

CELEBRATING **40 YEARS** OF VICTORIES

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

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NEWSMAGAZINE

YES WE CAN! *But Will We?*

Examining Obama's Environmental Agenda



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Farewell After 40 Years

THIS YEAR MARKS the 40th anniversary of Friends of the Earth's founding by the visionary environmental leader David Brower. He approached environmental problems from a global perspective and recognized that pollution does not respect national boundaries. With this in mind, our organization spread into Europe and beyond. Today, with member groups in 77 countries, Friends of the Earth International is the largest global environmental advocacy network in the world.

Under Brower's leadership, Friends of the Earth launched the first major climate campaign of the environmental movement in 1970 with a successful fight to stop the supersonic transport (SST). Our key concern in challenging this new technology was that commercial fleets of super-fast, sonic-booming commercial jetliners for the wealthy would harm the Earth's stratosphere.

I had my first experience with congressional advocacy when I volunteered in 1970 for Friends of the Earth and joined in the SST battle. The variety of creative advocacy astonished me as I participated in this David versus Goliath struggle. Friends of the Earth utilized grassroots letter writing, newspaper ads, input from liberal and conservative economists, budget priority arguments, and knowledge of congressional procedures, in addition to the environmental arguments put forth in door-to-door visits to senators and representatives. These tactics and strategies led to many victories in the ensuing years.

For four decades Friends of the Earth has carried the torch of progres-



sive advocacy, never losing sight of the importance of pushing for far-reaching changes in our highly polluting society. We have led efforts that secured new environmental laws, won major court victories, carried out successful consumer and corporate campaigns to safeguard public health, and blocked numerous attacks on our environmental protections.

President Obama has a challenging task, for it is clear that he needs to do far more than rectify the devastation caused by the Bush administration policies over the last eight years. Doing that would merely return our nation to the environmentally unacceptable and unhealthy position we were in at the turn of the new millennium.

Given the collapse of the global economy, timid changes and tinkering at the edges are not going to be sufficient to change the dangerous course of human civilization. Bold leadership in the mold of Franklin Roosevelt is needed to rectify the economic and environmental injustice that is damaging so much of our world today.

We have an extraordinary opportunity with President Obama to make the kind of change he preached about during the Presidential campaign. I always want Friends of the Earth to represent change you can

believe in, the kind of change that can transform the current unsustainable economic system into a different model, a model that encourages life to flourish on Earth.

After 40 years of work for Friends of the Earth and for the Environmental Policy Center and Institute, which merged with Friends of the Earth in 1989, I am retiring this year. I look forward to pursuing my love of teaching and writing, but will also continue to raise support for Friends of the Earth.

I want to thank you for the many years of support and I hope that all of our members will find a way to honor and celebrate our 40th anniversary this year and to welcome our new President when that person is formally on board. Even as we recall our many victories, we should also renew our determination to make sweeping changes in the way our nation operates and in the way the global economic system rapidly turns vital natural resources into waste.

We will be hosting anniversary events in several locations throughout the year, including San Francisco, New York and Washington, DC, and will keep you apprised of opportunities to participate.

If you would like to host your own 40th Anniversary event and invite your friends to become Friends of the Earth members at this crucial time for the environment, please contact Lisa Matthes at lmattes@foe.org or 202-222-0730 in order to receive a packet of information that you can use to help us build broader support.

David Brower

Voice of the Social Justice Movement Rings Out in Brazil

HEALTH AND Environment
Campaigner Ian Illuminato joined more than 100,000 activists in Belém, Brazil, this winter for the World Social Forum (WSF) – the social justice movement’s reaction to globalization. Friends of the Earth’s nanotechnology campaign maintained a huge presence at the forum — hundreds of people attended the four workshops we organized to examine nanotechnology’s implications for human and environmental health, and the

health of workers. Ian also helped organize and spoke at the opening day of the first World Sciences and Democracy Forum. The Forum was attended by more than 200 people from around the world and created a platform for NGOs, scientists, social activists and the public to talk about taking scientific research out of the hands of corporations and giving the public greater say in how research affects the rest of the planet. To read Ian’s blog, go to www.foe.org/wsf_blog. ○

New Report Investigates Nano-silver

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH U.S. and its sister organizations in South Korea (KFEM) and Australia will release a new extensive report this spring that examines nano-silver particles and the potential dangers for human and environmental health. There are already hundreds of products contain-

ing nano-silver on the market, including clothing, cosmetics, baby products and even food. South Korea is a major global producer of products containing nano-silver and is also one of the largest global investors in nanotechnology research and development. ○

