

SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD

Our Union and the Environment

UNITED STEELWORKERS

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Leo W. Gerard
International President

June 1, 2006

Greetings:

Steelworkers have always fought for a better life for our children.

Today, two of the greatest threats to our children's future are the destruction of good-paying jobs and the environment in an economy where multinational corporations compete globally without regard or loyalty to their home countries.

But destruction of what we hold dear is not inevitable. Just as Canadians and Americans responded to the challenges of World War II by harnessing the ingenuity and productivity of its working people, we can retool our economy and rebuild it on sound environmental principles.

Such an endeavor could create millions of new jobs for our economy, regenerate our manufacturing capability and capture emerging energy efficient technologies for the benefit of all that secure us from being victimized by changing conditions.

We outline key environmental challenges and our strategies for success in this report, Securing Our Children's World, which was developed by the USW's International Executive Board Environmental Task Force, created in 2005. The report was approved by a unanimous vote of the IEB on February 28, 2006, on a motion made by District 9 Director Connie Entrekin and seconded by District 7 Co-Director Bill Gibbons.

To ensure membership input into the report, the USW conducted hearings in eight U.S. and Canadian cities over the course of three months. They were held in Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Atlanta, Houston, Portland, Ore., Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

I would like to thank all those whose hard work made this report possible including task force co-chairs Dave Foster and Jim Pannell and IEB members Terry Bonds, Jon Geenan and Steve Hunt. I would also like to thank Mike Wright and Diane Hemmingway from the International Health, Safety and Environment Department and Les Leopold from the Public Health Institute for their input and support. Staff appointed to assist included legislative director Bill Klinefelter and Andy King, head of the Health, Safety and Environment Department in our Canadian National Office.

This report is an update of a seminal 1990 report by our union entitled, "Our Children's World," which exposed the false choice between good jobs and environmental protections in North America and made the case that global warming is the single most important environmental issue of our lifetime.

In many ways, the environmental challenges we identified in 1990 have not changed but have become more severe. The then speculative damages caused by global warming have since been conclusively demonstrated by the melting of the polar ice cap and the rising number of deadly storms across the globe.

The question now is not whether global warming is happening, but how do we slow it, reverse it, and manage the devastating effects to our benefit as trade unionists.

The future of manufacturing will belong to those nations that solve the problems of the world's growing shortage of fossil fuels through energy-efficient technologies and building and process redesigns.

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The technological solutions to environmental problems are within our grasp. Although some environmental friendly technologies require continued research, none are beyond our technical capacity.

Renewable energies like wind and solar power and mass transportation systems can create millions of new jobs. In Germany, for example, 40,000 people are employed directly in its wind energy industry, which consumes more steel there than any other industry, except for automobile manufacturing.

The real barriers are not technical, they are economic and political. Despite the Bush Administration's horrible record in environmental issues on the national and global arenas, local and state governments are increasingly pledging action on their own.

As a union, we cannot stand aside from these issues. Our choices are to be victims of change, or to control that change to the benefit of ourselves and our children.

This report lays out a clear choice in favor of controlling our destiny, and those of our families and communities.

Sincerely,



Leo W. Gerard
International President



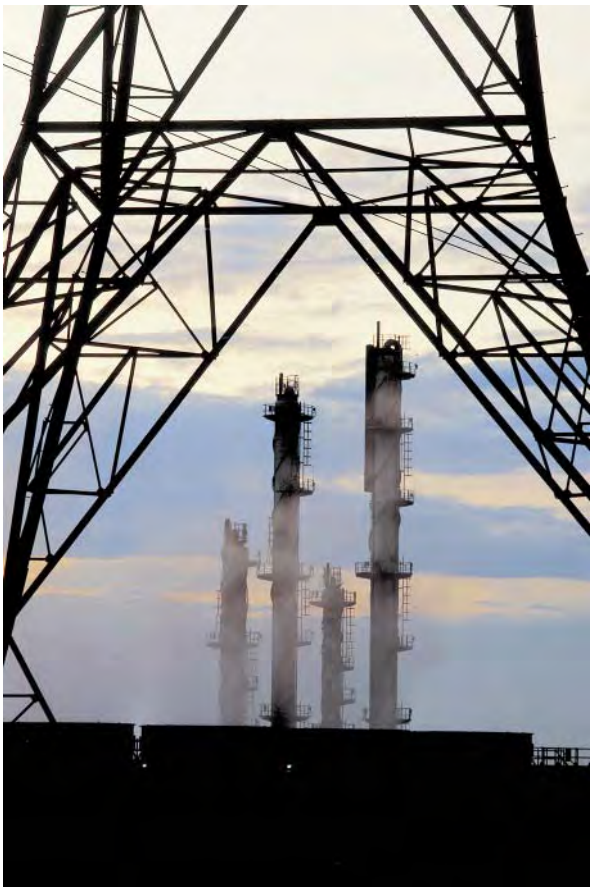
SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD

Our Union and the Environment

"SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD, Our Union and the Environment" is an updated report developed by the USW's International Executive Board Environmental Task Force which was presented to the IEB on February 28, 2006 in Pittsburgh, PA. As its title suggests, the report builds upon the landmark work of the original report, OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD, which was adopted at the 25th Constitutional Convention of the USW in Toronto, Ontario on August 30, 1990.

In 1990, when the USW adopted its first comprehensive environmental policy statement, our world, its economic systems, and our union were all dramatically different. In the intervening years, globalization and the World Trade Organization displaced the system of national economies. The Berlin Wall crumbled, drawing Eastern Europe, Russia, and China into the international economy and greatly affected both the conditions of labor and the regulation of the environment. And our union participated in four major mergers — with the URW, ABG, IWA and PACE — as well as several smaller ones.

The USW is today North America's largest manufacturing union and the dominant representative of workers in the steel, aluminum, paper and forest products, metal mining, oil, chemical, rubber, tire, plastics, glass and countless other industries. The breadth of our engagement with the global economy is greater than any other labor organization in the world. The overwhelming majority of our members work today for large multinational corporations who compete globally, with little regard or loyalty to their countries of origin. As such, the USW recognizes the special obligation it has to speak out to union members not only in North America, but across the planet, on the fundamental issues of wealth, poverty, and the creation of sustainable economies in our ever shrinking planet.



In 1990 we devoted much of our attention to exposing the false choice between good jobs and environmental protections in North America. Today, we are expanding our attention to the pivotal issue of how we exercise control over a global economy that threatens the very framework of the regulatory systems that have provided us with labor law, environmental protections, human rights and, indeed, basic democratic processes in our two countries. In 2006, we are intent on exposing the false choice between good jobs in a global economy and the full range of civil society protections that were achieved in the twentieth century.

In our original report, we wrote:

"In the old days, we thought that smoke meant jobs. That pollution was a byproduct of prosperity. And that if the air smelled funny, and the mill killed all the fish in the river, such was the price of progress. Besides, you could always get away on the weekend to a place where the air was pure, the lake was clean and the fishing was good.

Today we know better. "Smoke" has become "air pollution," with a host of noxious ingredients like sulfur dioxide, which corrodes our lungs, and benzene, which menaces our children with leukemia. Millions of tons of toxic chemicals get dumped into our water every day, from heavy metals to organic solvents. They threaten not only fish, but every person downstream.

Decades ago, nobody worried much about hazardous waste. Today we are spending billions of dollars in what can only be a partial clean-up of thousands of sites that threaten public health. Entire communities, such as Times Beach in Missouri, have been abandoned because of contamination by hazardous waste.

Pollution issues used to be local. The smoke from a factory affected the town, but not the world beyond — no longer. Acid rain, generated by pollutants from power plants, factories and automobiles, threatens forests and lakes half way across the continent and may contribute to thousands of deaths every year. Nor do the problems stop at national borders — some are truly global. Chlorofluorocarbons like Freon are slowly destroying the protective layer of ozone in the Earth's upper atmosphere. The ozone layer shields us from harmful ultraviolet radiation; if it is lost, the result will be serious damage to human and animal life and to crops.

The burning of fossil fuels like petroleum and coal generates billions of tons of carbon dioxide every year. This gas and others trap heat in the atmosphere. Studies show the resulting global warming will melt the ice caps, flood our coastal cities and turn huge agricultural areas into deserts. The problem is made worse by the widespread destruction of our forests, which help absorb excess carbon dioxide.

[Poor forest and other habitat management] threatens many species of plants and animals with extinction. Even our oceans are at risk from toxic runoff, oil spills and waste dumping at sea.

Added together, these problems may threaten the ultimate capability of our resources to sustain civilization.

Can the destruction of our environment be stopped? If so, who will pay the price? Some would have us believe that these problems are

not as serious as we think, or that they can be left for the next generation to solve. Others maintain that pollution is still the price of progress, and that attempting to end it would cause massive economic dislocation, putting millions out of work.

The argument can get personal. Some companies, faced with new regulations, have threatened to shut down — pitting workers against environmentalists. Additional controls would be just too expensive, these companies say, and workers who want to save their jobs had better line up behind their employers.

This is part of a familiar corporate strategy. When the union tried to clean up unsafe conditions in plants or reduce toxic chemical exposures, some companies would threaten us with loss of jobs. Our response has always been that a failure to act will cost us our members' lives. Time and again, these unscrupulous employers have backed down, proving that we must fight for good jobs and a clean environment as mutually reinforcing goals.

Are they right? Do we really have to choose between our jobs and the environment? Is our economy threatened by efforts to stop environmental damage? Or is a damaged environment the real threat to our economic well-being? Can we afford to wait? What kind of world do we want to leave our children?

We believe the greatest threat to our children's future may lie in the destruction of their environment. For that reason alone, environment must be an issue for our union. In addition, we cannot protect Steelworker jobs by ignoring environmental problems. This report summarizes our findings and recommendations, beginning with a basic review of the threat to our environment."

In July, 2005 the International Executive Board reconstituted its Environmental Policy Committee and charged it with reviewing and restating our commitment to the environment. Our committee believes that the words of our original report still ring true today.

But in 2006 much of the doubt that was expressed in 1990 has been removed. In the wake of the most devastating hurricane season in modern times, the destructive danger of doing nothing about global warming looms over the U.S. and world economies. Over 12,000 USW members and retirees were personally affected by the 2005 hurricanes, losing their jobs, homes, and in some cases, their lives. The economic impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita may run as high as $200 billion, an amount that our economies can ill afford to absorb on a regular and escalating basis.

An unregulated global economy that increases the gap between rich and poor and ignores sound environmental science—will ultimately destroy the good jobs and healthy environment that are the legacy of the North American trade union movement.

Our original report identified global warming as the single most important environmental issue of our lifetime and warned about the risks of doing nothing. During the last 15 years the U.S. government, in particular, has failed to take meaningful steps and today, global warming has emerged as a significant threat to the stability of steelworker jobs and communities in the coming years. We can no longer be content with simply identifying problems and issuing warnings. A strategic response to environmental challenges like global warming is key to our union's long-term survival. The good jobs of the future will be based on principles of environmental sustainability. Quite simply, this means that the jobs and other human activities that we engage in must be performed in a manner that doesn't destroy the planet we inhabit. Two hundred years ago, we didn't concern ourselves with this issue. Even a hundred years ago, such concerns were minimized. Today, scientists are very clear that escalating human impairment of our environment will rapidly and irretrievably change the ability of human beings to survive on the planet. Thus, we can say with certainty that those jobs that are based on the continued rapid consumption of the earth's resources and atmosphere simply will not last.

