

The President's Internet Address *November 11, 2000*

Next week representatives from around the world will gather to help shape an international response to one of the greatest challenges we face, the threat of global warming. Today I want to talk with you about what this challenge means for the United States and how we can meet it together. The scientific consensus is clear: The Earth is warming, and there is strong evidence that human activity is part of the reason why.

Today I received a report from some of our leading scientists that provides the most detailed assessment ever of the potential impacts of global warming across the United States. This landmark report, undertaken at the request of Congress, pulls together a great deal of scientific analysis and paints a sobering picture of the future.

Scientists project that continued growth in greenhouse gas emissions could raise temperatures across our country by 5 to 9 degrees over the next 100 years. To put that in perspective, the Earth has not seen a temperature change of that magnitude since the end of the last ice age, about 15,000 years ago. This new study makes clear that this projected warming threatens serious harm to our environment and to our economy. It could mean more flooding, more droughts, more extreme weather, and a serious disruption in water supplies.

It could mean rising sea levels, the loss of species, and the destruction of entire ecosystems such as the Alpine meadows of the Rocky Mountains. What's more, the scientists warn, there may be many other impacts that we simply cannot predict.

Fortunately, there are steps we can take now to help avert these threats to our future. That's why for the past 8 years Vice President Gore and I have pursued commonsense strategies to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. We've expanded research and development of solar, wind, biofuels, and other renewable energy resources.

We've taken dramatic steps to reduce energy use by the Federal Government, the world's largest energy consumer. We've adopted stronger energy-efficient standards for appliances and forged new alliances with industry, including the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. These are all steps that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while saving consumers money and strengthening our economy.

But we must do more. That is why today I'm calling for a dramatic new approach to reducing air pollution from America's powerplants, a comprehensive new clean air strategy that will produce significant reductions in the emissions that contribute to global warming.

By adopting one integrated strategy that addresses all the major pollutants—including mercury and carbon dioxide, the largest contributor to global warming—we can give electric utilities the flexibility they need to meet our clean air goals in a cost-effective way. A key part of this strategy is the use of emissions trading, which has proven so effective in curbing the pollution that causes acid rain. There is strong bipartisan support for this approach, and I urge the next Congress to take it up as soon as possible.

As we accelerate our efforts here at home, we are committed to working with other nations to take strong and sensible action to curb global warming. As the world comes together next week in The Hague, the United States will work to make real progress toward a treaty that is both environmentally strong and cost-effective. We must continue to move forward together. The stakes of not acting are simply too high.

Thanks for logging on.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:45 a.m. on November 10 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 8 a.m. on November 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.