VICTORY! Landmark Global Warming Lawsuit Settled

A FEDERAL LAWSUIT that sought to force the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to address the global warming implications of their overseas financing activities was settled after more than six years. The suit, brought by Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and several U.S. cities, claimed that the two U.S. agencies financed fossil fuel projects without assessing whether the projects contributed to global warming or impacted the U.S. environment, as

they were required to do under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under the settlement, Ex-Im will begin taking greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into account in evaluating fossil fuel projects and create a carbon policy, and OPIC will reduce GHGs associated with projects by 20 percent over the next ten years. Both agencies will provide more financing for renewable energy. The suit opened up the courthouse doors for the first time to victims injured by climate change. ○

Get involved in issues and debates affecting human health and the planet by signing up for Friends of the Earth action alerts and bi-weekly newsletters by email. Go to www.foe.org and enter your email address in the box provided in the left-hand navigation bar.

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The Earth Just Got a Few More Friends

By Elizabeth Bast

EVERY TWO YEARS, the Friends of the Earth International network gathers for the Biannual General Meeting of the federation. At this meeting, representatives from each Friends of the Earth group come together to decide on matters of importance to the federation – from programs, to communications, to fundraising, to the oversight of the network. This is also the time when we vote new member groups into the network.

Last November, at the general meeting in Honduras, Friends of the Earth International welcomed eight exciting new groups to the network. All of these organizations have been established in their own countries for some time, and each brings impressive experience and a unique voice to the federation.

Liberia. The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)/Friends of the Earth Liberia, directed by Goldman Prize winner Silas Siakor, works on a range of issues including protecting the country's valuable natural resources from corrupt governance and mismanagement, particularly in the forest sector. Liberia is emerging from a turbulent period of dictatorship and civil war, and SDI



Past and present Friends of the Earth International Chairpersons Meena Raman and Nnimmo Bassey in Honduras.

hopes to create a country in which natural resource management is guided by the principles of sustainability and good governance and benefits all Liberians. Website: www.sdiliberia.org/

Malawi. Citizens for Justice (CFJ)/Friends of the Earth Malawi works with and on behalf of the country's largely subsistence farming communities that are adversely affected by unsustainable natural resource management. CFJ was formed in response to proposals for

uranium mining in Malawi, and CFJ has insisted that the health, safety and welfare of the people near the proposed mine sites are adequately addressed in advance of mining operations. CFJ facilitates public access to information, therefore increasing public participation. They emphasize empowering and promoting the rights of women and children in Malawi.

Mexico. Otros Mundos/Friends of the Earth Mexico works to address the concerns of Mexico's rural,

History Lesson: How Friends of the Earth International Began

Ed Matthews was working in Paris in 1969 when he wrote Friends of the Earth founder David Brower suggesting that environmental problems spanned international borders and that Friends of the Earth should expand its reach. Brower asked him to represent the organization in Europe and within a year Ed had established offices in England, The Netherlands and Sweden. The success of those groups was grounded in the belief that every nation's environmental movement must be expressed by each culture in its own terms in order to solve the dilemmas they face. And his legacy lives on in the ever-expanding network of international Friends of the Earth groups. These groups adhere to a core set of values agreed upon at the international level but have the flexibility to meet those goals in their own way. It is this achievement that he is most proud of and deeply satisfied by. His wife Patricia serves on the board of directors and through her participation, Ed remains involved.

indigenous and peasant population. They work with people from cooperatives, communities and social organizations to alleviate human and social rights violations. One of their priority issues is water, and they are working to secure water as a human right as well as to fight against the construction of large hydroelectric dams and to support communities negatively impacted by these dams. Website: www.otrosmundoschiapas.org

Mozambique. Justica Ambiental/Friends of the Earth Mozambique goes by JA!, which means 'Now!' in English. They work closely with communities to end deforestation, halt pollution, stop dam-building, monitor oil exploration and increase people's access to clean water. JA! is committed to free rivers and clean water for all, environmental law and policy monitoring, promotion of renewable energies and a toxic-free environment.

Tanzania. The Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT)/Friends of the Earth Tanzania was established to ensure the rights of the people to access the country's land and resources. Tanzania's environment and natural resources are under attack and LEAT works at all levels of policy, legal and grassroots advocacy to improve environmental laws, conservation, and governance of natural resources – particularly with regards to mining issues and human rights.

Timor Leste. The Haburas Foundation/Friends of the Earth Timor Leste was formed by a group of Timorese students in 1998 during



Representatives from the new member groups.

the Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste. It is the oldest and most active national environmental group in the country. Haburas, also directed by a Goldman Prize winner, Demetrio de Carvalho, uses a wide network of local community groups and relies on traditional Timorese culture to promote better environmental management practices that also respond to the developmental needs of local communities.