Our report will examine each of the areas originally noted in our 1990 report and touch on both the progress made and the threats that are still outstanding. In the concluding section we outline an action plan for our union's broad engagement with the global environmental movement. In many ways, there is no more important policy decision for us to make — a planet populated by 6.5 billion human beings, virtually all of whom share our own aspirations for a better life, cannot imagine a future of peace and growing prosperity without also imagining a global economy that lifts 2 billion people out of poverty in a sustainable fashion. The alternative — an unregulated global economy that increases the gap between rich and poor and ignores sound environmental science — will ultimately destroy the good jobs and healthy environment that are the legacy of the North American trade union movement.

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SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD

Our Union and the Environment

What We Face

In 1990 we wrote, "Over the last century, the relationship between human beings and the planet that sustains us has undergone a profound change. When the century began, our population and our technology did not have the power to alter our environment irreversibly. Now they do. Yet that power seems out of control, creating enormous conflicts between human activities and the natural world. Some of the problems are local and familiar; others are global, and seem difficult to comprehend. All of them are critical to our survival."

In many ways the challenges we identified between human technologies and the environment in 1990 have not changed. But in one profound way they have. Today, this challenge is deeply affected by the political refusal of the Bush Administration to accept the overwhelming scientific consensus on the importance of addressing environmental issues.

In 1992 the governments of the world's nations, including the U.S. and Canada, gathered in Rio de Janeiro for the first global conference on the Environment and Development. This landmark event — for the first time the issues of global economic growth and environmental protection were linked — set the stage for an international effort to deal with global warming. The Rio conference was followed in 1995 by the Kyoto Treaty which committed the nations of the world to reducing greenhouse gases and reversing the trend toward climate change.

Ten years later, in May, 2005, 141 of the world's governments ratified the Kyoto Treaty and took the first steps toward cutting back on carbon emissions. Notably, the United States stands apart as the only member of the G-8 (the world's eight largest economies) refusing to sign Kyoto. We must note that this refusal not only poses a grave threat to efforts to reverse global warming; it also represents a grave threat to steelworker jobs in a global economy.

Consider that while the rest of the industrialized world is now moving toward more restrictive standards on everything from automobile fuel efficiency to pollution standards on power plants, the U.S. stands alone, insisting on its right to build cars and industrial plants and equipment that are out of compliance with what the rest of the world wants and needs. How long can our automotive companies and manufacturers compete in a global economy, producing products that nobody else wants? How can we compete with China when Beijing produces cars that are more fuel efficient than Detroit's? Of course, the main reason that Chinese production is a growing threat to the U.S. automotive industry is the fact that China pays its assembly plant workers less than one-tenth the hourly wage of their unionized U.S. counterparts and intends to sell their cars in North America for about $10,000. But we have seen how the lack of fuel efficiency has caused a dramatic drop in the sales of SUV's, trucks, and other low mileage vehicles in the last year.

The current Bush Administration is the most anti-environmental administration of the last 50 years. According to Congressman Bernie Sanders (VT), the Bush Administration "…has proposed or implemented over 400 rollbacks in environmental protections, from permitting untreated sewage into our waterways to curbing restrictions on toxic mercury in our air and water."

These actions have consequences far beyond public health and the environment. They have grave economic consequences as well. The U.S. automotive industry still accounts for 3.5 percent of the U.S. economy, employing over 2.5 million



Americans, directly or indirectly. Many of those Americans are members of the USW, employed in the steel, aluminum, tire, glass, plastics and general manufacturing industries. Another 2.2 million others are employed by the economic activities that are generated by a successful automotive industry. The failure of this industry and of the U.S. government to meet internationally acceptable standards for fuel efficiency is resulting in millions of American consumers turning away from GM, Ford, and Chrysler to purchase high quality, fuel efficient imports. The go-it-alone, cowboy-style of the Bush Administration is accelerating the destruction of America's long-term manufacturing base.

But this destruction is not inevitable. Just as Americans responded to the challenges of World War II by harnessing the ingenuity and productivity of its working people, Americans can retool our current economy and rebuild it on sound environmental principles. Not surprisingly, such an

endeavor would create millions of new jobs for our economy, regenerating American manufacturing and capturing the energy efficient technologies of the twenty-first century for America's middle class communities.

Studies, such as those conducted by economists for the Apollo Alliance and Redefining Progress, have detailed how the investments in tackling global warming through energy efficiency, renewable energies like wind and solar power, and mass transportation systems would create three million new jobs, largely in manufacturing. An important step to spur the production of fuel efficient vehicles in North America would be the expansion of tax incentives for the production of hybrid and beyond-hybrid vehicles.

Thus, we have concluded, that as we examine the environmental challenges in front of us, we should always remember that in solving those problems we are creating the jobs and the work force of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the jobs that will last are those that are based on sound environmental principles. The jobs that are disappearing are those that continue the destruction of our environment. As we examine our current environmental challenges we will come back to this fundamental truth.

Global Warming

Global warming is the greatest environmental and economic challenge of our generation. Its disruptive effect on the economic life of our planet will be far greater than that caused by the possible disruption of oil flows from the Middle East. Some have compared its possible consequences to the aftermath of nuclear war. Scientists have already documented an average increase in global temperatures during the twentieth century of 1 degree Fahrenheit. That doesn't sound like much, but the effects are significant.

In a recent publication, the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote, "Global warming is already under way. The evidence is vast and the urgency of taking action becomes clearer with every new scientific study. Some of the most obvious signs are visible in the Arctic, where rising temperatures and



melting ice are dramatically changing the region's unique landscapes and wildlife — as well as people's lives and livelihoods."

And despite the millions spent on fraudulent science by the oil industry, the national science academies of all G-8 nations plus China, India and Brazil have unequivocally stated that global warming is real, caused by human beings, and about to have extraordinary social and economic consequences.

Global warming, as we use the term today, is a gradual rise in the temperature of the Earth itself, caused by gases we are pumping into the atmosphere. Fifteen years ago we predicted, "A temperature rise of just 4 degrees Centigrade could melt the polar ice caps, flooding huge areas. Changing weather patterns could turn forests to grasslands and grasslands to deserts. Coastal cities would be submerged, major agricultural regions would be devastated and the weather would turn more violent." Fifteen years ago such statements were considered speculative. Today, the evidence has proven these statements correct. The polar ice cap has been reduced by 20 percent since 1979. The 2005 hurricane season with 27 named storms, including three Category 5 hurricanes, is the worst on record. The question is not whether global warming is happening, but how to slow it, reverse it, and manage its current devastating effects. Ignoring it or doing nothing are simply not options.

The US remains the largest producer of greenhouse gases, contributing over 25 percent of the world's emissions.

What causes global warming? Our atmosphere contains a number of "trace" gases, present in very low concentrations. The most important is carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide has a special property — it traps heat that otherwise would radiate out into space — much like the glass in a greenhouse. Hence the name "greenhouse effect." Without some carbon dioxide in our air, the Earth would cool to well below freezing. The problem is having too much. Carbon dioxide results from the burning of fuels containing carbon, like petroleum, coal, natural gas or wood. One mile of driving a car, or one-half kilowatt-hour of coal-generated power, releases about a pound of carbon dioxide. Altogether, 18 billion tons are released every year. Most of the Earth's population contributes three tons per person to this total; North Americans contribute twenty tons each. Over the last century, the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere has risen by 25 percent. At the present rate, it could double in the next century, triggering massive changes in the global climate, far beyond what we have witnessed in the last decade.

In fact, carbon dioxide could increase even faster. This past century's rapid industrialization in the United States, Canada and Europe was fueled by the massive burning of coal and petroleum. As developing countries take the same route, huge increases in the amount of carbon dioxide are being pumped into the atmosphere. China alone has 800 billion tons of coal reserves. This reliance on coal, combined with double digit economic growth for the last 15 years, has already made China one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. Rapid industrial growth in India is also accelerating the threats of global warming.

Nonetheless, the U.S. remains the largest producer of greenhouse gases, contributing over 25 percent of the world's emissions. Since 1990, the nations of the world have taken some important steps to confront the challenges of global warming. As stated earlier, in 1995 the Kyoto Treaty on global warming was negotiated by over 150 countries setting specific targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions to 5 percent below 1990 levels. In February, 2005 the Kyoto Treaty went into effect when 141 countries adopted its protocols. Unfortunately, two industrial countries, the United States and Australia, refused to participate in Kyoto. In fact, the Bush Administration, continuing its go-it-alone role in world affairs, has refused to even bring the Kyoto Treaty to the U.S. Senate for a vote. In the meantime, U.S. carbon emissions have increased by 15 percent. Ironically, the Chinese government has reduced its level of emissions by 17 percent.

In Canada, with our union's support and the support of the Canadian Labor Congress, the national government ratified the Kyoto Treaty. The debate in Canada is not about whether global warming exists, but which program should be enacted to effectuate the cuts in greenhouse gases. The Conservative Party, however, has threatened to abrogate Kyoto entirely should it be elected. This is an important debate. Business-oriented political forces in the Liberal Party want to use the threat of global warming to push the "Green Plan" (#3) which relieves most industrial emitters of significant responsibility and relies heavily on government

funded trading credits. It amounts to a huge bailout for industry — while no mention is made in their program of workers and the effects of global warming on their jobs and livelihoods.

The New Democratic Party, the third major party in Canada founded on social democratic principles and supported by the USW, promotes an alternative with a strong program to cut greenhouse gases by investing in new renewable energies, mass transportation systems and energy efficiency, thereby creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs in Canada. Workers who are adversely affected by the change in energy policy will be protected through well-funded "just transition" programs.

Can we act fast enough to halt the changes of global warming and its devastating economic impact? We don't know, but we must try.

In the U.S. there are encouraging signs at the local level in spite of the federal government's inactivity and the Bush Administration's intransigence on energy policy. Mayors from 194 U.S. cities have signed on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, pledging to take local action to curb global warming. And 20 states now have renewable energy standards. Three states, California, Oregon, and Washington have passed "clean car" legislation mandating increased fuel efficiency above current federal standards for automobiles sold in their states.

The USW, along with the United Mineworkers and United Auto Workers unions, has endorsed a proposal put forth by the National Commission on Energy Policy (NCEP) in which our union was a leading participant. This proposal calls for real reductions, but requires a review of the progress of other economies in greenhouse gas reductions - so as not to give them a competitive advantage over the U.S.

Taking action on global warming is also the right policy for protecting North America's manufacturing infrastructure. Our countries have a long history of creating jobs through innovation and technological breakthroughs. The future of manufacturing in the global economy will belong to those nations who solve the problem of the world's growing shortage of fossil fuels through energy efficiency technology and building redesign, mass transportation systems, and new forms of renewable energy. Important economic studies, produced by the Apollo Alliance, Redefining Progress, and the Union of Concerned Scientists have demonstrated the significant economic benefits of public investment in these areas. The Apollo study demonstrates that 3 million new jobs, mostly in the manufacturing sector, would be created by this approach.

New environmental regulations, enacted through state and national legislation like increased CAFÉ standards (Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency) and RES (Renewable Energy Standards) that mandate increased use of wind, solar, biomass from waste wood and slash, and even landfill methane for generating electricity, and public bonding for mass transportation and clean energy development are critical for rebuilding North America's manufacturing base. Continuing the Bush Administration policies of ever greater reliance on the shrinking pool of Middle Eastern oil guarantees that more and more manufacturing jobs will leave North America as industry tries to offset the rising costs of energy with the low costs of Third World labor.

Global warming is, as we predicted, the most important environmental challenge of our lifetimes. But meeting that challenge provides us with the opportunity to fix some of our most significant economic problems. Imagine a twenty-first century Clean Energy Authority whose mission is to bring renewable energy to our communities, much as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Bonneville Power Administration brought electrification to millions of Americans during the 1930's and 40's with their hydroelectric projects. Good jobs, a cleaner environment, and a world made safer by less reliance on foreign oil can become a reality for both our countries.

