



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *107th* CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

House of Representatives

September 9, 2002

The Honorable **Ciro D. Rodriguez**

Of Texas

U.S. Should Assume International Leadership Role on the Environment

Mr. Speaker, I expected that the United States would have taken a leadership role in the recent international summit on sustainable development. Instead, I am disappointed to report that this Administration has taken a back seat in international discussions on global warming and increasing the use of renewable energy.

GLOBAL WARMING

The United States is the number one contributor of greenhouse gases worldwide. We have a responsibility to provide the necessary international leadership to address global warming. It is shameful that the Bush Administration has elected to ignore that responsibility. Not only did the Bush Administration decide that the United States should not take a leadership role on addressing the challenges presented by global warming, but worse, it also tried desperately to keep the climate change issue off of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Agenda earlier this month in Johannesburg.

We may not agree with every international recommendation, and we must chart our own course. But at the same time we must engage the issue not only here at home but also with our global neighbors

around the world. If we don't show leadership, then we abdicate leadership.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Even though we in the U.S. account for only 4 percent of the world's population, we account for 20 percent of the world's energy use. We are the world's great producer and great consumer. We must take responsibility for the consequences of our prosperity. Simply seeking voluntary standards to protect the environment will not solve the problem. Without some sort of specific timetables or goals, we will never get there. Partnerships are successful only when there is binding accountability. The Enron and WorldCom scandals have shown us the hard way that corporate self-policing will not work. We don't need corporations to do to our environment what they have done to their employees' 401 Ks.

Our national energy policy must include a forward-thinking plan to increase the use of renewable energy -- in our buildings, automobiles, and appliances, the large sources of carbon dioxide emissions. Tax credits, incentives to use smart energy plans, and efficiency programs such as those offered by the Brooks Energy Sustainability Lab are all steps in the right direction to create more energy-efficient buildings and appliances.