Sri Lanka. The Center for Environmental Justice (CEJ)/Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka promotes environmental good governance and environmental justice in Sri Lanka. CEJ was established in 2004 as a public interest environmental organization to engage in environmental campaigning and legal advocacy nationwide. They work closely with local communities and impacted peoples and support them through a broad range of activities. Website: <http://www.ejustice.lk>

Uganda. The National Association of Professional Environmentalists/Friends of the Earth Uganda advocates for the sustainable use of natural resources in the areas of water, energy and forests. They also lobby for the transformation of the Ugandan government to ensure transparency and accountability in Uganda's development processes.

In addition to accepting these new groups, the federation also elected Nnimmo Bassey, the Executive Director of Friends of the Earth Nigeria, as the Chairperson for Friends of the Earth International. He succeeds Meena Raman, who has stepped down as Chair but remains closely involved with the network through the Executive Committee, the governing board of the network.

The Executive Committee members were also elected at the general meeting, and include representatives from Uruguay, Croatia, Guatemala, Bangladesh, South Africa, and England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Elizabeth Bast from Friends of the Earth U.S. is also serving for a second term on the Executive Committee. ○

For global, multilingual coverage of international events and activities, check out Real World Radio, an alternative news source sponsored by Friends of the Earth International: <http://www.radiomundoreal.fm>

Solar Fueling Stations:

Building a Zero Emissions Transportation Future



Envision Solar's Solar Grove at Kyocera Headquarters, San Diego, CA.

By Sara Schedler

RECENT REPORTS INDICATE that greenhouse gas emissions are growing much more rapidly than expected and pushing beyond leading scientists' projected worst-case scenarios. Transportation currently accounts for more than one-third of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and is rapidly growing. In order to quickly and substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and achieve energy independence as a nation, we must fundamentally transform our vehicles and the fuel

they use. Plug-in electric vehicles, fueled by renewable energy sources such as solar, offer a vital solution to achieving these goals.

Rising from relative obscurity just a few years ago, the plug-in electric vehicle is now widely touted by opinion leaders, engineers, environmentalists, government officials, and national security leaders as the car that will revolutionize the way America—and the world—drives. China recently released its first plug-in car for commercial use and numerous automakers, both domestic and foreign, are working quickly

to release their own plug-in vehicles. Recognizing the important role plug-in vehicles can play in solving our greenhouse gas and oil dependence problems, President Obama has set goals of putting one million plug-ins on the road by 2015, requiring that at least 50 percent of all federal fleet purchases be plug-ins by 2012, and converting the White House fleet to plug-ins (security-permitting).

Today, a plug-in charged from the cleaner California electric grid can reduce emissions by up to 62 percent compared to a conventional car. But, when the electricity used to fuel plug-

What is a Plug-In Vehicle?

Plug-in cars look and feel like conventional cars, but are powered, in whole or in part, by batteries that are charged via electricity. Plug-in vehicles can be charged by plugging them into a 120 volt outlet, which is standard in most homes and garages.

There are two main types of plug-ins: the Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) and the Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV). A PHEV is like a conventional hybrid car, such as a Toyota Prius, with a more powerful battery that generally allows for 20 to 60 miles of all-electric driving before switching to a normal gasoline-electric hybrid engine. A BEV, also known as a “pure electric car,” does not have a gasoline engine and runs solely on batteries. Many BEVs have a range of up to 100 miles or more.



in cars is produced from 100 percent renewable sources such as solar energy, greenhouse gas emissions from cars can approach zero. Friends of the Earth is pursuing this vision and working with legislators, regulatory agencies, and businesses to develop solar-powered charging stations (i.e. sun fuel stations) that can fuel plug-in cars directly from the sun.

A solar fueling station is essentially a carport upon which solar panels are mounted and underneath which cars park and charge from provided outlets. These stations not only charge cars, but can also feed the grid with clean energy or provide energy for the onsite host building(s) when cars are not being charged.

The benefits of solar fueling stations are manifold. They dramatically

contribute to public and environmental health by reducing smog and particulate matter. From a national security standpoint, plug-ins charged from domestic solar energy reduce the need to rely on dwindling supplies of increasingly costly oil. Solar fueling stations will also significantly contribute towards the emerging green economy and help support a burgeoning green collar workforce.

Importantly, by using existing built space such as parking lots to generate fuel, solar fueling stations encourage infill development and cut down on the use of virgin land for solar power generation. Solar fueling stations have the potential to generate significant amounts of fuel. For example, there are approximately 90 million parking spaces in California and if

just one-third of all parking spaces in the state were converted to solar fueling stations, they could generate enough fuel to power the average daily commute for the majority of Californian cars on the road.

