

Gore and Bush Presidential Campaigns: Environmental Issues

Compiled by Susan Campbell

We asked the Democratic and Republican candidates for president for statements on their environmental record and plans if elected. The Gore Campaign has an office in Washington State and I was able to speak to people there. The following article was written by Gore staff and has not been edited or changed. For more information, check their web site at www.algore2000.com.

The Bush Campaign does not have a local Washington State office. Their office in Texas suggested I take excerpts from their web page and that is what I have done. I have edited only by adding subheadings to make it clearer. I excerpted from all the environmental topics on the web page, then sent the finished article back to the Bush Campaign and received their approval. For more information, check the web site at www.georgewbush.com.

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Article from Gore2000 Campaign

"Thanks to Gore, the Clinton Administration is the most pro-environment in a generation." [Time Magazine, 4/19/99]

From his leadership in the House to protect air and water quality and pass the original Superfund legislation to clean up dangerous toxic waste sites; to his pioneering House and Senate efforts to fund research

into global warming, long before it was widely recognized as a serious threat; to his best-selling book about the environment, "Earth in the Balance"—Al Gore has a record of action and leadership in protecting our environment and quality of life for more than two decades.

Protecting Children and Families

Held the First Hearings on Toxic Waste. Al Gore was one of the first in Congress to tackle the issue of toxic waste by calling hearings in 1979 that revealed illegal dumping of billions of pounds of toxic chemicals. As a direct result of these hearings, Gore played a leading role in creating the "Superfund" law, which has helped clean up the worst environmental problems in the country.

Making Substantial Achievements in Toxic Waste Clean-Up. During the first six and one-half years of the Clinton-Gore Administration, 443 toxic waste dumps have been cleaned up. That is nearly three times more than were cleaned up during the previous two presidential Administrations. In addition, the Administration's budget for FY2000 includes \$1.5 billion for the Superfund program.

Fighting to Improve the Quality of Our Water. In October 1997, Vice President Gore took the lead in calling for an initiative to restore our nation's polluted waterways. This "Clean Water Action Plan" called for \$10.5 billion in restoration efforts, and additional research and prevention of urban and agricultural run-off into watersheds.

Working to Protect Our Drinking Water. As part of the Administration's Water 2000 initiative, the Vice President has announced a number of efforts to improve drinking water throughout the country. Earlier this year, Gore announced nearly \$200 million in federal loans and grants to assist more than 100 safe drinking water projects in rural America. In 1997, Gore

announced a similar program that helped fund more than 80 safe drinking water projects in 43 states and Puerto Rico. In addition, the Administration approved legislation that strengthened the Safe Drinking Water Act by requiring water utilities to inform their customers about the quality of their drinking water.

Protecting Natural Treasures

Working to Protect America's Environmental Treasures. Al Gore has taken an active role in the Administration's efforts to protect our environmental treasures. In 1998, Vice President Gore unveiled a \$7.8 billion restoration proposal to help restore the natural water flow in the Everglades. Gore has also supported efforts to ban drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in order to protect more than 19 million acres of refuge—the last intact Arctic ecosystem. In addition, the Administration took a strong stand to protect more than 10 million acres of old growth reserves in the Pacific Northwest, and to restore, protect, and revitalize 14 rivers designated as "American Heritage Rivers." In addition, the Administration has protected more than 3.2 million acres as national parks or monuments—including the creation of 13 new national park areas.

Working to Raise Awareness of Global Warming

An Early Leader in Recognizing the Implications of Global Warming. As a member of congress, Al Gore took an active role in recognizing the implications of global warming by calling for some of the first Congressional hearings on the issue. In addition, Gore sponsored legislation to study the implications of global warming and to encourage the development of environmental technologies to assist environmental protection efforts in third world countries.

Played a Major Role in the Administration's "Climate Change Action Plan." As

Vice President, Al Gore has played a major role in the Administration's "Climate Change Plan" to address the need for public-private partnerships to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This plan has promoted private investment in energy-saving technologies and government-business partnerships to promote energy efficiency.

A Leader in International Efforts Against Global Warming. As Vice President, and as a US Senator, Al Gore has been a recognized leader in international efforts to combat global warming: Chaired the US Delegation to the Inter-parliamentary Conference on the Global Environment, which reached an agreement between 40 nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent over 20 years. Led the US Delegation to the 1992 "Earth Summit." Gore was influential in demonstrating American commitment to the global environment and the importance of curbing global warming. The Kyoto Global Warming Conference. Vice President Gore's arrival at the Conference helped to stimulate the talks and produce an agreement among the 150 nations participating in the conference to help provide targets for limiting the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are released into the atmosphere.