Global warming is affecting many other industries, in addition to those that consume large amounts of energy, where USW members are employed. In Canada, the infestation of pine bark beetles in the western provinces threatens the country's timber supply and the long-term viability of its forest products' industries. The pine bark beetle's habitat was once limited by severe Canadian winters; three weeks of constant -40 degree weather killed off the beetles each year, stopping their spread. Now, warmer winters are allowing the beetles to reproduce uncontrollably, killing off huge sections of the boreal forest, permanently, and changing it forever.

Can we act fast enough to halt the changes of global warming and its devastating economic impact? We don't know, but we must try. Over 12,000 USW members and retirees were affected

by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The economic losses of these two storms were in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Doesn't it make more sense to invest those billions of dollars in a preemptive program to develop new clean sources of energy and create millions of jobs, thus avoiding future economic catastrophes?

Our union faces powerful corporate interests that care more about the next quarter's profit report while we care about saving our children's world. Eventually, corporate interests will have to recognize the severity of this problem, but at much greater cost. And as our experience shows in Canada, the programs to deal with global warming can differ widely. Conservative programs will force these costs off on consumers and taxpayers, while protecting corporate interests. We have no choice but to fight around this vital union issue.

Air Pollution

Steelworkers know about air pollution. In October of 1948 a temperature inversion trapped the smoke and dust from zinc smelters and railroad locomotives in Donora, Pennsylvania. By the time it was over, 20 people had died from breathing polluted air. More than six thousand suffered lung problems. Shortly afterward, the Donora smelters shut down forever.

Almost 60 years after the Donora incident and, in spite of significant steps forward, many public health risks remain as a result of air pollution. In the U.S., for instance, the rates of childhood asthma more than doubled between 1980 and 2001 according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Asthma now affects 8.7 percent of all children in the U.S. or 6.3 million kids.

Today's air in some industrial settings may be cleaner, but is it clean enough? Union members must contend with dirty air in many of the plants where they work. And what children breathe outside the plant is similar to what their parents breathe inside the plant. A great deal of pollution is also caused by non-industrial sources, like automobiles, power plants, and waste incineration.

New laws in both countries have led to cleaner air. Through our union's involvement, the exposures to toxic air pollution that affected millions of North Americans have been substantially reduced. In particular, criteria pollution control has improved in the U.S. And it was with Steelworker leadership that the first community right-to-know laws were passed which made it possible for nearby residents to monitor their exposures to toxics, thus forcing companies to control their emissions.

However, since the passage of the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, we have moved backward in the U.S.

The Bush Administration is attempting to roll back the "New Source Review" permits on power



Some pollutants are especially common:

- Sulfur dioxide, emitted by power plants, nonferrous smelters and coke batteries, causes severe respiratory problems and contributes to acid rain.
- Oxides of Nitrogen, from auto exhaust and industrial plants, cause lung irritation, increase susceptibility to viral infections, and are a secondary cause of acid rain.
- Particulates, tiny particles of dust from many industrial sources, also cause lung damage.
- Carbon monoxide, mostly from automobiles, affects the blood's ability to carry oxygen, thereby leading to heart disease.
- Hydrocarbons, from automobiles, chemical plants, spray painting and many other sources, react with other chemicals and sunlight to produce urban smog and cause breathing problems.
- Ozone is formed in the atmosphere by reactions between hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen. Thirty miles above the Earth, naturally-occurring ozone helps protect us from harmful solar radiation. But at ground level, ozone formed from pollutants is a corrosive poison, irritating the respiratory system and aggravating heart and lung disease.
- Air toxics are thousands of especially dangerous chemicals such as benzene and lead, mostly emitted from industrial plants. They cause a variety of diseases, including cancer.

plants which will greatly increase power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide. Auto emissions which were on the decline 15 years ago are now increasing again as a result of the doubling of vehicle miles driven, combined with the failure of Congress to pass improved fuel efficiency standards. And lastly, 52 percent of the U.S. population, or 152 million people, still live in areas that fail the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health-based air quality standards.

In Canada, "Smog Days" have become a regular feature in many large cities, leading to increasing public health concerns and in remote smelter communities like Flin Flon and Thompson, Manitoba, our members children have higher rates of respiratory illness and risk of cancer because of the continuing smelter emissions. More than 4.1 billion kilograms (4,165,490,502 kg) of pollutants were released into the air from industrial facilities in 2003.

Alarmingly, of the ten top emitters of carcinogens in Canada in 2002, six were in workplaces organized by the USW.

Clearly we have work to do. We have shown our ability to succeed. For instance, lead emissions in the air dropped by 93 percent when it was phased out of gasoline. But until we force our governments to act, millions of North Americans will continue to be threatened by polluted air.

Water Pollution

North America is blessed with abundant water. Canada alone has 20 percent of the world's fresh water. But there are regional shortages, especially in the American Southwest.

Today, our two countries' water quality is threatened as never before. Although new regulations have cut the amount of pollutants flowing directly from municipal sewage treatment and industrial plants, it is still possible to detect pesticides, toxic metals and industrial chemicals in many of the lakes and rivers we depend on for our water. The pesticides come from agricultural runoff and aerial spraying of forests and residential areas; toxic metals and chemicals come from industrial sources, and from consumer products dumped down the drain.

In the U.S. 48 of our 50 states have fish advisories because of mercury pollution. The quality of life that our members enjoy in their non-working hours has been seriously impaired by the continuing pollution of our rivers, lakes and groundwater. In Wyoming, USW local unions have joined active coalitions of ranchers and environmentalists to make important public lands "off limits" to coal-bed methane drilling that leads to long-term contamination of ground water supplies. Many of our members live in rural parts of the U.S. and Canada where enjoyment of outdoors' lifestyles depends on sound conservation of our natural water systems. Our union supports protecting the natural environment in which our members hunt, fish, hike, and camp.

In Canada, the Great Lakes, the Fraser River, and the St. Lawrence River are, and continue to

be, seriously contaminated by toxic chemicals. The Walkerton, Ontario tragedy in 2000 raised concerns about drinking water quality that reverberated across Canada. Six people died and over 2000 became ill when the public water system became contaminated with E. coli bacteria. The failure of the government to act promptly and invest adequately in public infrastructure became an object lesson in global economics that scrimps on public safety while glorifying the privatization schemes of public services around the world.

Allocation of the world's fresh water resources is becoming one of the great economic and environmental issues of our time. Already the threat of bulk shipments and diversion of water to the U.S. from Devil's Lake is becoming an issue in Canadian/U.S. politics. Recently the states and provinces that border the Great Lakes signed an international compact restricting access to their water outside the immediate watershed. As the activities of the large French multinational companies, Suez and Vivendi, have shown, privatization of the world's public water systems represents a great untapped source of global profiteering and exploitation.

Lake Erie, which washes the shores of both countries, provides an example of what we can do to clean our waters, and what remains to be done. In 1960, that lake was considered "dead" because of the accumulated effects of municipal sewage, fertilizer runoff and industrial waste. Thick green mats of algae floated on its surface and beaches were littered with dead fish. But through a joint program between the U.S. and Canada, more than $9 billion was spent on new sewage treatment plants and other measures. Phosphates, which pollute the lake, were banned from laundry detergents and industrial discharges were restricted, as a result, the lake lives again. It is used for recreation and fishing is coming back. But hundreds of dangerous chemicals can still be found in its waters. Some comes from industrial discharges, some from municipal agricultural runoff, and some from overhead. Much of the contamination in all the Great Lakes comes from air pollutants drifting down from the sky. It will be much harder to control these sources.

Water is growing scarcer in some areas. Intensive irrigation aids agriculture, but much of the water is lost to evaporation. Groundwater supplies are diminishing, and some have been contaminated by hazardous chemicals. Access to water is being affected by global warming, also. Snow pack levels in the Pacific Northwest, for instance, have dropped to historic lows, glaciers are shrinking and the available energy from the regional hydroelectric



system is diminishing. This, in turn, affects industry, agriculture, and native fisheries. As the nation's energy appetite increases, the failure to adopt sustainable production methods limits our ability to produce energy, grow food, and maintain the diversity of our species. Sustainability must become a core value of our union and the industries where we represent our members. Without it, we cannot provide the job security our members deserve.

Toxic Chemicals

More that 75,000 chemicals, metals and minerals are currently used in industry. Modern civilization depends on them. Almost everything we eat, drink, wear, walk on, use or even touch was produced using one or more of these materials.

Many are hazardous, even when the final products of the plants using them are safe. Vinyl plastic, for example, poses few risks. But the vinyl chloride gas used to make it causes liver cancer. Chromium is essential to stainless steel. But chromium compounds leaching out of hazardous waste sites are suspected carcinogens. We once saw toxic chemicals only as a threat to the workers using them. But it is essential to look at the entire life cycle of a chemical, from its manufacture, to storage, use and ultimate disposal.

Every year, billions of pounds of toxic chemicals are released into U.S. and Canadian air and water. Working class communities are hit especially hard, with industrial workers exposed both inside and outside the plant.

Most of these releases take place slowly, as a normal and routine part of a company's operation. But the potential for a sudden catastrophic accident also exists. The 1984 tragedy in Bhopal, India, which took more than 2,500 lives, occurred when a single tank released 30 tons of methyl isocyanate to the air. In 1988, an explosion at the PEPCON rocket oxidizer plant in Nevada killed two, injured 350, and caused millions of dollars of damage to the surrounding community. The jobs of the 64 members of USWA Local Union 4856 working in the plant also vanished in the explosion. Even more terrible accidents occurred in 1989 and 1990, when explosions in two petrochemical plants outside Houston killed 40 workers. Most recently, an explosion at the BP oil refinery in Texas City, Texas claimed 15 lives and injured 170 others.

Many toxic materials are dumped on land. While disposal practices are safer now than in the past, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 29,000 chemical waste sites in the United States alone pose a potential threat to their neighbors. As many as a million underground storage tanks in North America may be leaking gasoline and other chemicals into the soil and groundwater. And many chemicals are virtually indestructible; putting them in landfills only relocates the problem. Despite all our recent laws and regulations, toxic chemicals are increasing in our environment.



The regulation of these toxics has become increasingly difficult as global trade agreements have eroded the rights of sovereign nations, states, and municipalities to control their own exposures. Two infamous "Chapter 7" cases under the North American Free Trade Agreement illustrate this point. The state of California has been prohibited under NAFTA rules from stopping the use of MTBE, a cancer causing gasoline additive, in their state. And in Mexico the same rule was used to force the state of San Luis Potosi in Mexico to accept a toxic waste dump opened by the foreign company, Metalclad, under the rules of "free trade".

One of the most significant dangers to those living in the U.S. today is the failure of the Bush Administration to protect our people from the dangers of catastrophic toxic releases caused by terrorist attacks. In spite of heavy lobbying by our union and millions of concerned Americans, the administration refuses to pass a meaningful Chemical Security Act as the cornerstone for U.S. homeland security. Currently 23 states in the U.S. are home to chemical facilities where a terrorist attack could expose over 1 million Americans to harmful releases. Texas, alone, has 28 of these



sites.

Instead the Bush Administration and its allies in the chemical industry are trying to weaken existing Right-to-Know laws that require companies to disclose potential dangers to the workers and communities that might be affected by toxic chemical releases.

In Canada, large USW-represented employers like INCO, Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting, and Falconbridge continue to be among the top ten largest emitters of toxic chemicals in Canada, including sulfur dioxide, mercury, and cancer causing dioxins. Many urban USW-organized companies are on the National Pollution Release Inventory, the nationwide comprehensive list of chemical exposures prepared by Environment Canada. Recent studies show an increasing body burden of toxics in individuals across Canada. Consequently, there is much work to be done by our union in cleaning up our work places and surrounding communities.