In order to avert the worst of climate change effects, plug-in vehicles and solar-powered charging infrastructure provide an important near-term solution to dramatically reducing greenhouse gas and other pollution from vehicles. This is just one of many tools in our tool belt. We must also work to get people out of their cars altogether through fast and user-friendly transit and promote smart-growth development which provides families with a more walkable and livable community-oriented environment. ○

GIVING

Help Save the Planet One Month at a Time



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH members who sign up to make a monthly donation through the Earth Keeper Society help us ensure effective campaigning and victories throughout the year. By giving a fixed amount each month you can support our campaigns without the financial strain of a larger, one-time gift – as

little as \$10 a month can add up to huge support for the environment. Your reliable contribution helps us exert pressure on polluters, raise awareness and mobilize public action, create meaningful legislation and work to enact the most powerful and effective environmental laws. ○

Notice: Annual Meeting of the Membership

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH will host its annual board meeting, **Monday, June 15th at 12:30 p.m.**, in the Washington, D.C. office. Jayni Chase and David Zwick are running uncontested for the two open slots on the Friends of the

Earth Board of Directors. Members may cast votes at the annual meeting. If you would like to attend, contact Lisa Matthes at lmattes@foe.org or by phone at 202-222-0730. Members may also vote by proxy ballot. To do so, copy

or clip the mailing label from this newsmagazine and mail your vote to Board Election, Friends of the Earth, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC, 20036 or fax 202-783-0444.



Jayni Chase, Founder and CEO, Center for Environmental Education

Jayni founded the Center for Environmental Education, a nationally based non-profit organization which advances environmental education. She

is also the author of *Blueprint for a Green School*, an environmental education resource guide. Jayni is the recipient of numerous awards from organizations such as The Audubon Society, NRDC, The Environmental Media Association, Women For, U.S. Environmental Film Festival, and the Rainforest Alliance. Most recently Jayni participated in the Clinton Global Initiative and, along with Earth Day Network (where she is a board member), she is launching a new ambitious initiative, GREEN reModel. Jayni currently serves as Chair of the Development Committee for the Board of Friends of the Earth.



David Zwick, Founder, Clean Water Action

David's work over the past 30 years has focused on helping grassroots citizen organizations form, grow and campaign successfully. In the fall of 2007, he stepped down as President

of Clean Water Action, which he founded in 1972. Since then he has been a Fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics for a semester and later worked on several election campaigns. David is Treasurer of America Votes, a national organization that works with its partner groups on election projects. He is the author of *Water Wasteland*, which helped shape the Clean Water Act, and co-author of the bestseller, *Who Runs Congress*. He holds a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. David currently serves as Treasurer for the Board of Friends of the Earth. ○

EVENTS

DC Celebrates

JUST DAYS PRIOR to the Presidential Inauguration Friends of the Earth's Global Stewardship Council held an intimate reception at the home of board member Peyton West in Washington, DC. Nearly 50 area supporters and several Friends of the Earth campaigners came together to celebrate our recent successes and share thoughts about our goals for the upcoming year. All of the funds raised at the reception will be

used to support our campaigns to combat global warming, prevent air and water pollution, and keep toxins out of consumer products. Thank you to all who attended and pledged support.

For information on becoming a member of the Global Stewardship Council and local events in your area, please contact Hillary Blank at hblank@foe.org or 415-544-0790 ext. 19. ○



Event attendees gathered on January 18th to celebrate Friends of the Earth's recent victories.

Help us Celebrate 40 Years of Friends of the Earth!



Tom Stokes (far right), Bunny Gabel (center) and NYC activists fight the Westway interstate highway and development scheme in NYC.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH is looking for stories from long-time members from ten, twenty, thirty and forty years ago to include in our 40th Anniversary commemorative news-magazines coming out this year.

Many of you have supported us since our founding by David Brower in 1969. Some of you joined in the 1980s and still others of you came on board in the years since.

Send us your recollections of key victories, environmental battles, inspirational leaders, local landmarks we helped protect, and other

memories connected with being a Friends of the Earth member.

We will print excerpts from all of the top entries received. The best submission will win a \$100 gift certificate from Patagonia. Please submit your entry by May 1st to be considered for the prize. Thanks for helping us celebrate!

Please address your submissions to:

Marsha Mather-Thrift
Director of Development
311 California Street, Suite 510
San Francisco, CA 94104.

Or email them to slozano@foe.org.

CONTRIBUTE

Planet Earth Advocacy Fund: Honoring Brent Blackwelder

AFTER NEARLY 40 YEARS working for and then leading Friends of the Earth (and previously the Environmental Policy Institute which merged with us), our President and beloved leader, Brent Blackwelder, will be retiring during the coming year.

