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## An environmental president? Not Bush

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**T**HREE YEARS ago, George Bush announced to the nation that he wanted to be known as the environmental president. Today it is clear that he is not.

He barely mentioned the environment in his State of the Union address and the draft of the proposed national energy policy, which is circulating around Washington, is a package of profits for the oil and nuclear industry.

Although the door to the solar age is open and the rest of the world is going through it, President Bush remains loyal to his oil industry friends. The "new" energy thinking emphasizes building new highways over increasing automobile gas mileage. Autos consume 60 percent of the oil we normally import. This could be cut in half, if the Bush administration would demand it.

Not doing so is consistent with Bush's campaign to "just say no" to environmental leadership, inspiration and action. During the Reagan years, and now during the Bush years, the United States has become the lonesome polecat of global anti-environmentalism, while virtually all the Western democracies have made the environment a top issue. Australia, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and the Scandinavian countries are examples.

Even Bush's most conservative friends, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, have launched environmental programs to enhance their nation's destiny. The deadly pollution revealed when the Iron Curtain was opened on Poland and other Soviet bloc countries is enough to assure continued interest—for all but the Bush administration, that is.

The Clean Air Act is one piece of legislation he did deliver. But he showed that he and other decision-makers don't understand how things are connected. If we don't improve gas mileage requirements and cut back on oil, we'll get more air pollution, which means dirtier—not cleaner—air. Soon after the act was passed, I heard him grum-

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### Lujan wants oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge

bling in an interview that he fears implementing it will be too costly. This doesn't inspire confidence in this listener that he cares.

Bush's disregard for global warming is serious. In last week's 130-nation conference on eliminating global pollution, U.S. representatives carried a message that stated, at last, that there is indeed a problem. But the United States declined to join with the other nations in committing funds to do something about global warming by reducing the carbon dioxide problems caused by burning fossil fuels, like oil.

Why is our would-be environmental president so bad at it? Well, you can tell a lot about a president by the company he appoints. Nearly every cabinet position is filled by men who view the environmental health of this nation as separate from our economic health—even the secretaries of Interior and Energy appear to think this way.

Normally, the secretary of Interior would be someone with a passion for protecting the nation's resources. Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan prepared for his appointment by regularly voting against environmental legislation from his seat on the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Now he is ignoring his responsibility to protect America's wild heritage by advocating oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

**S**ECRETARY OF Energy James Watkins is a former admiral in the nuclear Navy. He has neither defined sensible energy priorities nor led us on the path to a sustainable energy future. His new energy policy proposes to limit the legal rights of citizens to criticize and oppose new nuclear plants, and reduce a state's ability to refuse the unstorable poisons of the nuclear industry.

When one turns to Bush's key White House staff positions on environment, there is no one home.

Chief of Staff John Sununu, the former governor of New Hampshire, forced the Seabrook nuclear power plant on his constituents. He and the others, along with Richard Darman, director of the Office of Management and Budget, and economic adviser Michael Boskin, have stood guard at the gates to Bush's sensibilities and discouraged any thoughts about progressive environmental policy. They have done this chiefly by burying the only one in the administration who could straighten Bush out on the subject, EPA Director Bill Reilly. We haven't heard much since Bush initially favored expanding the EPA's sphere of influence as a cabinet position.

Bush needs a new crew of people who can help deliver the environmental ship of state in good shape to the next generation. Part of our job as "passengers" is to actively demand a change in course.