Acid Precipitation

It's called acid rain, but the problem is much larger. Acid can fall to earth as rain or snow, fog or mist, or on fine particles of dust. But regardless of its source, the problem of acid rain can and must be addressed. The economic consequences to the forest and tourism industries as well as the profound public health implications compel us to act.

The source of the acid is sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which react with oxygen and water in the atmosphere to form sulfuric and nitric acids. The oxides, in turn, come from industry and automobiles, especially coal-burning power plants not equipped with the proper controls.

The acid does not respect national boundaries. Copper smelters in Mexico drop acid rain on the Rockies. Power plants in Indiana and Ohio send millions of tons into Canada. Sulfur dioxide from Ontario poisons lakes in Vermont. Acid rain kills forests and lakes and it corrodes buildings. Acid rain is damaging the tourist, hardwood forest and sugar economies of rural Quebec and the New England states. Recent evidence indicates that it may be a leading cause of lung disease, contributing to 50,000 premature deaths in the United States and Canada every year.

Acid rain has caused significant tension between our two countries. The U.S. government points to the Inco nickel smelter in Sudbury, Ontario, as the largest single source of sulfur dioxide in North America. Canadians counter that Inco's emissions are dwarfed by those from coal-fired power plants in the U.S. Midwest. In addition, Inco has made major efforts to fit pollution controls on its equipment, in part through the pressure of USWA Local Union 6500.

Fifteen years ago we thought that major improvements would be made in U.S. power plant emissions with passage of the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's ill-named "Clear Skies Initiative" aims to undo the effect of this legislation, rolling back its "New Source Review" provisions. In addition, the failure of the Energy Bill of 2005 to articulate a coherent energy policy, stressing the development of clean, renewable energies, has encouraged the electrical power industry to concentrate on meeting our growing power needs through increased utilization of coal without the use of new carbon sequestration technology. The USW recognizes that coal-fired power generation will continue to play a significant role in U.S. power generation for years to come, but strongly rejects the notion that there should be any roll back of "new source review" and strongly supports the use of carbon coal sequestration as a legitimate condition for the construction of any new coal-fired power plants in the U.S.

Ironically, the widespread effects of acid rain result from an earlier misguided attempt at pollution control — the smokestack. A hundred years ago, smokestacks were mostly used to create greater draft for furnaces. Air pollution made the areas around smelters and steel mills into smoky infernos, but the problem remained local. Forty years ago, however, companies began to build very tall stacks



in order to inject the pollutants high in the air, so as to dilute them to "acceptable" levels. In Sudbury, Inco built the tallest smokestack in the world as its solution to an air pollution problem that had turned the surrounding area into a virtual moonscape. It worked — locally. But it is those same pollutants that turn to acid, eventually damaging forests and lakes throughout the Northeast.

Acid rain teaches an important lesson — that the only real solution is controlling pollution at its source.

In Canada, it is estimated that a further 75 percent reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions beyond that agreed to by the U.S. and Canada by 2010 is required to prevent further damage to eastern Canada's forests, soil, and lakes. There is likewise growing concern for acid rain damage, caused by emissions from tar sands in Alberta and smelters in Manitoba, to boreal forest and lakes of the western provinces.

As widespread and serious as is the problem of acid rain, there are solutions. Throughout this document we will review some of the policies that would reverse the destruction of the related problems of acid rain and global warming.

Sustainable Forestry

Green plants remove carbon dioxide from the air and put oxygen back in. It was plant life that kept carbon dioxide levels balanced before humans began burning huge amounts of fossil fuels and wood.

Forests are, therefore, the lungs of the Earth. Especially critical are the tropical rain forests of South America, Latin America and Africa. But endemic poverty and reckless forest management are destroying the earth's tropical forests at an unprecedented rate. More than 27 million acres of tropical rain forests — an area the size of Pennsylvania — disappear every year. For the most part, they are burned, adding still more carbon dioxide to the air.

Deforestation of these tropical rain forests has another consequence. Millions of species of plants and animals, 50-90 percent of all living organisms, many undiscovered by humans, live in these forests. Many of these species may be extremely valuable to human welfare. Important new medicines have been derived from rain forest plants, including the most effective treatment for childhood leukemia. But these species are disappearing along with their rain forest habitat.

In the lesser developed countries that are home to these tropical forests, much of the cleared land is used for agriculture, in some cases for huge ranches exporting beef to richer countries, in other cases for subsistence farming by those driven to the countryside by urban poverty. But tropical rain forest soil is low in nutrients, so the farmers and ranchers usually have to clear another stretch in a few years. Sometimes the land is logged, often to gain foreign exchange to repay the enormous foreign debts owed by many developing countries.

Saving the rain forests of the Amazon basin has become a major issue for the people of that region, often at great cost to their own safety. One example was Chico Mendes, the leader of a union of Brazilian rubber tappers who depend on the forest for their livelihoods. Mendes gained worldwide attention through his fight to stop the unrestricted clearing of tropical rain forest land by wealthy ranchers. But in 1988 he was gunned down, joining thousands of workers, peasants and Indians who were murdered when they got in the way of the developers.

More recently, Sister Dorothy Stang from Dayton, OH, an advocate for the poor and the environment, was murdered for leading protests against the illegal logging of the Amazon.

Sustainable forestry. The USW represents almost 200,000 members in the paper and forest products industries in the U.S. and Canada. Here, more than in any other industry, issues of jobs and the environment stand in contrast to each other and can only be resolved by adopting forest management practices that sustain both jobs and the environment over the long haul.

In answering this complex question, a predecessor union to the USW, the Industrial Wood and Allied Workers Union of Canada (IWA) produced, in 1990, an important policy statement, "The Forest Is the Future". IWA Canada pointed out that sustainable forestry was the solution:

> *"Our forests must be managed for long-term sustainability. That means we must constantly work to find a balance between our environmental, social and economic concerns.*
>
> *"It also means that we cannot take one-sided positions that sacrifice biological diversity, waterways or forest soil, any more than we can ignore the needs of people, jobs, communities or the economy.*
>
> *"Forest management and forest practices must consider a wide range of values and respond to numerous concerns. It takes careful and reasoned analysis; research; consultation; planning; careful design and construction of forest facilities, sites and roads; monitoring and enforcement. It also takes an ongoing commitment to invest in new, environmentally-friendly ways of harvesting timber; reforestation; intensive silviculture; research; product development; training and new markets.*
>
> *"To achieve the balance we en-*

vision, forest management must take into account the full range of human concerns for our forests. These include environmental considerations such as biodiversity and our forests' role in the exchange of gases that makes life possible on the Earth. It includes a commitment to protect forest soils, waterways and life forms that depend on them. It includes economic factors such as employment creation, the generation of wealth and export earnings; it also includes social concerns, such as the health and safety of forest workers and the preservation of viable communities based on forestry."

The USW believes in the principles of sustainable forestry, but what exactly is "sustainable forestry"?

Properly managed, forests represent a renewable resource that can provide a wide range of opportunities, both for people today and for future generations. Steelworkers and our precursor unions have long fought for sustainable forest practices in spite of opposition from industry and governments.

That struggle has never been more important than today. In many parts of the world, forests are under pressure. As we have already noted, in the Amazon Basin — home to the world's largest rainforest — millions of poor subsistence farmers are pushed by poverty to large-scale land clearances, for instance. There is also widespread illegal logging and, in some instances, extremely poor forest practices by companies bent on short-term exploitation and profits rather than long-term stewardship of people or the forests.

Similarly in Russia and Southeast Asia, illegal logging is on the rise, with the result that illegally-obtained timber appears to be abundantly feeding China's low-wage, dangerous mills and manufacturing plants.

In the Southern U.S., meanwhile, forests are increasingly crowded by urban expansion. The resulting rising prices for timber helps make unviable many Southern pulp mills, paper mills and sawmills, creating pressure that helps, for example, perpetuate the unhelpful and damaging lumber dispute between the U.S. and Canada. Too often, as well, vibrant natural forests are replaced by sterile plantations that ecologists call "biodiversity deserts" — row on row of look-alike trees spaced so that they can be serviced by tractor-drawn sprayers dispensing herbicides and fertilizers.

Over-capacity in worldwide paper production, meanwhile, not only puts downward pressure on pulp prices and thus threatens jobs and wages. It also puts unneeded pressure on forests to supply an increasing amount of fibre in a shorter time. We must find a way to stop this downward spiral.

In the Interior of British Columbia, meanwhile, forests are currently being devastated by mountain pine beetles. Some scientists believe that the infestation is a symptom of global warming — mountain pine beetles historically were killed off by three weeks of subzero weather. Today companies are ramping up production and expanding output, harvesting the beetle-infected timber. In less than a decade, however, those same mills will be idled as the beetle wood is exhausted and becomes unusable. Without firm commitments to dramatic remedial action by companies and governments, Steelworkers and their communities will be abandoned when the current boom runs out.

In spite of these and similar problems, forests nonetheless remain an important source of opportunities and hope for humanity. Forests provide a wide range of values — beautiful wood products that provide shelter, utility and warmth; paper products that equally satisfy important human



Forest-sector workers from USW precursors, PACE and IWA Canada, play an important role in ensuring sustainable forest stewardship.

needs; botanical forest products and other non-timber resources; habitat for a wide range of plant, animal and fungal species; refuge and a variety of recreational opportunities.

Forest-sector workers from USW precursors, PACE and IWA Canada, play an important role in ensuring sustainable forest stewardship. Our members, after all, know that in a very real way, the forest represents their future and their children's future. We have a built-in, immediate interest in ensuring that forests are managed not only for short-term gain but also for long-term sustainability. We want to continue producing wood and paper products under conditions that allow us safe, secure jobs in stable communities where workers produce useful products for people worldwide. Forest communities also offer a unique, satisfying way of life, often in locations far from urban centres where alternate employment is rare.

That's why, for instance, members of IWA Canada participated in a succession of land-use planning processes and forest round tables in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario and supported worker-friendly government's efforts to improve forest environment standards. Forest-sector workers sincerely want to achieve the kind of balance that maintains some forests in their natural state — as a result of planning processes in British Columbia, for example, more than 13 percent of the land base is now permanently set aside as parks, off limit to timber harvesting and other economic pursuits — while setting science-based and reasonable conditions for timber production on other parts of the land base.

Achieving a sustainable balance has never been easy, of course. Some forest companies have always resisted best forest practices in favor of getting the wood out and making a profit. There is, in fact, increasing pressure on companies operating in a global economy to turn a quick profit. That stance is incompatible with the needs of a natural resource which requires decades of care to produce a profitable stand of timber. Such a short-sighted perspective can also be detrimental to the health and well being of forest workers and their communities. The pressure to produce and increased contracting out lower workers' pay and benefits and threaten safety and environmental standards that protect the forests.

Companies everywhere have also resorted to extensive mechanization of logging and wood manufacturing processes, resulting in the loss of jobs. Forest-sector workers have therefore worked hard to convince governments and corporations to diversify their product lines and increase their efforts in silviculture, regeneration and forest renewal work. We have also advocated more research into new markets and new products. We believe that more attention to sustainable forestry and improved forest practices can contribute to increasing long term employment in resource-based communities.

In addition, by raising the value-added to each unit of timber harvested, we can ensure that each unit produces not only a higher return on investment, but also add more jobs. Thus, less timber would be harvested to ensure a consistent standard of living. This is a crucial part of a sustainable management strategy that must be pursued by the USW, governments and industry alike.

As a result of the consolidation and globalization of the forest products and paper industries, there are many possible avenues for cooperation between forest workers and environmentalists. Our members are deeply concerned about many of the recent trends in forest management, for instance. USW-represented companies are increasingly bent on short term economic strategies regardless of their potential harm to forest health and viability. There is an increase in the incidence of firms harvesting only the most readily accessible and most valuable timber while leaving the rest to rot in the forest because it cannot be processed in a sufficiently profitable way. Such practices impact both our members' employment prospects and long term forest health. It also undermines the public's faith that we are doing our best to steward and safeguard the resource base.