Named as an outstanding environmental luminary in *Vanity Fair* magazine and the *Washingtonian*, among others, Brent has led Friends of the Earth in growing its international network to include groups in 77 countries. His vision has inspired unique and crucial efforts that have stopped attempts to destroy our rivers, oceans, mountains, air, wildlife and climate. On Capitol Hill and elsewhere, he has taken principled stands that have meant victory for the voiceless among human communities and within our natural world.

In honor of Brent's retirement, Friends of the Earth has created a special "readiness" fund to take advantage of breaking opportunities and teachable moments to win victories. The funds will be used to provide a special boost to our campaigns on energy and climate, to protect fragile ocean life and coral reefs, to stop egregious practices such as tar sands extraction and mountain top mining, and to counter similar threats that demand quick and decisive action.

We hope that you, our members and supporters, will make a special donation this year to honor Brent's four decades of leadership and unstinting dedication to environmental protection.

We will be hosting events throughout the year which will offer opportu-



nities to donate. You can also mail your check and good wishes to our office at 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, Ste. 600, Washington, DC 20036.

For further information or to facilitate stock or other donations, please contact Marsha Mather-Thrift, Director of Development at 1-866-217-8499 or via email at mmather@foe.org.



photo credit: Jack Thielepape

YES WE CAN!

Examining Obama's

Yes We Can! But Will We? President Obama campaigned on a message of hope and change, but will the change he brings be sufficient to save our planet?

By Nick Berning

THERE'S REASON BEYOND President Barack Obama's campaign slogan to believe he will bring change to Washington. In his first months in office, Obama has already engineered a massive economic stimulus package, signed legislation protecting women's right to equal pay for equal work, ordered the Guantanamo detention center to close, and expanded health coverage to more than 10 million children. Obama's early actions have also benefited the environment. He has directed billions of dollars toward clean energy, ordered the EPA to reevaluate a Bush-era decision blocking "clean cars" legislation, and

appointed top scientists to influential positions in his administration.

But given the vast environmental challenges we face, will the change Obama brings be enough? Our civilization is on a wholly unsustainable path. We are burning through the world's natural resources, and our reliance on fossil fuels has created a climate crisis that will at a minimum lead to food and water shortages for humans and the extinction of many species. If human civilization is to survive, we will need to radically re-work the way we live, dramatically reducing consumption and transitioning to 100 percent clean energy. And the change must take place soon.

During the campaign, Obama told *Rolling Stone* that "a new energy policy that speaks to our dependence on foreign oil and deals seriously with global warming" was one of his top priorities. Shortly after the election, Obama said "any nation that's willing to join the cause of combating climate change will have an ally in the United States of America." And in his inaugural address, he said "We can no longer consume the world's resources without regard to effect."

Clearly, Obama will move away from the harmful policies of

President George W. Bush. But at the same time, it would be a mistake to underestimate the influence fossil fuel industries continue to hold in Washington, the power of the status quo, and the allure of incremental change even when only sweeping change will do.

Obama's record isn't perfect. He voted for a deeply flawed 2005 energy bill that perpetuated our dependence on oil and gas, he has been a booster of environmentally harmful corn ethanol, and he continues to be open to energy sources that are not part of the solution, including nuclear power and coal. Obama's campaign platform recommended reducing global warming pollution too slowly, with domestic emission reduction targets for the year 2020 that are too weak. And even where Obama wishes to exercise bold leadership, Congress will act as a constraint. In the Senate, not all Democrats are as progressive on climate issues as they should be, and Obama will need their support plus the backing of some Republicans to pass legislation.

One reason for optimism is that in the face of the worst economic crisis in decades, Obama hasn't run from his plans to revamp America's energy infrastructure and tackle global warming. Instead, he's re-empha-



Talk radio personality Rush Limbaugh's incendiary remark that he hopes Obama

fails is the wrong attitude but unfortunately many in the Republican leadership are siding with him. We need bi-partisan support for solutions to our nation's problems, not the same old giveaways to polluters and denials of global warming.

photo credit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ultravod/>

But Will We?

Environmental Agenda

sized them, arguing that one of the best ways to create jobs in the short-term and keep down the cost of energy in the long term is to invest in wind farms, solar installations, public transit, home insulation and other green programs. Obama has also been clear that the U.S. must end the Bush administration's go-it-alone stance and has noted that international engagement is crucial to winning the climate fight. This bodes well for what are likely to be difficult international climate talks in Copenhagen in December 2009.

If Obama is to succeed as president, his tenure must result in changes as sweeping as those achieved by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, and Abraham Lincoln. There will be victories as well as setbacks along the way. One thing that's certain is that environmental organizations such as Friends of the Earth and grassroots activists will continue to play an important role. Obama's success will depend on what the rest of us do—the support, and pressure, that we provide. It's time to get to work.

Will Obama turn away from false energy choices?

