

INFLUENTIAL LEADERS PUSH FOR CLEAN ENERGY, GLOBAL WARMING QUESTIONS IN REMAINING PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Union, Religious, Science, State Gov't and Former Federal Officials Zero In on "Urgent" Issues; Seen as Key to New Jobs, National Security, Public Health and Saving Environment

WASHINGTON, D.C.//October 6, 2004//A wide-ranging group of 22 union, religious, science, state government and former federal officials today petitioned the trustees of the Commission on Presidential Debates – as well as debate moderators Charles Gibson and Bob Schieffer – to “include questions about the candidates’ plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean energy and clean vehicle technologies as urgent matters of both domestic and foreign policy.”

Signers of the joint statement include well-known individuals as United Steelworkers of America President Leo Gerard, National Council of Churches of Christ General Secretary Robert Edgar, California State Controller Steve Westley, United Nations Foundation President and former U.S. Senator Timothy Wirth and former Central Intelligence Agency Director James Woolsey.

The two remaining debates between President George Bush and Senator John Kerry will take place on October 8, 2004 at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, and October 13, 2004, at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ.

The full text of the joint statement reads as follows: “We respectfully request that the two remaining 2004 Presidential Debates include questions about the candidates’ plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean energy and clean vehicle technologies as urgent matters of both domestic and foreign policy.

We believe that the future of energy is at the crux of major challenges facing our nation today: concerns about the economy and the loss of manufacturing jobs, national security, and the environmental, public health, and financial consequences of global climate change.

There is a strong consensus in the science community that global climate change is underway and that we must dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow the rate of warming. America's major faith communities have named climate change as a matter of great moral urgency for our nation and the planet.

It is also becoming clear that as the rest of the world moves to limit emissions from burning fossil fuels, we are on the cusp of a major industrial transition, a transition the United States must choose to lead in order to preserve and create jobs for the 21st century and protect future generations.

This should not be a partisan issue. Across the nation, policymakers from both parties are working to encourage the development of renewable energy, cleaner vehicles, and energy efficiency. Voices as diverse as the Pentagon, religious leaders, labor union presidents, scientists, investors, and the editors of Fortune Magazine and Business Week have expressed concern about climate change and the need for the development of a clean energy strategy.

We believe that this is a moment for a great national undertaking, one that can put Americans to work – in both high tech and manufacturing jobs – in solving the biggest challenges of the day.

Both candidates have offered ideas, but the issue has not yet been presented as a matter for serious consideration to the general public.

The Presidential Debates offer the most important format for bringing these issues to the fore. We hope you will agree they merit close attention. Thank you for your consideration.”

The complete list of signers of the joint statement is as follows: Rosina M. Bierbaum, professor, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, University of Michigan and former acting director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; the Rev. Dr. Robert Edgar, general secretary, National Council of Churches of Christ; Leo Gerard, president, United Steelworkers of America; Kevin Knobloch, president, Union of Concerned Scientists; Mindy S. Lubber, executive director, Ceres; James J. McCarthy, Alexander Agassiz Professor of Biological Oceanology, director, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University; Dale McCormick, treasurer, State of Maine; Ruth Messinger, president/executive director, American Jewish World Service; Denise Nappier, treasurer, State of Connecticut; Stanley J. Noffsinger, general secretary, Church of the Brethren General Board, Reverend Wilfred E. Nolen, president, Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust; Michael Oppenheimer, Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs, Princeton University; Dr. F. Sherwood Rowland, Bern Research Professor, Earth System Science, University of California at Irvine and winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry (1995); Sr. Carole Shinnick, SSND, executive director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious; Pam Solo, president, Civil Society Institute; Andy Stern, president, Service Employees International Union (SEIU); Steve Westly, state controller, California; Timothy Wirth, president, UN Foundation and former U.S. Senator (Colorado); Sr. Patricia Wolf, executive director, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility; Dr. George M. Woodwell, founder/director, Woods Hole Research Center; and James Woolsey, former director, Central Intelligence Agency.

The joint statement effort was coordinated by Ceres, the Civil Society Institute’s Results for America project, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: A streaming audio recording of a related phone-based media briefing will be available on the Web as of 6 p.m. EDT on October 6, 2004 at <http://www.ceres.org>.