothing is done. The consequences of sudden climate change, such as rising oceans, increased storm activity, and the displacement of wildlife, are a threat to the economy, our coastal cities, and possibly the very existence of humanity. The public policy that will stop global warming must be informed by the best science. I applaud Speaker Pelosi for creating a new committee which will hold hearings on global warming and then come up with solutions to address the threat of global warming.

In his State of the Union address to Congress, President Bush finally acknowledged the danger of global warming by mentioning the "serious challenge of global climate change." Unfortunately, the President then went on to talk about using "alternative fuels" such as 'clean' coal. The use of coal based fuels would most likely increase, not decrease, the production of global warming gases. The most advanced coal technologies produce significantly more CO<sub>2</sub> than the gasoline we use today. We need energy that's not just "alternative" but actually low-carbon or carbon-free.

To reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide, significant investment and incentives will be needed to change the technology, processes, and products that run our economy. We need all of the cars on the road to be even 'greener' than the Toyota Prius I drive today. Electrical plants that burn fossil fuels will need to be replaced by facilities that use renewable energy sources, such as geothermal, wind, solar, and tidal energy.

Private industry can actually benefit from the shift to renewable energy. Innovative companies can play a role in the research and development of alternative energy technology. They can develop new products and infrastructure that will bring green energy to the masses. With the proper incentives, renewable energy technology will open up whole new markets.

### **The CLEAN Energy Act**

[The CLEAN Energy Act](#) , which I cosponsored, was passed by the House of Representatives on January 18, 2007 as the final piece of the House Democrats' First Hundred Hours Agenda. This legislation, if enacted, will end government handouts to big oil companies. Included in the bill are provisions that will repeal corporate tax deductions for large oil companies, and require them to pay their fair share of fees for oil leases.

These measures will save the federal government an estimated 14 billion dollars, which will go into a 'trust fund' to support renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. The CLEAN Energy act is a bold first step on the road to real energy reform.

### **The Safe Climate Act**

I have also agreed to cosponsor Congressman Henry Waxman's Safe Climate Act. This bill was introduced in the 109th Congress as [H.R.5642](#) . The Safe Climate Act will reduce national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by roughly 2% each year from 2010 to 2050. The reduction will result from improved auto emissions standards for the entire nation, a cap and trade system for greenhouse gas credits for industry, and by requiring 20% of electricity production to come from renewable sources. Mr. Waxman plans to reintroduce this legislation soon, and it is my hope that it quickly makes its way through Congress.

### Knowledge is the Key

In order to make wise choices, America truly needs to understand global warming, its causes, and potential impacts. A recent [poll](#) found that 13% of Americans had never heard of global warming, even though the US produces more greenhouse gases than any other country. In addition, the poll found that among the 46 nations that were polled, Americans are the least concerned about global warming. We can not keep our heads buried in the sand – global warming is a serious problem and we must make a concerted effort to address the threat.

Our nation, and our world, has the potential to address the dangers of global warming. Because of the technological advances brought about by scientists in Silicon Valley and elsewhere, new products and technologies are becoming available to allow us to utilize newly available forms of energy. I will continue working with my colleagues to ensure that the government implements incentives and programs to promote the use of renewable energy. To ensure broad implementation of these measures, however, a large scale public information and education campaign will be needed.

As a former teacher, I understand the importance of imparting knowledge to help people make wise decisions. By providing people clear information about global warming, in a variety of forms, we can take away the fear and the sense of helplessness, and move people to take action. By informing people of the new technologies and programs as they become available, we can ensure maximum understanding and maximum impact. I encourage you to continue learning more about this issue, and to talk about this issue with your family, neighbors and friends. Together, we can ensure that the planet we leave to our children is as healthy as the one which we inherited ourselves.