

**Talking Points for Governor Christine Todd Whitman,
Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency
at the
G8 Environmental Ministerial Meeting
Working Session on
Climate Change
Trieste, Italy**

March 3, 2001

- I would like to begin by thanking my new colleagues for the warm welcome you have extended to me and the members of our delegation.
- I am pleased to be a part of the Group of 8 Environmental Ministers and I look forward to working with you toward our shared goal of preserving and protecting the world's environment for all people for all time.
- I believe it is appropriate to begin our working sessions by talking about global climate change. The Bush Administration considers global climate change to be one the greatest environmental challenges we face.
- Increasingly, there is little room for doubt that humans are affecting the Earth's climate, that the climate change we've seen during the past century is the result of human activity, and that we must continue our efforts to stop and reverse the growth in the emission of greenhouse gases.
- If we fail to take the steps necessary to address the very real concern of global climate change, we put our people, our economies, and our way of life at risk. We must be ready to give this matter the careful and creative attention it deserves.
- As many of you know, I spent the past seven years as governor of the State of New Jersey – the most densely-populated and one of the most heavily developed states in the United States.
- My home state has just about every environmental challenge imaginable. Those challenges occupied a great deal of my time and energy while I was governor.
- One of the first things I did as New Jersey's governor was to shift the emphasis of our environmental ethos to a focus on results.

- For too long, the state government had focused on the means that were being used to reach environmental improvements instead of focusing on the results.
- By changing our focus, by reaching agreement with stakeholders on where we wanted to travel as opposed to arguing about which road was the best route to get somewhere, we were able to build successful partnerships that brought about real improvement in environmental quality.
- To cite one relevant example, the State of New Jersey has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 3.5 percent below 1990 levels by 2005. That goal has received widespread support in my home state.
- That's the sort of leadership President Bush has asked me to bring to the EPA and it's the sort of relationship I hope we will all be able to develop.
- The United States has a strong record of reducing the growth of greenhouse gas emissions in the years since Rio through voluntary programs that include industry, small business, and state and local governments..
- Since 1992, we've cut by 20 percent the growth in greenhouse emissions – and this during a time of economic growth.
- These efforts have had the collateral benefit of reducing energy costs to consumers, saving American families and businesses \$3 billion a year.
- Our efforts at promoting alternatives to automobile travel for work and pleasure have helped lead to reduced vehicle miles traveled, which, of course, reduces automobile emissions.
- These voluntary programs have proven their effectiveness in reducing greenhouse emission growth. We are ready to build on that success.
- The Bush Administration is committed to building new partnerships at the local and state level in the United States, and to working with the business community, to reduce greenhouse gases in the most cost-effective way possible.
- In last year's campaign, for example, the President proposed mandatory reduction targets for emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants from utilities, the largest source of such emissions in the United States.
- The administration is exploring approaches to following through on that commitment in the most cost-effective way, relying on market-based incentives.

- But global progress on climate change will only occur with global cooperation over the long term. President Bush understands very well the importance of working with our G8 partners and the rest of the world's nations to address the challenge climate change presents.
- As the first industrialized country to ratify the United Nations Framework Convention in Climate Change back in 1992, we remain committed to fulfilling our commitments in the Convention.
- I also understand the importance of participating in the Conference of the Parties, and I look forward to the continuation of the UNFCCC negotiations.
- I particularly want to thank those of you around the table who agreed to our request to extend the preparation time prior to COP6-bis. It is a welcome gesture from the international community.
- Let me stress here, that a favorable conclusion to the meetings in July may be possible. But as President Bush has said, an acceptable agreement must be "comprehensive, fair, and effective." That's what the United States will be looking for.
- President Pronk has already clearly highlighted the difficult issues that confront us.
- For the United States, there are particular concerns about complementarity, sinks, and the continuing lack of a plan for the developing countries to follow the lead of the industrialized nations in developing a plan to slow emissions growth.
- The United States wants to find a way to move forward on these issues. It is critical that any eventual agreement on complementarity provides maximum flexibility in using market mechanisms.
- Artificial restrictions do not make sense, either economically or environmentally. Let's keep our focus on results, not means.
- With respect to credit for domestic sinks, I want to emphasize that the entire package must be economically achievable for the United States as well as for other Parties and that domestic sinks must be part of the equation.
- Of course, we must also find a way to foster greater action in the developing countries. Our best attempts at compromise will be wasted unless developing countries are part of the overall solution.
- I do look forward to considering new ideas and proposals for breaking the deadlock of the Hague, as well as for a timely and effective way forward over the coming years.

- Lastly, I am sure you know that President Bush has initiated a review of U.S. climate policy. I am very personally involved in that review.
- I can promise that we will move quickly to complete the review and will soon be in a position to discuss more fully the manner in which we can work together on climate change.
- Thank you.