

Fighting global warming helps Mich. jobs

■ If Bush won't take action on climate change, business, labor and other groups will do it for him.

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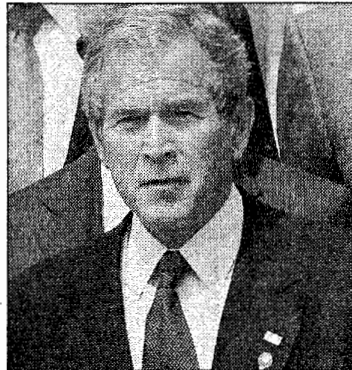
Congratulations to President George W. Bush. At the G-8 summit held last week in Scotland for the leaders of the world's eight wealthiest nations, Bush publicly acknowledged for the first time that the Earth is getting warmer and that humans are part of the problem.

But the praise stops there. The president also said taking action to curb global warming will wreck the U.S. economy. That simply is not so.

Many available technologies could be implemented at modest or no cost to the economy. And serious leadership would support a growing high-tech sector that will provide the next generation of technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With mandatory limits on these emissions, a combination of new technologies and serious efforts at energy efficiency will increase our competitive advantage, generate new jobs — including in Michigan — and protect our quality of life.

For example, the United States uses roughly 50 percent more energy per dollar of gross domestic product than does the European Union. Reducing that waste puts billions of dollars into our economy. That's real economic growth.

Although the president doesn't understand, many others do. From all corners of society and the globe, there is an ever-increasing consensus that humanity is deeply at risk because of greenhouse gas emissions, and action is being taken. International governments are putting the Kyoto Treaty into force; the Senate passed a nonbinding resolution calling for mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions; the states of California and New Mexico, among others, are setting their own greenhouse gas control standards; and more than 130 city mayors are following the lead of Seattle's Greg Nickels and vowing to implement the Kyoto protocol in their own towns.



Yury Kochetkov / Associated Press

President Bush agreed last week that human activity is causing global warming.

Global warming developments

- President Bush last week signed a statement along with the leaders of the world's eight wealthiest nations, saying people are partly causing the Earth to warm.
- About 45 mayors attended a summit this week on global warming. Many say they want to cut manmade pollutions according to an international treaty the U.S. hasn't signed.

And leading them all is the business community. Why? Because business knows that along with the myriad environmental benefits, action on global warming both at home and abroad affects their bottom lines — and they want a say in how that happens. Inaction, or sitting on the sidelines as the Bush administration prefers to do, creates regulatory (and market) uncertainty, something business abhors.

Of course, not all companies agree on this issue. But the ranks of dissenters are thinning fast. The National Commission on Energy Policy has developed a proposal for mandatory greenhouse gas controls that is attracting support from across the business community because it creates mechanisms for mitigating climate change that allow for adjustments if developing nations don't follow our lead.

The United Mine Workers of America changed its longstanding opposition to greenhouse gas controls last year and endorsed the proposal, in part because it in-



Stuart Johnson / Deseret Morning News

Actor and environmental activist Robert Redford, right, and Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson this week hosted a summit where experts briefed 45 mayors on the effects of global warming.

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cludes credible financial ways for developing new methods for cleaner combustion of coal.

Other coalitions are forming, including the Apollo Alliance, a group devoted to job creation in the clean energy industry; the Energy Future Coalition, an effort to bridge the differences among business, labor and environmentalists on energy; Set America Free, a coalition of individuals and nonprofit groups concerned about U.S. dependency on foreign oil; the Evangelical Environmental Network and the National Association of Evangelicals.

No longer is climate change purely the province of environmentalists. It now unites all those concerned about jobs, trade, security and religion.

Bush frequently speaks of the virtues of leadership. The G-8 summit offered him a chance to provide that. Mr. President, you could have talked about the jobs U.S. automakers can retain if they jump into the markets for hybrid vehicles and clean diesels with both feet rather than ceding them to Japanese and

European carmakers.

You could have talked about how a new vision for energy efficiency can improve our economy, reduce our dependence on oil from the Middle East, reduce our vulnerability to oil price shocks and reduce the flow of money to countries that breed terrorism.

And you could have talked about caring for creation and the moral leadership the United States should provide in protecting the world's poor, who will be hardest hit by the effects of climate change.

As Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., recently said at a conference at U-M's Ross School of Business, what is needed is presidential leadership offering a vision for the future of our planet and our economy, like President John Kennedy's heroic charge to put a man on the moon. Our president has lacked the political will to launch such an effort. So a broad-based coalition is doing it instead. With or without the president, this heroic effort has taken off.

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