Wind Power: Taking the World by Storm
P R E S I D E N T ’ S  C O L U M N

We Won’t Let Big Business Rule the World

Our commander in chief is turning out to be the polluter in chief. To satisfy his corporate contributors, President Bush has put in play the most damaging, wide-reaching energy legislation to be considered by Congress in a decade. If he has his way, Congress will soon hand out billions in subsidies to the dirty oil, coal and nuclear industries and only a nod to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar (see Pg. 4).

In July Congress took action to place tougher regulations on runaway corporations by passing the Sarbanes bill. But a few days later, oblivious to contradictions, Congress also passed a “fast track” trade bill that is really a massive global deregulation plan. Rather than placing urgently needed controls on global polluters, the “fast track” bill actually paves the way for giving them new tools to challenge health and environmental regulations.

As the House and Senate finalized the “fast track” deal and negotiated over crucial differences in energy legislation, such as oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, we’ve been preparing strategies for votes this fall. And our political arm, Friends of the Earth Action, has been targeting key congressional races where we’ll send staff and financial support (see Pg. 13).

But the halls of Congress are far from the only place where we’re moving forward on behalf of the environment. As you’ll read in this newsmagazine, we’re conducting consumer campaigns, watchdog efforts and litigation strategies, with allies here and abroad. I’d like to highlight three recent initiatives.

The Friends of the Earth International network, now in 70 countries, was present in force at the most important international meeting on the environment and poverty in a decade, to deliver the message that “we won’t let big business rule the world.” It’s the second U.N. Earth summit, being held in Johannesburg, South Africa, Aug. 26 – Sept. 4, and is called the World Summit on Sustainable Development (see Pg. 9).

At a Coal Summit in West Virginia I spoke to activists and citizens concerned that coal companies are turning Appalachia into a moonscape, through mountain-top removal coal mining. The rogue coal companies are blowing the tops off mountains and devastating streams, trees and wildlife there. Kevin Richardson of the band Backstreet Boys testified before Congress against this destructive practice (see Pg. 14). Our alternative vision for Appalachia is grounded in watershed restoration, using the abandoned mine fund for rehabilitation activities that would create many jobs.

On the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s 100th anniversary I went to Arizona to join citizen leaders in a call for the Bureau to drain manmade Lake Powell and restore the Grand Canyon from the adverse impacts of the Glen Canyon Dam. The Bureau has so choked the Colorado River with dams and drained it with diversions that in most years it never reaches the sea. We need to be sending the powerful signal that the age of pork barrel dam building is over and that river restoration has come of age.

From the mountains of West Virginia and the shareholder meetings of major polluters like ExxonMobil to a British Petroleum pipeline project in Turkey to the halls of Congress, we are still coming up with winning strategies to protect our planet. And we thank you for your strong support.

Brent Blackwelder
It’s no secret that our planet faces an environmental crisis. We’re causing global climate change with greenhouse gasses; we’re desecrating natural habitats in search of limited fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal; and we’re scrambling to dispose of tens of thousands of tons of radioactive nuclear waste. But what if we could change all that?

What if we could replace our dependence on polluting energy sources with an inexhaustible, affordable, environmentally friendly energy source? Well, we can – with a power source we’ve been using for more than 2,000 years: wind energy.

What is Wind Energy?

Wind energy is not a new concept. Boats have been powered by wind for millennia and windmills have been in use for centuries. But today’s wind energy is technological generations ahead of its ancestors, using turbines to convert the natural movement of air into electricity that feeds into a regional power grid.

Because technology has improved and costs have been steadily declining, wind energy is the fastest growing energy source in the world. That may be in part because costs have dropped from 35 cents per kilowatt hour in 1980 to less than 4 cents per kilowatt hour now at good wind sites. Wind is not only competitive with conventional energy, it’s the lowest cost option among all renewables – including solar, geothermal and biomass.

In the past two years alone, worldwide wind power production has almost doubled. In 2001, U.S. wind capacity increased by 66 percent to 4,260 megawatts (MW), nearly 20 percent of global wind-power capacity. Ironically it is Texas, most often associated with oil, that had the largest increase in wind capacity in the country. The Pacific Northwest is also rapidly adding wind power to its energy portfolio, with several hundred megawatts already on line and more under development.

