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**Media Briefing to Respond to President Bush's Global Warming Plan  
and Power Plant Clean-up Bill Introduction**

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**TEXAS CLEAN AIR ADVOCATES CHALLENGE  
SENATORS HUTCHISON AND CORNYN TO BACK REAL POWER  
PLANT CLEAN-UP BILL;**

*President Bush re-introduces phony global warming reduction plan;  
His voluntary "Climate Vision" plan is déjà vu all over again*

AUSTIN— Leading clean air and environmental advocates today urged Senators Hutchison and Cornyn to back Senator James Jeffords' (I-VT) **Clean Power Act** in order to help clear the air over Texas cities and fight global warming. The bill has bi-partisan support and passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee in similar form during the last Congress.

"Cleaning up our power plants is critical to the health of Texans. Unless we get pollution reductions soon from coal-burning plants in Northeast Texas, it is unlikely that the Dallas/Ft. Worth area will meet clean air goals. The Jeffords plan requires real reductions, but the Bush 'Clear Skies' bill will delay clean up until 2018," said Tom 'Smitty' Smith, Director of Public Citizen's Texas Office.

The Clean Power Act deals with the oldest and dirtiest "grandfathered" power plants that are responsible for over 1,300 deaths each year in Texas, as well as thousands of asthma attacks. Over 800 premature deaths would be avoided by putting the Clean Power Act into effect.

"The Clean Power Act would limit the mercury emitted by coal-burning power plants by 90% at all sources. Mercury is a toxic metal that can cause birth defects, mental retardation and learning disabilities. Eating contaminated fish is the major exposure for most people, and the health of people and of the fish must be protected," stated Karen Hadden, Deputy Director of the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition. "Texas is the worst state in the nation for power plant mercury pollution, with over 9,300 pounds per year. We need real mercury clean-up at all sources, as in the Clean Power Act, so that Texas doesn't get even more mercury pollution due to the trading of credits allowed by Bush' plan. Senators Hutchison and Cornyn should get on board with the Clean Power Act to assure that the health of Texans is protected."

Unlike the Bush air pollution plan, the **Clean Power Act** includes mandatory limits on emissions of carbon dioxide, which causes global warming.

"This "Climate Vision" plan is déjà vu for those of us who have seen George Bush's previous attempts at voluntary emissions reductions fail miserably. Relying on the goodwill of big polluters to clean up gets us little more than a lot of hot air," said Peter Altman, Executive Director of the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Coalition. In 1999, then-Governor Bush initiated and backed a plan to

encourage industry to voluntarily reduce emissions at the state's oldest and dirtiest plants. But the TCEQ reported back to the legislature that the effort only yielded a 3% emissions reduction, nowhere near enough to address the state's critical air pollution problems. The legislature threw out the voluntary program and replaced it with a mandatory cleanup requirement.

"The United States has had a voluntary carbon clean-up plan since 1990 and the problem has only gotten worse. Our emissions have increased significantly during this time. "The world's largest reinsurer, Munich Re, predicts that by 2050 global warming will cost the global economy more than \$300 billion every year. We are long overdue for concrete goals with real timelines to achieve real results," continued Altman.

As documented last year in the "Climate Action Report 2002," put together by the White House Council on Environmental Quality and other agencies, the United States will be severely impacted by global warming, with impacts including:

- ❖ In Dallas, one study projects that by 2050 heat-related deaths during a typical summer could triple, from about 35 heat-related deaths per summer to over 100.
- ❖ Climate change could increase concentrations of ground-level ozone. Currently, ground-level ozone concentrations exceed national ozone health standards in some areas across the state. The Houston-Galveston area is classified as a "severe" nonattainment area, and the El Paso area is classified as in "serious" non-attainment. Ground-level ozone has been shown to aggravate respiratory illnesses such as asthma, reduce existing lung function, and induce respiratory inflammation.
- ❖ Sea level rise could lead to flooding of low-lying property, loss of coastal wetlands, erosion of beaches, saltwater contamination of drinking water, and decreased longevity of low-lying roads, causeways, and bridges. At Galveston, sea level already is rising by 25 inches per century, and it is likely to rise another 38 inches by 2100. Brown shrimp catch in the U.S. Gulf Coast could fall 25% with only a 10-inch rise in sea level.
- ❖ Evaporation is likely to increase with warmer climate, it could result in lower river flow and lower lake levels, particularly in the summer. If streamflow and lake levels drop, groundwater also could be reduced. In addition, more intense precipitation could increase flooding.
- ❖ As climate warms, agricultural production patterns could shift northward. Increases in climate variability could make adaptation by farmers more difficult. Warmer climates and less soil moisture due to increased evaporation may increase the need for irrigation. However, these same conditions could decrease water supplies, which also may be needed by natural ecosystems, urban populations, industry, and other sectors.
- ❖ Texas, climate change could weaken and stress trees, making them more susceptible to pine bark beetle outbreaks. Semi-arid grasslands and shrublands are very sensitive to changes in rainfall season and in the amount of rainfall, and could be affected adversely by warmer, drier conditions.

Energy Daily is reporting today that Senator James Inhofe says the Senate may impose carbon limits on Bush's power plant bill. Inhofe and Bush have pledged to fight such restrictions. Inhofe's prediction puts greater emphasis on how individual Senators will vote on this issue and creates a test in particular for Senators Hutchison and Cornyn as to whether they will vote in the best interests of the state of Texas by supporting carbon dioxide limits and real power plant pollution reductions.

For other impacts documented in the report, please see

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/content/ImpactsStateImpactsTX.html>

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