Another concern to the USW and some environmentalists is the increase in contracting out of work done by company crews. Subcontracting not only leads to poor safety standards but often forces small companies with few financial resources to take unnecessary risks while failing to take appropriate care of the land base. Small contractors often cannot hire or consult specialists in forest management or planning and therefore neglect important aspects of the ecosystems in which they operate.

The USW and environmentalists also share concern on toxic exposures. In some workplaces, workers are forced to use and apply herbicides, fertilizers and other chemicals to standing timber or to manufactured products. There are many

instances of severe damage to workers', community or forest health as a result of improper handling of hazardous chemicals.

In Canada, the USW is committed to the principles of sustainable forestry and to a process of change designed to realize the goal of more sustainable production of wood and paper products.

In the U.S., our union advocates dialogue with responsible environmental organizations over how the principles of sustainable forestry should be applied on both private and public lands. We know we won't always agree on every issue or on every timber sale, but we believe that the previous conflict over forest management issues has been exploited by right-wing corporate interests to the detriment of our union.

Additionally, in the U.S., our union continues its long support for the Endangered Species Act (ESA), its opposition to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and its opposition to logging in the Tongass National Forest. The ESA has been the legislative cornerstone for maintaining biodiversity in the U.S. since its passage in 1973. Managing a complex ecosystem is essential to our own survival. Just as miners once carried canaries into their mines to warn them of bad air, so loss of our planet's unique species is a warning of possible mismanagement of the earth's resources.

In both the U.S. and Canada, we oppose the renegotiation of the Softwood Lumber Agreement in a way that encourages the export of Canadian timber, resulting in the loss of value added jobs in Canada and the destruction of logging jobs in the U.S. In general, the globalization of the world's forest products' industries has led to the displacement of North American workers and destabilized their communities. Companies like International Paper and Georgia Pacific (now Koch Industries) have focused on developing foreign sources of fiber in Chile, Russia, Brazil and Indonesia instead of concentrating on long term sustainable forest practices in North America. These trends toward globalization, in turn, put pressure on domestic logging companies to adopt destructive environmental practices and to cut safety programs. British Columbia, in particular, has seen a tragic rise in forest fatalities in the logging industry.

Public policies that affect land management and logging are fundamentally different in the U.S. and Canada. In the U.S. public lands make up only about 5 percent of the available timber resource. In British Columbia, virtually the opposite is true; public lands make up over 90 percent of the land available for logging. In Canada, our union advocates public policy collaborations between reasonable stakeholders to advance sustainable forestry.

In the U.S., where regulatory frameworks frequently affect private landowners, collaboration is more difficult. The U.S. National Forest Service policy has encouraged more litigation than is necessary. The USW advocates collaboration with environmental organizations to jointly lobby for resolution of national forest management plans earlier in the process. For instance, a joint labor/environmental initiative to build consensus in the Western states on federal forest management issues would help win support for sustainable forestry and reduce the boom and bust cycle so common in forest communities.

In spite of the challenges and obstacles the forest sector faces today, wood remains an important part of a worldwide strategy for economic sustainability. Timber, after all, is a renewable resource. Through the product life cycle from planting to recycling, wood uses less water, energy and raw materials than many other building materials. Wood and paper products contribute in a myriad of ways to human health and well-being. That's why it is crucial that we establish the right balance between our environmental, social and economic needs in the forest sector. And it's why Steelworkers are committed to sustainable forest management and the sustainable production and use of wood and paper products.

Ozone Depletion

Fifteen years ago, we warned that carbon dioxide was not the only trace gas threatening the planet. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are a group of chemicals including Freon and Halon. They were widely used as refrigerants, solvents, fire suppression agents, aerosol propellants, and in the manufacture of plastic foams.

CFCs, and certain chlorinated solvents, can float to the upper levels of the atmosphere, where they react with naturally occurring ozone gas. Ozone is a poison at ground level, but 30 miles up it shields the Earth from damaging ultraviolet radiation. If we lose the ozone layer, the result will be widespread skin cancer, crop failure and the extinction of many species of animals and plants.

CFCs are extremely stable. They can last for 75 years or more in the upper atmosphere. One molecule of Freon can destroy a hundred thousand molecules of ozone. By 1990, holes in the ozone layer had already begun to appear around the north and south poles, where frigid temperatures accelerated the process. CFCs also contributed to the greenhouse effect and global warming, through an entirely different mechanism.

The regulation and phase out of CFCs has been an environmental success story. In 1990 new international treaties were ratified leading to the replacement of CFCs and other ozone damaging chemicals. At the Buffalo Research Lab of Allied Signal, whose 70 workers were represented by USW Local Union 8823, research on HCFCs



(hydrochlorofluorocarbons), helped discover a substitute that will not damage the atmosphere at all. As a result, the destruction of the earth's ozone layer has ceased, and its restoration is slowly underway.

Originally, scientists expected the ozone layer to be restored over the next 25 years. However, it was recently discovered that the recovery is slower and the damage more persistent than first estimated. Now, scientists expect the repair of the ozone layer to take at least 40 years.

The example of the ozone depletion problem is an important one from which to learn. In 1990, refrigeration manufacturers complained that banning CFCs would result in massive job loss in their industries. They claimed that the public health risks from banning their refrigeration products were more serious than the long term effects of destroying the ozone layer. They also claimed that the regulations would be unenforceable since foreign manufacturers would take advantage of loose regulatory processes in their own countries and continue to use CFCs. While regulation is always an issue, these claims all turned out to be false. The companies were simply trying to protect their short term profit margins at the expense of the public's long term health interests.

The company arguments against environmental regulation are not new. These are the same arguments we hear everyday in our life as a union when we try to improve the wages, benefits and working conditions of our members. Regulations of the environmental practices of corporations, when they are uniform and consistently enforced, do not cost jobs. They improve the quality of our environment both inside and outside of the workplace.

The Oceans

Throughout the history of civilization, the ocean has been one of the chief food sources for human beings. Until recently, the ocean's ability to regenerate most species was considered inexhaustible. However, the expansion of industrial fishing fleets has proven that not only are large oceanic mammals like whales at risk — so are most fish species.

From the famous cod fisheries of the North Atlantic to the orange roughy of New Zealand, contemporary fisheries can now be exhausted in a few short years. As coastal waters have become exhausted, new species are subject to commercial fishing in ever deeper waters. In its 1998 report, Year of the Ocean—Ensuring the Sustainability of Ocean Living Resources, the U.S. government acknowledged, "Both U.S. and world fisheries, with a few exceptions, exhibit flat or declining trends in harvests and the majority are thought to be fully or over-utilized."

Consider the Chilean sea bass, unknown as a commercial fish until the 1990's. Today, the Chilean sea bass, for a few short years a favorite in restaurants around the world, is an endangered species. This particular fish lives in the deep, cold waters off the southern coasts of South America, taking ten years to reach reproductive maturity. Modern refrigeration and transportation systems turned the Chilean sea bass into a global commodity and quickly led to its near extinction.

The same is true of species ranging from Caspian sturgeon to swordfish to certain kinds of tuna. Huge industrial "floating fish factories" roam the world over with nets that are several miles long, catching and processing fish at an ever-escalating rate. We must note the role that globalization has played in forever altering the relationship between humankind and the oceans. Where once the ocean provided local food stuffs and a transportation medium between local economies, today the ocean is mined as a natural resource for commodities as far ranging as oil, natural gas and halibut steaks. Unless the ocean is treated and regulated as the exhaustible resource it is, the impact on its ability to sustain human life will be profoundly altered.

In this regard, we must mention one of the primary tenants of the The United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, "In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence." In Asia alone over 1 billion people depend on the ocean as their primary source of protein. Managing the ocean in a sustainable fashion is one of our great challenges.

The ocean is also at risk from pollution. On March 24, 1989, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Alaskan waters. The accident could have been much worse; the spilled oil represented only 6 percent of the ship's cargo. Even so, despite billions of dollars of "clean-up", a 2001 study showed that 58 percent of 91 tested shoreline spots still suffered from oil pollution. The ultimate damage to the environment is still not completely known.

Oil spills are not the only threat to the oceans. About one quarter of North American waste water is dumped directly into the sea, including millions of pounds of toxic chemicals. Some solid waste also is dumped at sea, out of sight of the shore. The hypodermic needles and other medical waste washing up on our beaches are only the most visible signs.

Much of the life of the sea is nurtured by natural bays and marshes along the coastline. But many of these natural areas have been destroyed by unrestrained development. Everyone recognizes today that the severity of the damage of the 2005 hurricane season in the U.S. was greatly aggravated by destruction of the natural coast line on the Gulf Coast.

The pollution of the seas already threatens shellfish in many areas. In the future, it could seriously diminish the supply of fish needed to feed the world's population. Plankton — microscopic marine plants — help remove carbon dioxide from the air, and provide the ultimate food source for most creatures in the ocean's food chain. If they are lost by oceanic pollution, the result will be global catastrophe.



Population, Poverty and the Environment

In 1800, at the start of the industrial revolution, the earth's population stood at about 500 million. Today, it is a thirteen times greater — 6.5 billion and 1.3 billion more than when our original report was written. At current rates it will double in less than 40 years. Most of this growth will take place in developing countries. As societies become wealthier, population rates have tended to fall. In the U.S. childbirth rates are 14 per 1000 women and in Canada they are 10. By comparison in Mexico childbirth rates are 23 per 1000 women. Economists have noted that none of the world's wealthy societies have raised their standards of living without first stabilizing their population growth rates at 1 percent for at least a century and having an economic growth rate that substantially exceeded their population growth rate. The population growth rate in Canada is 0.3 percent, in the U.S. 0.6 percent, while in Central America it is 2.0 percent.

Some environmentalists believe that overpopulation is a fundamental cause of environmental



degradation. In various forms, economists from the days of Robert Malthus in the late eighteenth century have argued that population growth is also the cause of poverty. However, the world produces more than enough food to feed its current population. For example, enough grain is produced to give everyone on earth two loaves of bread a day. Even more could be produced through more efficient use of our agricultural resources. The real problem is one of distribution — of poverty and wealth. Most poor countries could feed their own populations through agricultural and economic development. Done right, that development could occur in ways that do not cause environmental damage.

In fact, development also is linked to population. It is no accident that rich countries are approaching stable populations, while poor countries must deal with rapidly increasing numbers. Persons in impoverished societies tend to have more children, because children, and what they can earn, are essential to survival. Population growth cannot be limited without a worldwide attack on poverty.

In 1992, the Rio Conference on Environment and Development linked the issues of economic and environmental sustainability on a global basis for the first time. Its Third Principle reads, "The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations." The Kyoto Treaty of 1995 on global warming was a direct outgrowth of this historic conference. Each year since Kyoto, the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP) has met to take measure of the progress achieved by the global community.

In December, 2005 the COP-11 was hosted by Canada in Montreal. At this conference representatives of the USW appeared with other NGO representatives of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and argued strongly for immediate engagement by the governments of the U.S. and Canada on the critical goals of the global warming treaty and economic and environmental sustainability.

In the era of modern globalization, we will be unsuccessful in solving critical environmental challenges without also solving the challenges of global poverty and the political and social instability that accompanies in it. In a fundamental sense, the connection between economic justice and environmental sustainability on a global basis has linked the labor and environmental movements in every country. Without the two movements acting in concert, neither movement can succeed.





SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD

Our Union and the Environment

A Union Issue?

A Union Issue?

The problems of global warming, acid rain, ozone depletion, oceanic pollution and world poverty remind us that we can no longer think of ourselves solely as citizens of the U.S. or Canada, or even as North Americans. The potential catastrophe is global. The environment must be a global issue.