Wind: Clean & Available

Wind energy requires no combustion, and therefore creates no pollutants. Unlike coal, oil or nuclear energy, wind is both truly clean and infinitely available. Because wind energy can directly replace electricity generated
by traditional sources, using more wind power can have a proportional decrease in harmful pollutants and byproducts in the environment. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, every megawatt of wind-generated electricity offsets the equivalent of:

- 1,100 to 2,200 pounds of carbon dioxide,
- up to 15 pounds of sulfur and nitrogen oxides and particulates,
- 3.5 ounces of trace metals such as mercury, and
- more than 440 pounds of solid waste from fossil-fueled generation.

Of course there are also economic benefits to turning to wind power. Coal, gas and oil are finite resources, and as supplies dwindle, prices increase. We’ve already seen what an oil shortage can do to the price of energy. After all, it was the energy crisis of the 1970s that led California to explore wind energy as a viable alternative in the first place. The fuel for wind power, on the other hand, is free. The only costs are those of building and maintaining the turbines.

Hurdles to Widespread Wind Energy

With all of these benefits, one would think that wind power would be taking the energy markets by storm. And while large energy companies are indeed rushing to jump on the wind bandwagon, a combination of hurdles has constrained growth. In 2001, the United States only generated 0.3 percent of its energy from wind power.

This is particularly frustrating to wind proponents, because capacity already exists to power significantly larger proportions of our national energy supply, and the potential is even more exciting. “The U.S. Great Plains are the Saudi Arabia of wind power. Three wind-rich states — North Dakota, Kansas and Texas — have enough harnessable wind to meet national electricity needs,” wrote Lester R. Brown of the Earth Policy Institute in his book *Eco-Economy*.

One major hurdle is the lack of sufficient transmission support. Many of the most lucrative wind sources are in remote areas, which makes it difficult to get the power into a regional grid. What’s needed, say experts, is for power companies to be convinced that wind is as “real” a source of energy as a dam or a natural gas plant.

This means improving access to transmission lines and dropping penalties that discriminate against intermittent energy sources. Much of this can be accomplished through incentives — state and national policies that encourage utilities to add wind to their energy portfolios, and to making wind-generated power available to consumers.

Herein lays the second major hurdle: legislation at state and national levels is inconsistent. Some states have instituted Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) that require utilities to produce a specific portion of electricity from renewable resources, while others have not. Massachusetts created an RPS in 1997 that requires utilities to generate at least 4 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2009, and increase it by 1 percent a year after that. After Texas established an RPS in 1999 that mandates at least 2,000 MW of new renewable energy by 2009, it spurred dramatic increases in wind power capacity. Just imagine what a national RPS could do for our environment.

Responsible Wind Development

Friends of the Earth is a major proponent of wind energy, and also advocates for responsible development. This means paying close attention to community and environmental concerns. Old-model wind turbines can kill birds or change their migration patterns. In a few areas developers have chosen sites that are sacred to Native Americans. And some people don’t like the way a group of wind turbines changes a hilltop or a seascape horizon. All of these issues are important, and illustrate why environmentalists cannot simply give an across-the-board endorsement for any renewable energy technology.

“On the whole, over the last 10 years, most of the macro issues have been addressed,” said Shawn Cantrell of Seattle, director of the Friends of the Earth Northwest Office. “Conservation groups, developers and communities have worked closely to find ways to minimize adverse effects.”

Cantrell cites tower design as a major example. Turbine towers that used to be appealing to roosting or nesting birds have given way to sleek, tubular designs that do not attract birds. “There will always be site-specific issues that need to be considered,” said Cantrell, “which means looking at each proposed wind power development on its own merits.”

Continued on Page 6
Local, National and Global Efforts

Friends of the Earth is embarking on a three-tiered awareness campaign exploring wind energy issues at the regional, national and international levels. Regionally, the Northwest Office is tracking a number of projects in and around the states of Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Friends of the Earth is an active member of the Northwest Energy Coalition, which promotes environmentally and culturally responsible power development.

