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While Washington stalls, industry acts

As President Bush unveiled his energy plan, which rejected incentives for industry to reduce global warming, engineers at a huge electric utility in New Orleans were busy crafting ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Their work is the result of unique cooperation with Environmental Defense.

The utility, Entergy Corporation, one of the nation's leading electricity providers, has pledged to cap its greenhouse gas emissions at last year's levels through 2005. It is the first U.S. utility to commit to such a target. Entergy will partner with us in finding ways to reduce carbon dioxide from its coal-burning plants. "It is gratifying to see a company show that economic growth and electricity growth are possible along with reductions in greenhouse emissions," said our executive director Fred Krupp. "Policies from Washington should recognize this."

Entergy's CEO J. Wayne Leonard said, "Every business ought to take voluntary initiatives to limit global warming." Entergy thus joins our

Partnership for Climate Action, whose members, including BP, DuPont and Shell, have taken concrete steps to reduce greenhouse emissions.

Meanwhile, recognizing that vehicles contribute 33% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, we are joining FedEx, the world's largest express delivery company, to create a next-generation delivery truck that will reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse emissions by 50% at no extra cost. Encouragingly, 20 truck manufacturers responded to our challenge. With FedEx, we will choose companies to build a prototype hybrid electric truck. If all goes well, hybrids could soon become standard for the entire delivery industry, removing millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

"Working with a major buyer and manufacturers, we are proving industry can meet aggressive goals," said Elizabeth Sturcken, our project director. These partnerships are promising, Krupp noted, but government action to reduce greenhouse emissions is still urgently needed.



The cost of coal: Coal-burning power plants account for 33% of U.S. CO₂ emissions.



Building a secure energy future

The administration's energy plan is "a walk on the supply side." The electricity "crisis" in California has been used to beg support for a national energy strategy largely dependent on fossil fuels. California's energy supply problems are real, but they are largely short-term, until generating plants under construction are completed.

The long-term energy crisis we face today is global warming caused by pollution from cars and power plants. If our leaders supported a national cap on greenhouse-gas emissions, entrepreneurs

The real energy crisis is global warming

would have a huge incentive to innovate. Before long, we'd have an energy supply that's affordable, cleaner and more reliable. It's not too late for the Bush administration to act; a critical first step would be to rejoin the international talks on climate change.

An effective strategy would also focus on improving energy efficiency. This is something we can do today. If every household in California replaced four 75-watt light bulbs with off-the-shelf compact fluorescent bulbs, the state would not have to build three new average-sized power plants.

America won't have a secure energy future until our national leaders tackle greenhouse gas emissions as part of the nation's energy policy.

—Fred Krupp



John Warden/Nestlé Collection

Cars will never be as clean as nature. But we're making them cleaner.

Removing mercury: Ford takes a big step AUTOMAKER FACES UP TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES IN ITS CARS

After six years of promises, it was time for an accounting. The Big Three U.S. automakers had agreed publicly in 1995 to phase out mercury, a potent toxic chemical that causes brain, lung and kidney damage in humans. Now it was 2001, and they were still stalling.

Our recent *Toxic by Design* report had shown that Ford and GM continued to use mercury in convenience lighting switches and Daimler Chrysler and Ford used mercury in switches for antilock brakes. Worse, all three automakers continued to design new applications—like high intensity headlamps—that use the dangerous element.

Environmental Defense pressed for a meeting with top engineers at the Ford Motor Company. We also met with Bill Ford Jr., the company's young, environmentally-minded chairman whom *Time* magazine has called "the rebel driving Ford." Our timing was propitious. The famous car company was being hammered by accusations that its popular Explorer SUVs were unsafe. It was also promising to increase fuel efficiency by 40% in its next gener-

ation of Explorers and had announced plans for a new hybrid SUV—the Escape. Yet our report showed that not only did Ford continue to use mercury in its cars and trucks, it used far more than any other auto manufacturer.

Presented with our findings, Ford turned over its own mercury-use data. It then committed to phasing out all mercury switch applications by the end of this year. "We're taking them at their word," said Dean Menke, an engineer with our Pollution Prevention Alliance. "But we will be watching carefully to see what happens. We'd like other auto companies to quickly follow suit."

MERCURY IN EXISTING CARS

Removing mercury from the manufacturing process is commendable, but it doesn't help cars that exist today. The Clean Car Campaign, of which Environmental Defense is a founding member, estimates there are 200 tons of mercury in cars and trucks currently on the road. Mercury is released into the environment from metal recovery facilities when cars are recy-

pled. The furnaces that melt automotive scrap metals are America's second biggest source of mercury pollution, after coal-fired power plants.

Together with the automobile and scrap recycling industries and some 50 public environmental and health groups, our coalition is calling for end-of-life mercury collection systems to be paid for by car manufacturers. We're also requesting that mercury switches be replaced by dealers when cars come in for servicing.

We have also met with lawmakers about a possible federal law to remove mercury from cars. Already, five states are considering such laws.

"Just as we expect automakers to take responsibility for the safety risks of vehicles, they must address the public health hazards from the toxic chemicals they put into cars," said our Pollution Prevention Alliance director Kevin Mills.



Kindra Clineff/International Stock

Pure oxygen: Parks or other open places to play should be considered an essential part of everyone's childhood.

From parking lots to parks in urban L.A.

"California's a Garden of Eden," sang Woody Guthrie in the 1930's, but today's visitor to downtown Los Angeles finds mostly pavement. Environmental Defense is working on several fronts to create green spaces for the city's urban core.