But is it a union issue? Should we work to protect the environment merely as good citizens, or is there a special role for our union to play? And what about industries where environmental regulations are opposed by the employers where our members work? Whose interest should we support, the environment or the employer?

The answer to our question is clear. The environment is an essential union issue, the same way that globalization and trade are essential union issues. If we are to be successful in pursuing a world that is more economically just and sustainable in the long-term, environmental work must be part of our mission at every level of the union.

In a global economy, the issues of labor, environmental and human rights have become inseparably linked. During the last fifteen years, we have seen the devastation that lack of labor standards in trade agreements caused industrial communities. Millions of manufacturing jobs were destroyed in North America, relocated to low-wage, poorly regulated economies. Middle class communities deteriorated. Living standards declined rapidly in economically abandoned areas of both our countries.

The enormous downward pressure of the global economy has eroded environmental standards as well. Common sense solutions to cleaning up the environment have been replaced by corporate recklessness in the face of mounting evidence that the effects of global warming are already upon us.

In a global economy, sustainability should be the true measure of both corporate conduct and public policies. The union must now ask on behalf of our members whether a company's policies are sustainable over the long run. Or will they only benefit a few shareholders for a few short years? For instance, we must have sustainable forest management practices if our members' jobs in the forest products and paper industries are to last and their communities survive.

Sustainable economies recognize strong labor rights. They also promote sound environmental practices. And they stabilize the climate, avoiding the disastrous consequences of global warming.

The answer to our question is clear. The environment is an essential union issue, the same way that globalization and trade are essential union issues. If we are to be successful in pursuing a world that is more economically just and sustainable in the long-term, environmental work must be part of our mission at every level of the union.

First, we must protect our children's world.

Steelworkers have always fought for a better life for their children. Most of us are the descendants of immigrants who came to the United States or Canada seeking a better future, not just for themselves, but for later generations as well. They sacrificed enormously to build a finer tomorrow for their offsprings. They created this union as a force to ensure that their sons and daughters would have a better life.

Today, the greatest threat to our children's future is the destruction of their environment. Some of the worst consequences of environmental damage, such as global warming and the death of the oceans, we once believed would not occur in our lifetime. But today we realize that many of these problems are upon us now and, if we do nothing, will devastate the world of our children.

The Bush Administration believes we can ignore the problems and simply adapt. Others still believe that we can leave the problem to future generations — that is a delusion. Like a bad debt, the cost increases every day. CFCs were first developed in the 1930s. By the early 1970s several scientists warned about their capacity for damaging the ozone.

However CFC manufacturers, led by DuPont, argued for delay. CFCs were banned from aerosol sprays in the U.S. and Canada in 1978, but other uses quickly filled the gap. It took almost ten more years to achieve an agreement cutting the use of CFCs, during which time 15 billion pounds were produced. The ultimate damage has been much greater as a result.

The longer we wait, the worse it will get. It will cost billions to clean up toxic waste problems that could have been avoided for far less money, and with far fewer cases of death and disease. It will cost our children much more to tackle these problems than it will cost us. Leaving it all to them is the worst sort of irresponsibility.

But if we act today, many of the problems, particularly global warming, can be solved in a way in which far-reaching economic benefits are realized by the people of North America. As we have stated before, the global economy can be restructured in a way that raises standards of living worldwide and insures environmental sustainability. The alternative, the current path of globalization, traps all of us in a race to the bottom in which short-term corporate profits demand ever lower labor and environmental standards.

Second, protecting the environment ultimately protects our jobs.

In the 1970's when the environmental movement first started winning legislative victories cleaning up our air and water the common assumption was that protecting the environment would destroy the jobs of thousands — maybe millions — of workers in our basic, smokestack industries. What actually happened?

In hindsight, the great loss of manufacturing jobs in North America over the last three decades had very little to do with the rise of environmental regulation and everything to do with the integration of the world economy. At the time it was easy for manufacturers to point at environmental costs and blame them for the decisions to close or relocate factories. Today, we can recognize that companies were really making these decisions based on the long-term profitability of operating in low wage countries. The auto industry didn't outsource its part suppliers to Mexico and China because of environmental costs, but because labor costs could be reduced by as much as 90 percent. New mines were opened in South America and Indonesia because of lax labor laws and low labor costs. In the last five years, we can clearly see that the three million manufacturing jobs that vanished from the U.S. economy had almost nothing to do with domestic environmental regulation, and everything to do with U.S. corporate trade policy.

In a technological sense, the solutions to environmental problems are well within our grasp. Some may require continued research while we take the first steps, but none are beyond our technical capacity. Air and water pollution can be virtually eliminated by redesigning manufacturing processes, switching to cleaner products, installing good control technology, and recycling more of what we currently throw away.

Many toxic chemicals can be replaced by safer ones. Those that cannot, can be confined to closed manufacturing systems and recycled after use. Abandoned waste dumps will be with us for a long time, but they too can be cleaned up through a concerted program.

Acid rain is caused by a particular form of air pollution — oxides of sulfur and nitrogen. Acid rain can be controlled by capturing those pollutants through the use of scrubbers and other devices installed on power plants, certain industrial sources, and automobiles.



The ozone layer is being restored by phasing out the chlorofluorocarbons and other chemicals that destroy it. The international agreements on ozone depletion and the successful use of substitutes show that even worldwide problems can be solved.

Solutions to global warming will be much more difficult. Cutting carbon dioxide emissions will take a massive worldwide effort — but it can be done. However, the U.S. must engage in the international process initiated by the Kyoto Treaty. Technological barriers are not the problem. Political barriers, thrown up by the oil and coal lobbies are.

Immediate gains can be made by more efficient use of energy, such as better building insulation, greater automotive fuel efficiency, new mass transit systems and improved energy recovery in industrial plants. West Germany and Japan, for example, are almost twice as energy efficient as North America, as measured by the amount of energy it takes to produce an equivalent amount of gross national product.

The future energy needs of the U.S. can either be met through the construction of 120 plus new coal-fired power plants or through investment in alternate nonpolluting sources of energy-like wind, solar, and biomass. Today, Germany directly employs 40,000 people in its wind energy industry which consumes more steel in Germany than any other industry except automotive. Germany, with a fraction of the U.S. land mass and one-fourth our population, produces three times as much wind energy. Capital costs for the production of wind energy in prime locations are now lower than for coal. Economic studies from the Union of Concerned Scientists show that investment in renewable energy sources also creates more jobs — four times more jobs than with natural gas and 40

percent more than with coal. No one believes that coal and natural gas will disappear from our energy mix, but our expanding energy needs can and must be met from clean renewable energy sources. We also need to study the role of safe and well-secured nuclear power in our power mix to determine whether its challenges, such as the development of an experimental safe nuclear reactor and the permanent disposal of nuclear waste, can be resolved satisfactorily.

None of this, however, will be easy. The real problems are not technical — they are economic and political. Our society will change enormously regardless of which path we choose, either through our efforts to save our environment, or because environmental destruction finally overwhelms us. In a very real sense we can either choose to prevent the future generation of storms like Katrina and Rita or we can choose to rebuild repeatedly from an ever increasing cycle of destructive weather disasters. Regardless, our countries will have to provide equitable and effective emergency responses to such tragedies, including the building of levees even in poor neighbourhoods. As a union, we cannot stand aside from these issues. Our choices are to be the victims of change, or to control that change to the benefit of ourselves and our children.



We also want to note the trend toward government and private enterprise outsourcing which makes accountability more and more difficult. When the essential functions of any organization are increasingly fragmented and responsibilities are diffused throughout multiple companies — each of which is driven by its own profit-motive — effective social outcomes are less likely. Overall environmental goals become difficult to achieve. And health and safety concerns of workers and communities are brushed aside. This is especially true in British Columbia (BC) today in the logging industry where the dismantling of government enforced standards has led to the highest fatality rates in modern BC logging history.

Steelworkers have heard the argument before that environmental protection causes job losses. For many years companies have tried to use economic and environmental blackmail on the union and its members. In every fight for a new health and safety regulation, or better wages, or improved pensions, there is a corporate economist to tell us that if we persist, the company or the industry will fold, with hundreds or thousands of lost jobs. It rarely turns out to be true, and for good reason. Someone has to design the cleaner process or equipment. Someone has to build it. Someone has to install it. Someone has to operate it. Someone has to maintain it.

In the long run, the real choice is not jobs or the environment. It's both or neither. What kind of jobs will be possible in a world of depleted resources, poisoned water and foul air, a world where ozone depletion and greenhouse warming make it difficult even to survive? Securing our children's world, ensuring clean jobs, and planning a decent future are too important to leave to management alone.

Even in the short run, companies that exist only by destroying their resource base, or pushing their environmental costs off onto others, will not be in business very long. Some plants have shut down, not because they acted responsibly toward their neighbors, but because they did not. For example, the Johns Manville Corporation declared bankruptcy in 1982 after projecting billions of dollars of potential liability for diseases caused by the company's failure to warn users about the risks of asbestos. Thousands of workers lost their jobs in the resulting shake-up.

Jobs can be lost in any time of change — and the changes ahead are enormous.

Sometimes the cause is short-term greed, the desire to make a fast buck and get out, abandoning workers and the community. Sometimes the cause is management's unwillingness or inability to adapt to changing conditions. The Ethyl plant in Baton

Rouge, La., was a major producer of lead additives for gasoline. When the government banned leaded gas in 1985, management shut the plant down, putting more than a thousand members of USWA Local Union 12900 out of work. Yet the plant could have adapted to the manufacture of other products, as Allied Signal is doing in the example cited earlier.

Or look at the current example of the U.S. automotive industry which has steadfastly opposed improved fuel efficiency standards. Now, in an era of high gas prices, consumers cannot afford to drive inefficient engines. The U.S. Big Three's share of the North American auto market is now at an all time low. Failure to operate in an environmentally sustainable fashion has grave economic consequences for workers.

Some corporate managers try to pass the cost of their own misdeeds off onto their workers. For example, at Uniroyal Chemical, near Guelph, Ontario, 230 members of USWA Local Union 13691 went on strike in May 1990, when the company demanded concessions in order to pay the cost of cleaning up a leaky, poorly designed waste site.

The Steelworkers Toronto Area Council has embarked on a program to include environmental issues in bargaining with those employers who use or produce large quantities of toxic materials. Instead of waiting for those employers to demand concessions because of their failure to address environmental concerns, the union is building a pro-active approach, identifying the problems, meeting with the community, and devising strategies for improvement. Working with local environmental groups and other unions as well as City Council and Public Health, the Steelworkers are part of the city's "Community Right to Know" initiative to clean up the city and reduce chemical hazards.

Some companies understand that their own survival depends on their environmental record, but many do not. We cannot expect the company or the government to defend our interests for us. Protecting our children's future and our own jobs requires collective bargaining and political action. We must push our own companies to improve, not only as a way of protecting the environment, but as a way of preserving jobs as well. At the same time, we must recognize that some plants will close no matter what we do. It does not help these workers to argue that other jobs will be created somewhere else, in some other industry. Protecting the environment does create jobs overall, but displaced workers need jobs in their own communities, not the knowledge that others are benefiting from their sacrifice. It is, after all, the worker, not the government or corporate stockholder, who has the most to lose when a plant closes.

Just transition. It is fundamentally unfair to require working people to absorb the cost of environmental controls that benefit society as a whole. Nor is it politically workable, since it inevitably creates opposition to environmental reform, and pits workers against environmentalists.

The only answer is to link environmental reform with economic justice. Cleaning up the environment and improving public health should never be accomplished on the backs of workers. In particular, income protection and job retraining should be automatic for those who are displaced because of new environmental regulations, or the failure of their employers to adapt.