The coalition recently helped encourage the federal Bonneville Power Administration, the largest electric utility in the region, to drop a 10 cents per kilowatt penalty on intermittent energy sources. Friends of the Earth is also working closely with a Native Americans to oppose the Columbia Hills wind project slated for sacred tribal sites in Washington State.

Nationally, Friends of the Earth is working on a “Wind Energy Primer,” which is designed to:

- provide information about the economic and environmental impact of wind energy;
- discuss current federal and state incentives that help and hinder wind energy growth;
- examine the experiences of several states to see what lessons can be learned; and
- lay out a combination of programs and policies to help remove most of the barriers facing wind energy today.

The Friends of the Earth International Program has also been busy promoting wind and other renewable energies by exerting pressure on international development organizations such as the World Bank Group and the U.S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im).

“Those institutions fund all kinds of polluting energy projects overseas,” said Jon Sohn, Friends of the Earth’s campaigner on international financial institutions. “We want them to replace those projects with clean energy sources that give more control to local communities than do immense pipelines connected to a central government-controlled grid.”

As a result of Friends of the Earth’s work, the Ex-Im Board recently approved a wind project in China and created a new Renewable Energy Advisory Committee. Similarly, the World Bank Group has responded to our pressure by producing a report called Fuel for Thought, which sets clear targets and timetables for supporting clean energy projects.

“We will continue to exert pressure on these institutions until they realize that renewable energy projects are a win-win,” said Sohn. “They’re cost effective and they don’t harm the environment.”

What You Can Do

Making the change to wind power will lead to tangible, effective and positive changes for our environment and our planet. Here’s how you can help:

- Contact your local power utility and ask if they offer “green power,” which allows you to pay a slight premium in exchange for getting all of your power from renewable sources. If they do, sign up. If they don’t, encourage them to look into it.
- Contact your members of Congress to find out where they stand on wind energy. If they don’t know much about it, share this article with them. And while you’re at it, tell them that the current energy bills being considered by Congress are going in the wrong direction and will severely impact renewable energy.
- Contact your state government and find out whether they have an RPS mandate in place for utilities. If they don’t, share this article with them and encourage them to adopt an RPS mandate.

As if our reliance on dirty coal and oil isn’t bad enough, this ad we recently ran in USA Today details Bush’s efforts to allow industry to expand without installing pollution control equipment.
In June, I participated in an international fact-finding mission that examined a high-stakes, high-risk and highly controversial oil project: the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline.

This $3 billion pipeline will transport crude oil over 1,000 miles, equal to the distance from New York to Miami, from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey for export to the United States and Europe.

After the Bush administration supported the project in last year's energy plan, both U.S. export credit agencies – the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation – plan to finance it. Other public finance institutions, including both private sector divisions of the World Bank, are preparing loans and guarantees. The administration touts the project as a new source for energy and a boon to energy security.

However, the project is extremely risky. It will pass through mountainous terrain and socially unstable areas, including:

- Kurdish parts of Turkey, where human rights violations by the Turkish army against ethnic Kurdish populations have been documented.
- The forest buffer area of a national park in Georgia, potentially impacting threatened species and passing near the source of a natural spring water company, one of the only successful business enterprises in Georgia.

Parts of both Azerbaijan and Georgia that are rich in cultural heritage, such as 40,000 year-old cave carvings in Azerbaijan.

In all of these countries, corruption is a serious problem, as is the lack of citizen participation in governance.

I participated in the fact-finding mission with six other representatives of environmental organizations to hear local people talk about their concerns, what they’ve been told by lead sponsor British Petroleum (BP) and what they’ve been promised by their government. Since institutions like the World Bank will be coordinating massive amounts of public (taxpayer) financing for the project, we wanted to find out if people want the project, and under what conditions.

The economic and social situation in the countries is shockingly bad.

Unemployment is about 80 percent. Most people survive by tending small plots of land and a few animals – cows, goat and sheep. Most communities we visited have no gas or oil supply and electricity runs for only four or five hours a day. Electricity is very expensive, with some people spending half their income on utility bills.