As mounting evidence makes it clear global warming is real, polluting industries that once denied science now try to co-opt it, arguing their dirty products are solutions. Will the Obama administration reject these false claims?



Friends of the Earth is building support for sweeping changes from the Obama administration.

The biofuel industry has long tried to market corn ethanol as a “green” fuel, even though pressure for land on which to grow corn and other biofuel feedstocks leads to deforestation. The coal industry has spent tens of millions of dollars trying to connect its product to the word “clean,” even though coal is the dirtiest form of energy there is. And the failed nuclear industry is trying to attract taxpayer subsidies for new “low carbon” reactors, ignoring the fact that the industry has no solution for dangerous radioactive waste.

On all of these fronts, President Obama's legislative record, campaign platform, and early actions as president provide reason for optimism, but also concern.

Biofuels may end up being the dirty energy source over which we end up disagreeing most with the White House. Largely because of the power of the agribusiness lobby, biofuels enjoy a large base of support in Congress and

are heavily subsidized. As a senator from Illinois, where corn for ethanol is a major crop, Obama was a big biofuels supporter. However, after several scientific studies indicated biofuels cause more environmental harm than previously thought, Obama showed some willingness to modify his position. For example, as the campaign progressed, he talked less about “corn ethanol” and more about “advanced biofuels” (which have the potential to be more earth-friendly—though there's no guarantee this will be the case).

“Obama's made some progress on this issue, but his choice of former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack to lead the Agriculture Department is troubling,” said Kate McMahon, a leader of Friends of the Earth's biofuels campaign. “Vilsack is an ally of corporate agribusiness who has supported ethanol subsidies in the past.” On the other hand, McMahon noted, the new Secretary of Energy, Steven Chu, has spoken out against corn ethanol and called it highly inefficient.

While Chu may be an ally in the fight against corn ethanol, he could prove more troublesome on the issue of **new nuclear reactors**. During the campaign, Obama expressed openness to nuclear as a source of energy, but only if substantial hurdles, including safety issues and radioactive waste, can be addressed. Unfortunately, during his confirmation hearings, Chu advocated moving

(continued on page 12)

forward with new reactors before these problems have been solved.

“That’s a big distinction, and we’re going to push Chu to stick to Obama’s campaign position,” said Erich Pica, who directs Friends of the Earth’s domestic programs. “We shouldn’t be building new reactors when waste and safety problems have not been addressed.”

In practice, the fight over nuclear power will likely come down to whether taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill when the nuclear industry defaults on loans. The industry has been unable to attract private financing for financially risky reactor projects and will need loan guarantees from the government before construction can begin. The Congressional Budget Office predicts the industry will default on most of these loans, and taxpayers will be stuck with the bill. Friends of the Earth defeated an attempt by Utah Senator Bob Bennett to stick up to \$50 billion in nuclear loan guarantees into the stimulus package passed in February. If we can persuade Obama to oppose future congressional attempts to pass this pre-emptive bailout for the nuclear

Obama’s success will depend on what the rest of us do—the support, and pressure, that we provide.

industry, we will keep proposed reactors from being built.

The Obama administration may be most closely aligned with us when it comes to rolling back our nation’s dependence on **dirty coal**. While Obama has occasionally used the misleading term “clean coal” to refer to a technology that doesn’t yet exist in commercial form and likely never will, he has also spoken of our need to turn away from fossil fuels. And Energy Secretary Chu has called coal his “worst nightmare.” The cap on carbon emissions Obama supports would make coal much more expensive and likely lead to a phase out of coal-fired power plants.

Re-thinking Transportation

Obama has supported stronger fuel economy standards and cleaner fuels, but will he get to the root of the problem and give people cleaner options than cars?

Transportation causes about a third of our country’s global warming pollution. One way to reduce this pollution is to make cars and trucks more efficient; another is to use cleaner fuels; and another is to reduce driving altogether, with investments in public transportation, passenger rail, and walkable and bikeable communities.

Obama has been a leader in some of these areas. As a senator, he worked to improve fuel economy standards for cars and trucks, and after the energy bill of 2007 strengthened these standards, Obama pledged to push for further improvements. Similarly, he has promoted a transition away from oil and toward cleaner fuels. While the biofuels that Obama favored in the past have turned out to be as bad as oil, another new fuel—electricity—may be a better option. As the U.S. turns to clean energy sources such as wind and solar, electricity will be a less-polluting fuel for vehicles.