Ultimately, protecting the environment will require cleaner products, methods of production and sources of energy.

In the past, the USW and other unions lobbied intensively to add an Environmental Adjustment Assistance provision to the Clean Air Act, and to make similar improvements to the unemployment compensation systems in Canada. In addition, companies that curtail operations temporarily in order to install new equipment, or to comply with pollution regulations, should be required to continue the earnings of affected workers. In fact, such a provision was written into the 1977 Clean Air Act Amend-ments in the United States, for workers in copper smelters that shut down temporarily in order to reduce their average emissions to allowable levels. At the Rocky Flats nuclear plant in Golden, Colo., USW Local Union 8031 won an order from the U.S. Department of Energy requiring full earnings protection while production was suspended for a thorough cleanup. In Canada, Local 1064 continues to actively lobby for work for its members in the clean up of the coke ovens and tar ponds of Sydney Steel, now that the steel mill has closed.

Ultimately, protecting the environment will require cleaner products, methods of production and sources of energy. That, in turn, will take research. Direct steelmaking that bypasses coke ovens and blast furnaces is one such technology. Inert anode and wettable cathode technology in the aluminum industry is another. These new methods could greatly cut plant pollution and energy costs and increase the competitiveness of North American companies. But without proper planning, it could affect thousands of jobs and further impoverish



steelworker communities. Technological improvements are essential to a cleaner environment. However, new technology — especially that funded by the government — must be subject to democratic planning, and introduced in a way that protects the economic interests of workers and communities, as well as companies.

We cannot serve our members by ignoring environmental issues. We cannot protect them by pretending to resist change. Our mission is to adapt to change and to channel it for the long-term benefit of our members and all working people.

Third, Globalization is our common foe, linking the environment to other union issues.

Economic forces are the key to almost every union issue. Environmental issues are no different.

Companies usually try to "externalize" their costs — to make someone else pay part of the real cost of production, for example when workers are asked to pick up part of the cost of their health insurance.

Sometimes those costs are hidden. Bad working conditions lead to an increase in occupational accidents and illness. Some of that cost is paid by the workers' compensation system; most of it, however, is absorbed by the victims themselves in disability and lost income, and by all the rest of us, in higher overall medical and insurance bills.

Often these externalized costs are much larger than the costs the company avoided by refusing to improve conditions in the first place. But the company's concern is its own bottom line, not the overall cost to society.

As trade unionists, we understand this process well. Our efforts to win higher wages, improved pensions, adequate insurance and safe working conditions are efforts to stop the company from dumping its costs onto us.

Environmental economics work the same. Some companies try to maximize their profits by ignoring the cost to the environment. Pollution is pumped into the air and water, toxic chemicals are allowed to escape, greenhouse and ozone-depleting gases are generated because the cost to the environment never appears in the company's balance sheet.

But the cost is real. And while the cost of environmental damage may be external to the company, the earth itself is a closed system. Considering the earth as a whole, there is no such thing as an external cost.

A healthy economy is essential to a healthy environment. Protecting the environment ultimately means more efficient production, with less drain on the earth's resources, and less waste. But it will cost money to research, design and implement new controls; it will cost money to substitute new products for old.

Economic justice is critical. Without a full em-

ployment economy, workers displaced because their companies failed to adapt will be unable to find new jobs. Labor rights are important also, to ensure that jobs provide decent wages and benefits. In fact, the environment impacts almost every labor issue. Our health care system, for example, is stressed by the burden of environmental disease. The problems of poor people and minorities are made worse by the fact that they are often forced to live in the most polluted areas.

On a global scale, it is useless to work for a clean environment without also working for economic justice and human rights. It is no accident that a country like Indonesia, where the U.S.-based Newmont Mining Company was recently exposed for polluting coastal fishing areas with dangerous carcinogens and Freeport Mining acknowledged bribing the country's military leaders, has both low wage levels and repressive labor rights. It is no accident that the residents of maquiladora areas on the U.S.-Mexican border live in polluted hovels surrounded by raw sewage, walking to work in factories like the Alcoa wire harness plant in Peidras Negras that pays $.87 an hour doing jobs once performed in the U.S.

Our union is well aware that the same companies who are the worst violators of labor laws and human rights standards, invariably are the worst polluters and violators of environmental regulations.

Some companies may try to avoid strong environmental regulations by moving overseas. But the answer is not to repeal our own laws, any more than the answer to global competition is to cut our own wages to poverty levels. Instead, we should work with unions and governments in developing countries to improve conditions there. This is exactly the reason the USW has recently signed strategic alliances with seven major unions in Europe, South Africa, South America, and Australia. We also need to form strategic alliances with environmental organizations in North America and other continents to influence corporate environmental conduct.

A good first step would be to stop making the problems of developing countries worse than they already are. Some industrialized countries have tried to use poorer nations as a dumping ground for toxic waste. That practice should be prohibited by international law. In addition, we should forbid the export of products and processes prohibited in the exporting country because they damage health or the environment, and work to ensure that all other exports can be used safely.

Correspondingly, we should restrict the import of products made in ways that damage the environment. It does not help the world environment to export pollution — and jobs — to countries unwilling to meet fair standards. Since the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, the world has come to understand the powerful linkage between labor rights and environmental standards. All trade agreements should contain enforceable labor and environmental standards. Without this safeguard the countries of the world will have no protection against the unethical conduct of corporations that move around the globe to escape protections for workers and the world we live in.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, set up in 1983 by the United Nations, has defined its goal as "sustainable development," finding a way to meet our present needs without destroying the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the words of the commission: "Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations for a better life. A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes."

These prophetic words are even more important today. As the rapid expansion of the economies of China and India has accelerated the shortage of natural resources throughout the world, raising the prices of commodities from oil to iron ore, economic and environmental sustainability have become critical to our survival, our prosperity and a peaceful planet.

Taking Action—A Strategic Alliance between the Labor and Environmental Movements

Fifteen years ago we pointed out that unions have always led the fight for economic justice and human rights. We have sought to increase the income of all workers, organized and unorganized. We have struggled for better working conditions and fair treatment on the job. We have worked to ensure better pensions for our parents, and a better education for our children.

Frequently, we have fought for safer working conditions — in other words, for a cleaner environment inside our plants. Workers have a gut understanding of environmental issues — 100,000 North Americans die each year from workplace diseases caused by the same chemicals that later find their way into our air and water. The environment outside the workplace is only an extension of the environment inside.

Today, the greatest threat to our children's world is the destruction of their environment. Protecting it is more than good citizenship; it is an essential program for unions and their members. And in the era of globalization, an alliance between the labor and environmental movements is fundamental to building a powerful, progressive movement for change.

The USW and its predecessor unions have had an environmental program for almost 40 years. We

held our first conference on air pollution in 1969, more than a year before the first "Earth Day." A conference in Denver examined pollution from smelters in the western United States in 1973. In 1973 the OCAW conducted the first environmental strike against the Shell Oil Company. USW District 6 held air pollution conferences as early as 1966. A 1980 USWA Convention resolution warned of the dangers of global warming, years before it became a matter of widespread public concern. In 1989, the Canadian Policy Conference adopted a strong policy paper on the environment. And from 1992 to 1995, the Canadian National office ran an education program that was delivered at local union and area council meetings focused on environmental protection and energy conservation issues.

In our early years, the USW saw environmental protection as a legislative issue. We provided strong lobbying support for nearly every major environmental bill in the U.S. Congress, the Canadian Parliament, state legislatures, and provincial assemblies. In the United States, the USW has been an active member of the National Clean Air Coalition, and was instrumental in the passage of the 1990 Clean Air Act and earlier legislation. In Canada, the USW participated in the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain. In turn, environmental groups helped us achieve many of the right-to-know laws in the United States, and effective chemical testing regulations in Canada.

Some USW locals have worked hard on environmental issues. Local Union 6500, at the Inco nickel smelter in Sudbury, Ontario, fought sulfur dioxide pollution since the local was chartered in 1961. The local helped force the Ontario government to begin measuring pollution levels in the town. In coalition with neighboring environmental and community groups, Inco steelworkers won dramatic improvements in pollution control.

Environmental committees were also established by Local Union 1010, District 31, at Inland Steel in Indiana, and Local Union 480, District 3, at the Cominco Lead/Zinc smelter in Trail, British Columbia. The committees work with environmentalists from the community to protect both jobs and the environment.

These locals pointed the way. The environment was not just a legislative issue. Protecting our children's future and our own jobs from the threat of environmental destruction is a job for all levels of the union. In recognition of this truth, the union created its new "Health, Safety and Environment" department in 1990.

Throughout the 1990's our union learned that one of the keys to winning its struggles against rogue global corporations was to build alliances with environmental organizations which were also concerned about corporate misconduct. These alliances were critical to winning our major labor disputes at Ravenswood Aluminum, Bridgestone-Firestone, AK Steel, Kaiser Aluminum, and Asarco, to name just a few.

However, some people still say the task of environmental protection is too big for any one local, or union, or country. Certainly it is. But that has never stopped us from fighting for economic justice or human rights in the past. The biologist Rene Dubos coined a phrase that sums it up: "Think globally; act locally." We should not forget the global nature of the problem, but we must not be paralyzed. In this issue, as in any other, an active union can have an impact.

As union members, we have learned the value of collective action.

In fact, workers are in a key position in the fight for environmental quality. Violations of pollution regulations can be difficult for the public to spot. Nor is it possible for the government to monitor continuously every potential polluter. It is much harder to hide illegal behavior from plant workers. And through collective bargaining and the power of the union, organized workers have an especially effective tool for forcing a cleanup.

Some maintain that environmental problems can be solved through individual actions, like turning off lights, reusing plastic bags and car pooling to work. Individual efforts are valuable and they should be promoted. They can help cut pollution and decrease the waste of our resources. More important, they can help establish a personal commitment to protecting the environment.

But individual efforts are not enough. Car pooling will not force Detroit to build vehicles that do not pump carbon dioxide into the air; cutting our use of plastic bags will not lead to the development of safer manufacturing processes for plastics; turning off the lights will not get scrubbers built on coal-fired utility plants or expand the use of renewable energy. In fact, individual energy use accounts for only about 30 percent of total consumption.

As union members, we have learned the value of collective action. We do not tell oppressed workers to handle it themselves, individually. We attack the problem with the strength that comes from organization. We do promote individual efforts — consumer boycotts are a good example. But we focus our efforts on organizing, collective bargain-

ing and political action. Protecting our children's world and our own jobs will require a coordinated program, involving all levels of the union.

Securing Our Children's World—A Strategic Alliance against Corporate Globalization.

Historic times demand historic responses. Since our original policy statement was published, the shape of both the labor and environmental movements has changed in North America. The historic protections fought for by both movements are under serious attack from corporate-led globalization. We have been forced to defend the very right of workers to form unions. Landmark legislation like the Clean Air Act is being considered for repeal by the U.S. Supreme Court.

That is why the United Steelworkers (USW) has proposed joining forces with the environmental movement to build a visionary, values-based response to the anti-environmental and anti-worker policies of the Bush Administration that threaten to drive us back to the 1930's.

We need an energy policy that promotes visionary solutions like clean cars and clean energy, not one that rips off consumers; fouls our land, air, and water; threatens our children's health; and places our armed forces at risk to defend an everincreasing addiction to foreign oil. We need a fair trade policy that benefits low income and working people and protects workers' rights and the environment. And we need to protect workers and their communities from irresponsible corporate practices that release toxic chemicals in our workplaces and neighborhoods, endangering us all.

Most importantly, we need a strategic message and concrete actions that unite the labor and environmental movements in providing answers to the great public policy challenges of our time. Together, we can fight for and win "Good Jobs, A Clean Environment, and A Safer World."