The two issues we heard with most frequency were whether the pipeline will provide jobs (likely to be minimal and short-term) and whether they will get any of the supply (they will not). People were also very concerned about getting fair compensation for their land, which will be disrupted during construction. Many other communities near other pipeline construction said their roads were destroyed by heavy construction vehicles and were not fixed by the oil companies afterward.
Friends of the Earth recently recognized three members of Congress – Reps. David Bonior (D-Mich.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Lloyd Doggett (D-Tex.) – for their role in fighting anti-environmental trade legislation by presenting them with “Friend of the Earth” awards.

Since early 2001, Congress has been considering “fast track” trade legislation that would encourage the weakening of environmental standards. The bill expands a controversial provision of the North American Free Trade Agreement, called “Chapter 11,” that allows foreign corporations to sue governments if an environmental law has reduced their profits.

The World Bank contends that its involvement in the project will make it a better project. They say they will bring high standards, work with the government to control corruption and establish oil funds that monitor how the proceeds from oil are spent.

Nevertheless, many people in local communities perceive huge risks. “The pipeline should be built only if safe, but it is not possible to make it safe,” one villager told us.

In Azerbaijan, the president appoints all the members of the oil fund oversight committee and has sole authority to decide how oil fund money is spent. In fact, he proposed to use the oil fund – which is supposed to be used for social programs – to finance part of the pipeline construction costs!

The oil companies, however, seem to have a different picture of World Bank involvement. John Browne, the head of BP, said that “free public money” from the international financial institutions was needed to make the project possible.

The financial viability of BTC has been questioned because the route is long and complicated. The return on the project is also dependent on finding enough oil in the Caspian Sea.

If Browne’s assessment is accurate, taxpayer monies are being used to make a questionable, high-risk project financially viable. Friends of the Earth wants to make sure that local people’s interests are not being ignored in the pursuit of profit by Big Oil, and that taxpayer monies are not being used to finance an economic and environmental boondoggle.

BONIOR. While serving as Democratic Whip, Bonior led countless fights to protect the environment. He has been instrumental in tightening the standard for arsenic in tap water and in protecting the Great Lakes from oil drilling.

BROWN has led efforts to advance an international agreement regulating Persistent Organic Pollutants and has also fought to improve the arsenic standard.

DOGGETT has the strongest environmental record in the Texas House delegation, and has led efforts to cut taxpayer handouts to the energy industry from the federal budget.
Second U.N. Earth Summit: Sustainable Development

By Colleen Freeman

As this issue went to press, Friends of the Earth’s International Team was gearing up for the most important international meeting on the environment in a decade – the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Also known as the Johannesburg Earth Summit, the Aug. 26 to Sept. 4 meeting was expected to draw more than 50,000 people and be the largest U.N. summit ever held. With more than 75 people from our international network planning to attend, Friends of the Earth was set to have one of the largest, most visible delegations of any environmental group.

The event marked the 10-year anniversary of the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, where government leaders reached major international agreements on climate change and biodiversity.

Although 100 heads of state confirmed their participation – including the U.K.’s Tony Blair, Russian President Vladimir Putin, China’s prime minister and Mexico’s president – a month before the meeting President Bush had not confirmed he would attend and there was growing evidence to suggest he would not.

This stands in stark contrast to his father’s decision to attend Rio Earth Summit. A decision not to attend would lend weight to those who have argued that the Bush administration continues to pursue a unilateral course on international affairs.

President Bush’s failure to confirm his attendance was undermining the participants’ efforts. At the fourth and final preparatory meeting in Indonesia, governments failed to agree upon a plan of action with clear targets and timetables on issues such as energy, agriculture, water, biodiversity and most importantly, financing. Those differences still had to be ironed out in Johannesburg.

“The relative success or failure of the summit remains to be seen,” said Director of International Programs Leslie Fields, who attended the preparatory meeting. “Friends of the Earth believes the summit presents an historic opportunity to make meaningful progress on a host of issues, especially corporate accountability, environmental justice and energy.”

Throughout the summit’s preparatory process, our network of groups in more than 70 countries has been the driving force behind the call for a corporate accountability framework. Friends of the Earth International maintains that the lack of progress in achieving the first Earth Summit’s goals is largely due to corporations that have failed to act in a socially and environmentally sound manner.

“Don’t let big business rule the word” is the message activists from member groups planned to take to this second Earth Summit – everywhere from t-shirts to banners.

David Waskow, our trade policy analyst, was set to lead a team of colleagues campaigning solely on corporate accountability.

The International Team planned to launch a “Corporate Accountability and the Johannesburg Earth Summit” Web site and update it daily during the summit. Please visit www.foe.org/WSSD for more information and to take action.
Almost two years after Friends of the Earth found StarLink genetically engineered corn contaminating the U.S. food supply, the corn was detected in food aid sent to Bolivia.

In partnership with a Bolivian environmental group, Friends of the Earth initiated a project intended to protect people in developing countries from the dumping of unapproved engineered crops as food aid or as unidentified seed.

“The United States considers this genetically engineered corn unfit for human consumption, yet it has been sent to Bolivia as food aid,” said Gabriel Hervas, president of the Bolivian Forum on Development and Environment.

Oxfam International, a global hunger relief organization, also condemned food aid contamination by genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In a news release, Oxfam supported those who “demand a moratorium on GMOs and the improved enforcement of monitoring systems to stop GMOs from entering vulnerable populations through food aid.”

Friends of the Earth wrote to the U.S. Agency for International Development requesting that Aventis CropScience, the company that engineered StarLink, be required to pay for the recall of any contaminated food aid and its replacement with non-engineered grain. The agency has so far responded with an offer to meet and discuss the findings.

The Bolivian problem comes on the heels of our work last year with Friends of the Earth in Ecuador, where we reported that food aid was contaminated with engineered corn and soy not approved for human consumption.

The government of Ecuador responded with a switch to locally grown, non-engineered crops for its food aid for children. It also issued an admonishment to the World Food Program, which is largely supported by the U.S. government.

Supporting materials on the Bolivian news, including photographs and an action alert, may be found at www.foe.org/foodaid.

...And Prescription Drugs May End Up In Your Corn Flakes

Friends of the Earth is calling on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prohibit a new class of genetically engineered food crops that threatens to contaminate the food supply much the way StarLink genetically engineered corn did in September 2000.

Joined by the GE Food Alert Coalition, Friends of the Earth wrote the USDA requesting an end to open
air cultivation of crops engineered to produce prescription drugs or industrial chemicals.

“Just one mistake by a biotech company and we’ll be eating other people’s prescription drugs in our corn flakes,” said a Friends of the Earth quote that appeared in daily newspapers across the country.

The new crops, already planted in over 300 field trials at secret locations nationwide, include plants that produce an abortion-inducing chemical, growth hormones, a blood clotting agent, and trypsin, an allergenic enzyme. The letter proposed that the USDA permit only contained (greenhouse) cultivation of non-food plants under the same controlled circumstances as other drug production.

The National Academy of Sciences warns: “…it is possible that crops transformed to produce pharmaceutical or other industrial compounds might mate with plantations grown for human consumption, with the unanticipated result of novel chemicals in the human food supply.”

A contamination incident may already have occurred. One biotech company official noted at a government-industry conference that: “We’ve seen it on the vaccine side, where modified live seeds have wandered off and have appeared in other products.”

A new report prepared by Bill Freese, policy associate at Friends of the Earth, details the threats that biopharm crops pose, the extent to which they have been planted across the country, the failure of regulatory agencies to serve the public and establishes a set of recommendations.


With dramatic flair and an eye for detail, Kathleen Hart documents the intense policy debate over the safety and environmental impacts of genetically engineered foods.