Obama’s Green Team



Energy and Climate Czar Carol Browner

PLUSES: Substantial experience; office in White House
MINUSES: Only accomplished incremental changes in the Clinton administration, bolder change needed now



Energy Secretary Steven Chu

PLUSES: He’s a Nobel-prize-winning scientist, calls coal a “nightmare,” and criticizes corn ethanol
MINUSES: He’s open to new nuclear reactors, and “synthetic biology” to manipulate nature



EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson

PLUSES: Put New Jersey’s strong global warming plan in place
MINUSES: N.J. activists faulted her for failing to clean up sites polluted by toxic chemicals



Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood

PLUSES: Supported transit funding while in Congress; joined congressional bike caucus
MINUSES: Lousy overall environmental record, little indication of transformative thinking that’s needed

Green Scissors Makes Another Cut

Friends of the Earth is sharpening our Green Scissors and will be releasing a new report this spring that examines various subsidies that encourage environmental degradation. The report includes an in-depth analysis of the tax code and other federal incentives for dirty energy, unsustainable development and resource management. We are already finding that over five years the biofuel industry will receive nearly as much federal support as the oil and gas industry (\$33.8 billion for biofuels and \$38.2 billion for oil and gas). This report should be a starting point for President Obama's "line-by-line" analysis of the tax code to rid ourselves of unnecessary spending. Check in at www.foe.org for updates.

Obama has pushed for a rapid introduction of plug-in hybrid cars into the marketplace (such cars can be plugged into regular electric outlets and travel for 30 to 40 miles before switching over to gas).

Unfortunately, making cars more efficient and powering them with cleaner fuels will only do so much. "What we ultimately need is to have fewer cars on the road, driving shorter distances—and that means ensuring there are clean, affordable, convenient alternatives," said Colin Peppard, who manages Friends of the Earth's transportation campaign. "The best ways to accomplish this are by being smart about how we develop and grow, and by expanding cleaner transportation alternatives, including public transit, passenger rail, carpooling, and walking and biking. We'll be pushing Obama to embrace such changes."

While Obama, as a former elected official from Chicago, has been a strong supporter of smart planning and public transportation, he hasn't yet embraced the complete overhaul of our transportation system that is needed. The economic stimulus package he signed in February contained roughly \$15 billion dollars for clean transportation infrastructure, but it also included more than \$30 billion

that could go to new roads and lock in future global warming pollution.

Likewise, new Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, a former Republican congressman, has in the past voted for smart transportation investments but has not shown the broader vision that is needed. The administration will face its largest test on this front soon. Every six years, the federal transportation bill comes up for renewal. That bill comes up for consideration this year and could be worth more than \$500 billion.

Restoring Integrity to the EPA

The EPA was weakened by Bush, but can be a key driver of progress under Obama.

For eight years, Bush administration appointees in charge of the Environmental Protection Agency did all they could to keep the agency from protecting the environment. The most nefarious appointee, Administrator Stephen Johnson, repeatedly overrode science-based recommendations from career EPA staff, disregarding the Supreme Court's landmark *Mass v. EPA* global warming ruling, blocking states trying to limit pollution from cars and trucks, allowing unsafe levels of mercury emissions from power

plants, and weakening pesticide safety standards.

"Johnson was one of the worst EPA administrators in history, and our country is a less healthy place because of it," said Friends of the Earth President Brent Blackwelder. "There's no question whether the Obama administration will be better—of course it will. The question is whether it will go far enough."

Already, Obama has ordered his EPA to reconsider a Bush-era decision that prevented California and 14 other states from limiting global warming pollution from cars and trucks. And the new EPA administrator, Lisa Jackson, has promised to put science back in its rightful place as the basis of EPA decision making. Jackson previously served as New Jersey's Commissioner of Environmental Protection and earned plaudits for her efforts to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions, though she has also been criticized by some local activists for not doing enough to stem other types of pollution.

One of Jackson's biggest challenges will be how she responds to the *Mass v. EPA* ruling in which the Supreme Court identified carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as pollutants. The Supreme Court held that the EPA has the authority to limit emissions of these gases.

"If Congress does not rapidly enact a comprehensive policy limiting global warming pollution, the ball will be in Obama's and Jackson's court," said Friends of the Earth's international programs director Elizabeth Bast. "Congress or the administration must act quickly if the United States intends to be a credible participant in the international climate negotiations in Copenhagen in December." ○

Breathe a Sigh of Relief for Clean Air

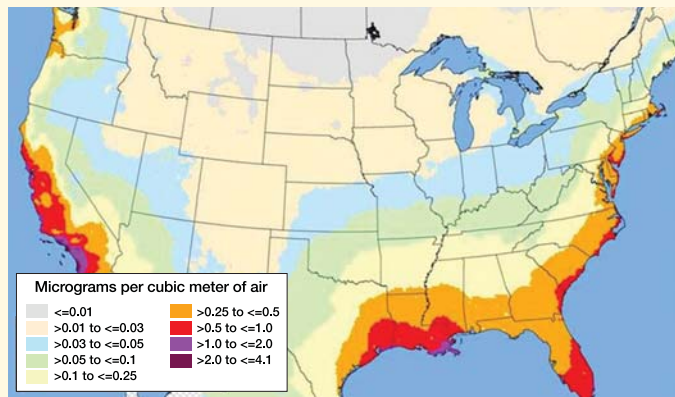
By John Kaltenstein

FOR YEARS FRIENDS OF THE EARTH has worked with the U.N. agency responsible for improving maritime safety and pollution standards – the International Maritime Organization (IMO) – to reduce toxic air emissions from ships worldwide. Building on our success in establishing stronger international air pollution regulations for vessels, our next goal is to implement the strongest protections available under that standard in U.S. waters.

