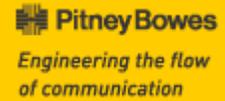




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POLITICS AND POLICY

Environmentalists, Industry Join Forces on Global Warming

By **JEFFREY BALL**
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

A group of strange bedfellows representing industry, environmental groups and unions called for more-aggressive federal action to address global warming.

Under the auspices of a group called the Energy Future Coalition, representatives of the auto, coal and oil industries joined with their traditional foes in the environmental and labor movements to call on Washington to ratchet up spending on programs to help industry reduce its emissions of so-called greenhouse gases.

While most of the industry representatives made clear that they would oppose any government cap on greenhouse-gas emissions, they indicated they are concluding that Washington ultimately is likely to impose such a mandate -- even though the Bush administration opposes a cap. At an announcement in Washington, the Energy Future Coalition called on the U.S. to cut both its oil consumption and its carbon emissions by one-third over the next 25 years.

To prepare for the possibility of a greenhouse-gas-emissions cap, the energy group said it wants the federal government to spend more on such programs as tax incentives for fuel-efficient cars and research into underground storage of carbon dioxide after it is emitted by coal-fired power plants. Vehicles and coal-burning power plants are two major sources of carbon dioxide, the chief suspected greenhouse gas.

An spokeswoman said the Bush administration has proposed some of the moves endorsed by the energy group, including tax breaks for fuel-efficient vehicles and further research into "sequestration" of carbon dioxide. However, noting that some of the energy group's members want a greenhouse-gas cap, she said: "We've gone in another direction."

The Energy Future Coalition is the latest of several groups trying to bring industry and environmental representatives together to focus U.S. attention on global warming. But organizers of the bipartisan Washington group, funded by a handful of foundations, hope it will pack particular political punch.

"We hope this voluntary effort will provide cover for those who have the difficult task of dealing with the various interest groups" debating national energy policy, said C. Boyden Gray, White House counsel to former President George H.W. Bush and a lead organizer of the Energy Future Coalition.

"If the political establishment looks up and says, 'We can move beyond the current inertia in the system,' they'd find a very broad coalition," added John Podesta, White House chief of staff under President Clinton and another main organizer of the group.

But the group's announcement did as much to show how strongly industry and environmentalists continue to disagree about global warming as to suggest common ground. Environmentalists made clear they want the Bush administration to impose a greenhouse-gas cap along the lines of the Kyoto global-warming treaty, a document the administration has rejected. Several industry representatives said they continue to oppose a cap, though they want to figure out how to reduce the cost of compliance if one is imposed.

"We don't agree that these emissions are necessarily causing climate change. And we don't, as a consequence, agree that there ought to be caps on CO(2) emissions," said Thomas Hoffman, vice president of investor and public relations for Consol Energy Inc., a Pittsburgh coal producer that is participating in the Energy Future Coalition. But he added: "We know that environmentalists believe what they believe, and they believe it passionately. And, from a policy perspective, the issue's not going to go away."

Write to Jeffrey Ball at jeffrey.ball@wsj.com¹

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(1) <mailto:jeffrey.ball@wsj.com>

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