A sound twenty-first century energy policy can create a new generation of domestic manufacturing jobs while reducing global warming and air pollution. Hybrid and other clean cars, public transportation, efficient heating and lighting systems, and clean renewable power plants are the keys to our energy freedom. Producing them can create more than 1.4 million new jobs and strengthen our economies while simultaneously making us more secure.

A just trade policy for the twenty-first century can promote growth and prosperity across all sectors of global society, not just for multinational corporations and a few elites, and would embed enforceable labor, environmental, and human rights standards in our trade agreements.

An informed twenty-first century policy on toxic chemicals can protect workers and communities from dangerous chemicals by sounding the alarm on dangers and promoting safer alternatives.

In the current political climate in the U.S., we must make labor/ environmental alliances a real political force in our communities and in state and local government.

Our countries are at risk. A century of environmental and workers' rights protections are in danger of being rolled back. We can and must act.

Our Next Steps. As always, the most important actions must take place at the local union level. First, local unions should establish a structure for dealing with environmental issues. In large locals, an environmental committee should be formed. In smaller locals, the issue can be handled by the safety and health committee. Whatever the structure, the committee should have the support and interest of the local union officers and the staff representative.

The first job of the local environmental committee must be to provide education to our members on the critical environmental issues of the day such as global warming or air quality and how they directly impact our members, their jobs, and their communities. In order to adequately arm our environmental committees, the International Union will provide educational materials for training our members on environmental issues. We have already found that both environmental organizations and some foundations will collaborate with us in this effort. Just as we taught the importance of international trade to our members' jobs and communities, now we must do the same around environmental issues.

In the current political climate in the U.S., we must make labor/environmental alliances a real political force in our communities and in state and local government. Our local union political action committees must take up this task. In the last five years Blue/Green Alliances have emerged in more than a dozen states taking on initiatives ranging from Renewable Energy Standards to corporate campaigns against rogue USW employers like AK Steel, Kaiser Aluminum and ASARCO. Building coalitions to gain strength for progressive causes should become a priority for our local unions.

The make up of the U.S. Congress illustrates clearly the natural alliance between the labor and environmental movements and also the benefits to



be gained from exploiting it. A study of 2004 voting records of the U.S. House of Representatives shows that the pro-labor and pro-environmental members of Congress (as measured by their AFL-CIO and League of Conservation Voters voting records) are virtually identical. One hundred eight-three members of Congress voted for both labor and environmental issues more than 60 percent of the time.

Only 11 members of Congress voted for environmental issues more than 60 percent of time without also supporting labor. And only 27 members voted for labor issues that often without also voting for environmental issues. In other words, the friends and enemies of the labor and environmental movements are virtually identical.

It is interesting to note that if the labor movement succeeded in making these 27 pro-labor members of Congress pro-environmental and if the environmental movement changed the views of these 11 pro-environment members on labor issues, then the labor/environmental coalition would have the support of a majority of Congress, 221 members. The ten-year domination of anti-labor, anti-environmental forces in the U.S. House of Representatives would be over. Together, we win; divided, we fail.

Take the example of one right-wing congressman from Calif., This member was elected to congress vowing to repeal or gut the Endangered Species Act, the law that helped save the bald eagle from extinction. In addition to having a 3 percent voting record on environmental issues, this congressman has only a 12 percent lifetime voting record on labor issues, including votes in 2004 against providing an extension of unemployment benefits to laid off workers while voting for legislation (HR 4520) that provided $40 billion in Foreign Sales Corporation tax breaks to companies that exported American jobs . This congressman is a perfect example of why the labor and environmental movements in the U.S. must work collaboratively to stop corporate-led globalization from pushing all of us back to the nineteenth century.

In Canada, the value of labor and environmental coalitions expresses itself differently. The right-wing corporate agenda of globalization has not yet taken root to the degree it has in the U.S. Nonetheless, many cherished Canadian values like its national health care system are under attack. The progress on environmental issues of the 1980's and early 1990's has stalled. Federal politics is dominated by a corporate agenda. And corporate trade deals threaten the security of Canadian jobs. Historically, the USW in Canada has supported important environmental initiatives such as the Kyoto Treaty through its support of the New Democratic Party and Parti Quebecois. Alliance building with the Canadian environmental movement can help strengthen these political alliances and avoid splitting the anti-corporate agenda between the NDP and the Green Party. Unity in future federal and provincial elections will be important to turn back the right-wing assault on both labor and environmental protections.

In the area of trade reform, the labor and environmental coalitions in both countries have provided a powerful critique of the failures of official U.S. and Canadian trade policies over the last 15 years. The USW has had no better ally in its efforts to stop the North American Free Trade Agreement, Fast Track, Permanent Normalization of Trade Relations with China, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the Central American Free Trade Agreement, than the environmental movement, led by such organizations as the Sierra Club, Natural Resource Defense Council, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, Friends of the Earth, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. Time and again, these organizations have stood with us in opposing these trade agreements and calling instead for labor and environmental standards that lift up other societies while supporting our own protections.

In both countries more work must be done on defining what are acceptable "Just Transition" programs to create new jobs, training and skills for workers who are displaced by the changes in our economy and environment. If we are to be successful in managing structural changes of this magnitude, adequate resources must be allocated in taking care of the human needs generated by environmental changes. The 2005 hurricanes illustrated the depth and complexity of these needs.

Other Local Steps. But there are other actions that our local unions should also take. The environment or safety and health committee should research their company's environmental record. Are their sources of raw materials threatened? Where does their waste go? What are they dumping into the air and water? Are their products harmful? Are they in violation of any environmental laws or regulations? Much of this information is a matter of public record. All of it should be legally disclosed to the union as information needed for collective bargaining. Any of it could be critical to devising a long-term program for protecting jobs.

Armed with information, the local union could, where necessary, work to negotiate a cleanup, or a switch to safer products, before the company is forced out of business. In 1982, for example, Local Union 6887, at the Noranda copper refinery in Montreal, helped the company negotiate a temporary variance from new water pollution regulations, in return for a commitment to install state-of-the-art controls assuring the plant's long-term compliance. In 1989 Local Union 1066, at the USX

Gary Works, used its political power to force a waste handling company on the plant site to reduce its inventory of dangerous chlorine gas, and to begin working with USX on an emergency response plan.

Most USW contracts give workers the right to refuse abnormally hazardous work. This pro-vision should be extended to orders that threaten public health, or violate environmental regulations. "Whistleblower" language should be negotiated, protecting workers who report suspected environmental problems to the union or outside authorities.

Local unions can also join with environmental groups on common issues. We need them to support and understand the concerns of working people. They, in turn, can benefit from our organizational strength and knowledge of the workplace. Our corporate campaign work over the last two decades shows that the labor and environmental movements can develop "Corporate Codes of Conduct" on labor and environmental issues that change company behavior.

USW local unions at Kaiser Aluminum play-ed an important role in convincing the Bonneville Power Administration to adopt such a code dur-ing their long labor dispute. The BPA required corporate purchasers of their power to observe all existing labor and environmental regulations to receive preferential industrial rates.

Legislative Action

At the level of the International Union, we must continue to work for progressive legislation. This includes laws:

- Improving air and water quality.
- Requiring reductions in toxic waste, and restricting the use of toxic chemicals.
- Promoting recycling, in ways that protect union jobs.
- Protecting "whistleblowers" who report suspected environmental violations, and workers who refuse to carry out an order that violates environmental laws or endangers the public.
- Guaranteeing "Just Transition"—income protection and job retraining for workers displaced because of environmental problems.
- Ensuring that new technology is introduced in a way that is subject to democratic planning, and protects the interests of working people and their communities.
- Banning, or defining as an unfair trade practice, the import of products made abroad under conditions that do not meet environmental standards.
- Prohibiting the dumping of toxic waste from North America in developing countries, and the export of products or processes that are banned in the exporting country for environmental reasons. Working to ensure the safe use of all other exports.
- Supporting strong international agreements on greenhouse warming, ozone depletion, and other global issues.
- Giving financial aid and debt relief to developing countries, in order to help them achieve sustainable development.

In addition, in the U.S., the union supports the maintenance and expansion of our basic environmental protections:

- Continuation of the Endangered Species Act
- Protection of the integrity of the National Parks' system
- Increased CAFÉ standards
- A continued ban on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- Opposition to the "Clear Skies Initiative" of the Bush Administration
- Ratification of the Kyoto Treaty
- Passage of a Chemical Security Act
- Maintenance of the Community Right-to-Know Act
- Passage of a national Renewable Energy Standard of 20 percent by 2020
- Maintenance of the new source review standards of the 1990 Clean Air Act

Lastly, in recognition of the importance of this work in the era of globalization, the USW will charge the IEB Task Force on Environmental Policy to review our work in this area on at least an annual basis. In addition, a committee of our key staff in the U.S. and Canada, assigned to this work, will meet regularly to assist in the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of this report.

Conclusion

None of this will be easy. Environmental issues involve difficult technical, economic and political questions. In the era of globalization, we have witnessed the power of new economic forces destroy well-known companies and the jobs and communities that they supported. We have witnessed massive economic dislocation. We have also come to realize that these same economic forces, if unchecked, can also destroy our environment with even more disastrous economic consequences than the 2005 hurricanes or the pine bark beetle of western Canada. As daunting as the problems are, we believe that meeting such challenges also holds the promise of a better life.

As trade unionists we are fundamentally optimistic in our belief that humankind only sets such problems for itself as it can solve. The issue is not simply our ability to solve environmental challenges. The issue is how they will be solved and to whose benefit.

Economic and environmental sustainability are the keys to our success, both as a union and as citizens of our two countries. These must become the watchwords of our union. Are our employers embracing these two principles? Are our elected political leaders? If we believe in a future of Good Jobs, A Clean Environment, and A Safer World, then we must act.

An essential part of our moral responsibility as union leaders is to defend the long-term interests of working people. It has been said that we inherit the earth from our parents. But in reality, we borrow it from our children. It is our children's world. We must not fail to protect it.

International Executive Board Unanimously Supports Securing Our Children's World

On March 1, the members of the International Executive Board of the United Steelworkers (USW) voted unanimously to support the recommendations set forth in the report, *Securing Our Children's World*.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

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International Secretary-Treasurer

Thomas M. Conway
Inteternational Vice President (Administration)

Fred Redmond
International Vice President (Human Affairs)

Ken Neumann
National Director for Canada

Richard LaCosse
International Vice President

James E. Pannell
Administrative Vice President

Ron Hoover
Executive Vice President (R/PIC)

James H. Dunn
Associate Secretary-Treasurer

Lewis Peacock
Vice President (Organizing)

James K. Phillips, Jr.
Vice President at Large

Kenneth Test
Co-Director

David McCall
Director, District 1

Gerald P. Johnston
Co-Director, District 1

Jon Geenen
Director, District 2

Stephen Hunt
Director, District 3

William Pienta
Director, District 4

Gary B. Cook
Co-Director, District 4

Michel Arsenault
Director, District 5

Wayne Fraser
Director, District 6

Jim Robinson
Director, District 7

William R. Gibbons
Co-Director, District 7

Ernest R. "Billy" Thompson
Director, District 8

Robert E. Smith
Co-Director, District 8

Connie Entrekin
Director, District 9

Donald L. Langham
Co-Director, District 9

Lloyd Walters
Co-Director, District 9

John DeFazio
Director, District 10

Robert Bratulich
Director, District 11

Terry L. Bonds
Director, District 12

Roger A. Heiser
Co-Director, District 12

Gary W. Beevers
Director, District 13

"An unregulated global economy that increases the gap between rich and poor and ignores sound environmental science will ultimately destroy the good jobs and healthy environment that are the legacy of the North American trade union movement."

SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S WORLD

Our Union and the Environment

February 28, 2006

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