Produced in-house by Gore 2000.

Excerpts from the Bush Campaign Website— www.georgewbush.com

Environment & Natural Resources

- Believes environmental standards must be based on the best science, market-driven technologies can provide solutions, and government should encourage innovation and going beyond compliance
- Recognizes that global warming should be taken seriously but will require any decisions to be based on the best science; opposes Kyoto Protocol

- Supports moratorium against offshore drilling in California and Florida
- Opposes breaching dams in Pacific Northwest
- Supports conservation of land, wetlands and habitat, particularly by private landowners
- Supports protection of private property rights
- Reinvest in America's natural resources by fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and guarantee a 50% share of the LWCF for state and local conservation
- Supports alleviating the substantial repair and improvement backlog facing our national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands

Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment

The federal Superfund statute has prevented the cleanup and redevelopment of the nation's 450,000 brownfields—mostly abandoned industrial or commercial facilities in urban areas—by scaring away potential investors and developers who fear being caught in the maze of Superfund regulation, liability, and litigation. In response, 35 states, including Texas, have developed innovative brownfield cleanup programs. Governor Bush is announcing today [April 3, 2000] a six-point reform plan to strengthen the successful state approach to brownfield cleanup and redevelopment:

To ensure brownfield cleanups protect human health and the environment, while enabling affordable cleanups and economic growth, Governor Bush will:

- Direct the EPA to establish high standards for brownfield cleanups that will provide more flexibility than the current Superfund standards.

To remove legal obstacles that prevent brownfield cleanups, Governor Bush will:

- Provide redevelopers with protection from federal liability at brownfields cleaned up under state programs that meet high federal standards.

To assist states and local communities to gain the technical know-how to clean up brownfields, Governor Bush will:

- Focus the efforts of the federal government on developing cleanup techniques and new cleanup technologies.

To make federal brownfield financial assistance more effective, Governor Bush will:

- Reform the Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund by cutting red tape and block granting funds to the states.

To provide incentives that spur more brownfield cleanups, Governor Bush will:

- Extend permanently the Brownfield cleanup tax incentive that is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2001.

To end the double standard that has the federal government acting as environmental enforcer while, at the same time, polluting the environment, Governor Bush will:

- Direct active federal facilities to comply with all environmental protection laws and hold them accountable . . .

In 1995, Governor Bush signed legislation that created the Texas Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) to encourage the cleanup of abandoned or underutilized brownfields across the state, and in 1997, he signed legislation that permitted local governments to grant property tax incentives for brownfield cleanups under the Texas VCP.

To date, 451 brownfield sites have been cleaned up in Texas under the VCP, restoring more than \$200 million to local property tax rolls, and revitalizing communities across the state. In addition, more than 500 additional sites are in the process of being cleaned up.

Building Conservation Partnerships

Thirty-five years ago, Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), one of the most successful and far-reaching pieces of conservation legislation in America's history. The LWCF is designed to fund federal, state and local conservation, natural resource protection and outdoor recreation. The LWCF is principally funded from the revenues from oil and gas drilling on the outer continental shelf.

At their peak, appropriations from the LWCF nearly reached their authorized level of \$900 million. By 1997, the LWCF had

provided a total of \$5.6 billion to purchase new federal park and recreation lands and about \$3.2 billion in matching grants to states and local communities for the creation, development and improvement of over 37,000 parks and outdoor recreation facilities across the country.

Over time, however, the federal government has maintained the LWCF's federal component but forgotten its vital state and local conservation function. Since 1996, funding of the state and local component of the LWCF has significantly declined

from approximately 60 percent of the Fund to zero percent, despite the fact there is an unappropriated balance in the LWCF of about \$12 billion . . .

Governor Bush believes it is time to build cooperative conservation partnerships between federal and state governments, local communities and landowners. As President, Governor Bush will:

- Reinvest in American's natural resources by fully funding the LWCF;
- Guarantee a 50 percent share of the LWCF for state and local conservation,

and relies [sic] on state, local and private entities to lead conservation initiatives;

- Emphasize that conservation in the next century will require a range of tools, including technical and financial assistance to landowners, conservation easements, rehabilitation of parks and land acquisition from willing sellers;
- Devote funds to alleviate the substantial repair and improvements backlog facing our national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands.