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## **Byliner: Secretary of Commerce Evans on Climate Change**

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*This column by Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans first appeared in The Washington Times December 3 and is in the public domain.*

### **Rx For Global Climate Change**

**By Donald L. Evans**

An aggressive new U.S. climate change research strategy, designed to accelerate answers to critical questions about the environment, will be the focus of more than 1,100 experts from throughout the country and the world when they convene in Washington this week.

Climate science as a fully understood and universally accepted discipline is still in its infancy. We know that the surface temperature of the Earth has warmed, rising 0.6 degrees Celsius (1 degree Fahrenheit) over the past century. And the National Academy of Sciences indicates that human activity is a contributing factor to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases.

Yet, significant uncertainties remain. We do not know the effect of natural fluctuations in climate on warming or adequately understand the natural carbon and water cycles. We do not yet adequately understand the role of clouds, oceans and aerosol emissions on global climate change. We cannot confidently project how our climate could or will change. We do not know definitely what constitutes a dangerous level of warming.

President Bush's Global Climate Change strategy represents a market-based, common-sense approach to finding answers and solutions to this long-term challenge. Rather than pitting economic growth against the environment, as the Kyoto Protocol would do, and imposing massive job losses on the American people, it promises real progress by harnessing the power of sound science and cutting-edge technologies. And, it ensures that America's workers and the citizens of the developing world are not unfairly penalized.

The new research strategy focuses on three broad tiers of activities: (1) scientific inquiry that is objective and well-documented; (2) observation and monitoring systems to provide needed, comprehensive global data; and (3) development of decision-support resources, including the ability to explore various potential outcomes.

The United States continues to lead all nations in research and technology development directed at climate change. Since 1990, the United States has spent \$20 billion on climate research. That's three times as much as any other country. It is more than Japan and all 15 nations of the European Union combined.

Mr. Bush's fiscal year 2003 budget seeks \$4.5 billion in total climate expenditures, an increase of more than \$650 million over last year. The funding will be used for basic scientific research, cutting-edge technology development, tax incentives to encourage the deployment of renewable and cleaner energy technologies and support for technology transfers to the developing world, where emissions are growing rapidly as a

result of development.

An important piece of the puzzle is a U.S.-led effort to develop a comprehensive, sustained and consistent global observing system. As scientific eyes and ears in the world's atmosphere, oceans and ecosystems, this comprehensive global observing system can, over time, tell us much about past, present and future climate changes and how best to prepare. The data collected will allow the nations of the world to set science-based policies with greater confidence than is now possible, ensuring future health, safety and economic stability.

Importantly, Mr. Bush has set a national goal of reducing greenhouse gas intensity by 18 percent over the next 10 years while sustaining the economy. This is comparable to the average progress that nations participating in the Kyoto Protocol must achieve. It is equivalent to taking 70 million cars off the road.

The president also is challenging American businesses to reduce the greenhouse-gas intensity of their operations. The semiconductor and aluminum industries and others already have scored successes in reducing emission of some of the most potent greenhouse gases.

The transportation sector accounts for about one-third of U.S. carbon emissions. Slightly more than half of these are produced by light-duty passenger vehicles. One innovative research project under way is the "FreedomCAR." This public-private partnership is focused on developing a break-through hydrogen-powered fuel cell. The long-term results of this research could be cars and trucks that are more efficient and less expensive to operate, and which emit no harmful pollutants or greenhouse gases.

While we continue to aggressively pursue cutting-edge technologies at home, we also will continue to actively work with friends, allies and developing nations to determine the dimensions and dynamics of climate change.

Global climate change is a complex issue requiring a sustained effort over generations. However, we can begin to address the factors that contribute to climate change now, understanding that economic growth is the solution, not the problem.

Fortunately, America is rich in talent, creativity and innovation, the source of sound science and cutting-edge technologies. Under Mr. Bush's leadership, the United States is marshaling the expertise that will advance the science of global climate change, promote technological innovation and take advantage of the power of markets to create a safe and healthy environment for the people of America and the world.

*Commerce Secretary Donald L. Evans is chairman of the president's Cabinet-level Committee on Climate Change Science and Technology Integration.*

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