

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 26, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN PODESTA

FROM: ROGER BALLENTINE 
RE: CLIMATE CHANGE PRIORITIES

Paper
I've started
my pics
Let's
discuss
TODAY

Now that we are past Earth Day, I am focusing on our climate change agenda for the remainder of the year. In addition to the work we must do on both COP6 and our budget/tax proposals, there are several different possible areas where we could seek to make demonstrable impacts this year. Given limited time and resources, however, we must prioritize. I would like your view as to 1) what you think we should focus on, and 2) whether it is necessary and appropriate to solicit the views of the President and the Vice President.

Possible approaches include:

-  • Simply work to ensure maximum completion/progress on existing major initiatives (e.g., federal energy management, bio-energy, etc.);
-  • Focus on international energy market, clean energy exports and clean energy development. This is an area that combines the President's broader vision of development in the new century with some specific proposals/examples, highlighting companies that are doing this and spreading the message abroad;
- Focus on message of "bringing climate change home", highlighting ways the real people can make decisions that will help the climate (light bulbs, Energy Star, etc.);
-  • Focus on continuing to improve the federal government's environmental performance and energy efficiency. While we have done much here already, we could push contracting reform and perhaps other new ideas;
- Focus on the corporate world. We could keep pushing business to adopt a new mindset that marries environmental and economic priorities and measurements. We could focus on interaction with business leaders, and perhaps undertake an initiative with Wall St. and the financial community as to how environmental/climate impacts should be incorporated into standard financial evaluations of companies;

- *Focus on cars/CAFÉ.* This could be at least a two-part strategy. One, we could fight the CAFÉ rider (perhaps issue early veto threat), and second, we might propose reforms to, or a substitute to CAFÉ. This is obviously a volatile approach;
- *Focus on fuels.* We could decide that helping move our economy to one based on advanced fuels (hydrogen) is the single best thing we can do for the climate. We could push a "Partnership for a New Generation of Fuels", focusing on both product development and infrastructure problems;
- *Focus on diplomacy.* In addition to the preparations we must make for COP6, we could have the President focus on a climate message of making Kyoto a success. To some extent, this is likely to happen regardless, as we approach COP6, and it is also related to a focus on international clean energy. We have not, however, made it a domestic message priority;
- *Focus on Congress.* We could take a much more political and aggressive approach challenging Congress. This focus might include a budget showdown (although we are likely to get most of what we are asking for), a debate over a climate resolution, or some other vehicle.

We could certainly undertake a combination of these issues and perhaps others. I do, however, think it is important that we agree on some larger sense of what it is we hope to accomplish in the next nine months, and your input would be very helpful. Thank you.

cc: George Frampton
David Beier