Friends of the Earth is now working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Canadian government to establish an IMO-sanctioned Emission Control Area (ECA) that would impose stringent air pollution standards on all vessels along the North American coast. In accordance with MARPOL Annex VI, an international IMO treaty governing ship air pollution, a country (or countries) may submit an application to the IMO seeking more stringent vessel air pollution emission standards where necessary to safeguard public health and the environment. We are asking that these ECA protections extend along our entire U.S. coast and as far as possible within U.S. waters, including the waters of Alaska and Hawaii, to assure that all U.S. and Canadian residents are protected from harmful ship emissions.

If approved this year, the ECA will consist of two major features. First, it will force ocean-going vessels to use progressively cleaner fuel. When ships enter the protective zone they will have to switch from using dirty bunker fuel to a fuel lower in sulfur content. By 2015, sulfur content in vessel fuel will drop from 1 percent to approximately 0.1 percent. A decrease in sulfur content directly correlates with a reduction in harmful particulate matter emissions, which are known to cause respiratory ailments, cancer, heart conditions, and premature mortality. By 2015, sulfur oxides and particulate matter from large ships will also be reduced – by 96 percent and 85 percent, respectively, from current levels. Sulfur oxides are responsible for respiratory illnesses, haze, and acid rain. In 2002 in the United States, between 2,000 and 5,000 people died prematurely due to ship emissions, and that number will continue to climb unless ECA-caliber protections are established.

Second, the ECA will require ships to install advanced technology to reduce harmful emissions from ships.



Estimated reductions in particle matter concentrations expected by 2020 with a U.S. ECA.

By 2016, new vessels entering the protected area must achieve an 80 percent reduction in nitrogen oxide from current levels. Nitrogen oxide is responsible for creating smog, which causes respiratory problems including chest pain, exacerbation of asthma, and decreased lung function. Children, outdoor workers, and those with compromised respiratory systems are most acutely impacted by these health effects.

We expect that the North American ECA application will be ready for submission to the IMO this spring. If the application is approved by the IMO, the North American ECA would become the third ECA established in the world – after the Baltic and North Seas – to the great relief of coastal and even many inland residents, especially those living near major ports and heavily trafficked shipping corridors. ○

VICTORY! EPA Compelled to Acknowledge Cruise Ship Pollution

Eight years after we petitioned the EPA to measure the pollution discharged from cruise ships, Friends of the Earth won a lawsuit compelling the agency to act. The EPA's subsequent report confirms what we already knew – that cruise ships routinely dump massive amounts of poorly treated sewage and contaminated water into our oceans. The report finds that cruise ships are dumping bacteria, pathogens, metals, nutrients, and other pollutants harmful to human health and the environment. This report provides the final evidence Congress needs to place strong limits on cruise ship dumping to protect our coasts, beaches, shellfish beds, marine ecosystems, and marine sanctuaries. ○

The Green Ball – A Sustainability Soiree

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH is pleased to present our sixth annual San Francisco fundraiser, *The Green Ball*, hosted by **Celebrity Co-Chairs Jayni and Chevy Chase and Ed Begley, Jr.** on May 15th 2009 at the lovely, historic Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. This spectacular venue offers a perfect setting for our event focused on Friends of the Earth’s critical work to promote sustainable agriculture and protect both tropical and California forests from the deforestation threat posed by alternative fuel crops. *The Green Ball* will feature information on clean energy developments, locally-grown gourmet food, hand-selected wines, live music, special celebrity guests, and the *Green Hero* awards, honoring actress Daryl Hannah for her environmental commitment. There will also be opportunities to learn about edible tropical



plants through a special “Edible Expeditions” exhibit at the Conservatory. For information on becoming a sponsor of *The Green Ball*, please contact Hillary Blank at hblank@foe.org or 415-544-0970 ext. 19. Tickets will be available on our website and by calling (415) 544-0790 x 12. ○



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Correction: Page 15 of the summer 2008 Newsmagazine incorrectly named the *New York Times* investigative reporter who wrote FREE LUNCH. It should have read David Cay Johnston.



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