The book opens with the case of Grace Booth, a California social worker who experienced a severe allergic reaction to a product made with corn. Booth heard of the StarLink expose conducted by Friends of the Earth and called to see if StarLink could have been the cause of her distress. We flew her to a federal hearing so she could take her case directly to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Eating in the Dark documents not only Booth’s moving testimony, but also the two-year, yet-to-be-resolved effort to determine whether StarLink caused her and hundreds of other people to become ill. The book highlights the incredible political power wielded by biotech companies and will leave most readers wanting to take action for safer food.
Each year tens of thousands of coyotes and other wild animals are ruthlessly chased down and shot by federal agents firing from helicopters. Others are killed by "M-44" traps that eject sodium cyanide into animals’ mouths, "denning" – the practice of finding coyotes’ dens and shooting or gassing the cubs to death - and catching the animals in steel leg-hold traps.

Wildlife Services is a federal program operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Its mission is to "provide leadership in wildlife damage control to protect agricultural, industrial and natural resources and to safeguard public health and safety."

Wildlife Services undertakes a diverse range of activities including the protection of aircraft and airports.
Program Hurts the Environment

- Thousands of non-target species are killed annually, including rare, threatened and endangered species, due to over-reliance on lethal control methods.
- The amount of wildlife killed by Wildlife Services has little relation to actual damage inflicted on crops or livestock. Wildlife Services routinely kills predators in anticipation of potential losses, not just in response to confirmed damages.
- Biologists have found that when subjected to intense control, not only do female coyotes respond by reproducing at an earlier age and producing larger litters, but pup survival increases, thereby rendering the control efforts counterproductive.
- The removal of large predators from an ecosystem can result in a rise in species such as mice and rabbits, which can cause millions of dollars in damage to crops and rangelands.

At the same time, six APHIS personnel have been accidentally killed in helicopter crashes and baits laid out by Wildlife Services’ operators on public and private property have poisoned unsuspecting pets and humans.

In September, Congress will consider a spending bill that will fund this devastating program. In the past, members of Congress led by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) have offered amendments to end this damaging program.

Visit [http://www.foe.org/wildlifeservices/](http://www.foe.org/wildlifeservices/) to take action!
Kevin Richardson of the band the Backstreet Boys was a surprise witness at a recent Senate subcommittee hearing on a controversial Bush administration rule change on water pollution.

“Sens. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) and James Jeffords (I-Vt.) held a hearing to discuss the devastating implications of the rule change and how it will affect the health of the environment and local economies in Appalachia.” During the hearing Lieberman denounced the rule change and announced his intention to introduce a bill, which would insert a definition of “fill material” into the Clean Water Act itself.

Richardson grew up in Kentucky and spoke about the devastation mountaintop removal coal mining is causing to streams, trees and wildlife there.

“The historic resources that sustained Daniel Boone, the original Cherokees and generations of mountain people are being converted on a mammoth scale into flat, lifeless plateaus,” Richardson testified.

Richardson’s testimony caused a bit of strife on the Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate Change and Wetlands of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio) boycotted the hearing.

“It’s just a joke to think that this witness can provide members of the U.S. Senate with information on important geological and water quality issues,” he said.

“I am not a scientist but I do know what I’ve seen in flights over the coal fields,” said Richardson, who has worked on environmental issues ranging from renewable energy to clean air.

He invited the senators present to join him on a flight over mountaintop removal mine sites. Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) accepted right away.

Incidentally, Voinovich has received a number of campaign contributions from the coal industry. In 1998 he received over $43,000 from coal mining companies and companies that use coal.

No other Republicans attended the hearing either. It was their loss, as Richardson gave tremendous testimony.

“The bottom line is that we have an industry (coal) that has thrived, not from honest business practices in the free market, but from passing its real costs to the people of Appalachia,” he said.

During the hearing Lieberman announced his intention to offer a bill to re-instate the original definition of fill in the Clean Water Act.

Take Action! Call you member of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor The Pallone-Shays bill (H.R. 4683). To be connected to your representative call the Capitol Switchboard, 202-224-3121.
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As you may have noticed we launched a new logo with the Summer 2002 Newsmagazine. That delayed the summer issue but this fall issue is back on schedule.

Friends of the Earth 2001 Expenditures
Friends of the Earth consistently receives high marks from charity watch groups.

PlANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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