We won an important victory recently when California Governor Gray Davis included \$40 million in his budget request to the legislature to acquire a 47-acre former railyard in L.A. known as the Chinatown cornfield and turn it into a park. Last year, we and others sued to stop the cornfield's development as industrial warehouses. The legislature needs to act quickly however, since, under the terms of the settlement, the state must acquire the cornfield by September 30 or forfeit it to the developers.

We also won vital concessions from developers planning a massive expansion of L.A.'s Staples Center. Their proposed expansion of the sports and entertainment complex would include a 7,000-seat theater, luxury housing, malls and 5,300 parking spaces. As the sole environ-

mental representative in the alliance monitoring the project, we argued that the plan lacked green space. Our attorney Jerilyn Mendoza helped make this a negotiating point. Now, the final community benefits package includes \$1 million for a new neighborhood park.

Los Angeles ranks last in the nation in per capita park space. The city's open-space plan, which hasn't been updated since the 1970's, prohibits parks smaller than five acres. This means no "pocket parks" to provide refreshment and greenery in hectic downtown L.A. In fact, because of the price of land, it means no new parks at all.

Environmental Defense is working to rewrite Los Angeles's open space plan. We've mounted a campaign with the Verde Coalition to convince the city council that small parks within walking distance of homes are needed to teach children about nature. "Kids should be able to walk to parks in their own neighborhoods," says our policy specialist Misty Sanford.

L.A. ranks last in park space

Leave some to the kids



Will Regan/International Stock

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For details on including Environmental Defense in your will, please check the bequest box on the form facing page 5, call toll-free 1-877-677-7397 or write:

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Message from the forest soil

With the passage of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, many people predicted acid rain would soon become a distant memory. But a new report co-authored by Dr. Gene Likens, an ecologist and vice chairman of our board of trustees, makes clear that the law addressed only part of the problem.

We need bigger mandated emissions cuts or, Likens predicts, acid rain will continue damaging sensitive forests and streams across the northeast.

Reductions in sulfur dioxide, emitted by power plants, have lessened acidity. But the Clean Air Act did not sufficiently control other pollutants, including nitrogen oxides. Now, atmospheric levels of nitrogen oxides—caused mostly by cars and trucks—are increasing. Acid rain has also leached vital nutrients like calcium from the soil, making it harder for forests to recover. In some areas, acid rain has killed or seriously damaged half the large red spruce and sugar maples. And while there is improvement in lakes across the region, 40% of Adirondack lakes are still classified as acidic.

Likens says further reductions in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides are needed to allow sensitive ecosystems to recover. “The root cause of these emissions is combustion of oil and coal,” he says. “That’s another reason why our national energy plan should focus on efficiency and conservation.”



Hugh Morton

Acid rain makes a potent case for stronger emissions cuts.



Corbis

The Meadowlands: No place for a shopping center.

Marsh... or mall?

With 28 square feet of mall space for every New Jersey resident, you’d hardly think the state needs another shopping center. Yet that’s exactly what the Mills Corporation wants to build in the heart of the Hackensack Meadowlands.

“This development would badly fragment the entire wetland,” says our general counsel James T.B. Tripp. Dr. Joy Zedler, a wetlands ecologist and Environmental Defense trustee, presented the state with a detailed critique of the project’s potential damages.

As the largest open space left in the NY metropolitan area, the 7,000-acre Meadowlands area is subject to considerable development pressure. Unlike another great estuarine wetland, Ja-

maica Bay, the Meadowlands enjoy no special federal protection and are largely privately owned.

But thanks to vigorous initiatives by Environmental Defense and its partners, the mall is dead, at least for now. Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco has announced his opposition to the development, which would destroy 206 acres of the wetland and transform another 300 into a stormwater retention area.

The Hackensack Meadowlands Partnership, of which we are a member, is leading the efforts to acquire the wetland and make it a preserve. “If we succeed, the Meadowlands will be one of the outstanding environmental victories of the last 50 years,” says Andrew Willner of the NY/NJ Baykeeper.

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A tale of two cities

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE GOES TO COURT TO FORCE COMPLIANCE WITH CLEAN AIR ACT

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. For the past few decades, Houston and Atlanta have been prospering. But thirty years of poor planning and aggressive road-building have resulted in unbearable traffic, runaway sprawl and unhealthy air. Under the Bush administration's energy plan, air pollution is likely to worsen. Houston is already the nation's smog capital and Atlanta recorded more air quality violations in 1999 than in any year during the last decade.

Inexcusably, state officials have introduced transportation plans that fail to meet federal health standards in both cities, and so Environmental Defense has gone to court to clean up the air in both Houston and Atlanta.

When states fail to create adequate air pollution cleanup plans by deadlines set in the Clean Air Act, the U.S. EPA becomes responsible for creating its own smog control plans for these areas. When EPA failed to do so in Houston, Environmental Defense and three other groups sued the agency. In May, we reached a settlement that may well reduce the region's ozone pollution by nearly 20% beyond what the state had first proposed.

"This is an important victory," said our Austin-based scientist Dr. Ramon



Fritz Prentzel/Peter Arnold

When cities ignored transportation alternatives, Environmental Defense filed suit.



Chuck Mason/International Stock

The long journey home: Americans spend more time commuting than with their kids.

Alvarez. "It puts Houston on the right trajectory for improving its air quality." The region has committed to revising its transportation plan to meet national health standards by June 2002. But the settlement does not preclude further lawsuits, if necessary. "The threat of litigation is the single hammer we have to keep people honest," said Alvarez.

MONEY FOR CLEANER TRANSIT

If a federal court were to rule Houston's transportation plan does not meet emissions requirements, the region would need to redirect transportation funds from highway expansion to projects that clean the air. That's what happened to Atlanta in 1998, following a similar lawsuit we filed there. That victory redirected hundreds of millions of dollars to cleaner buses, park-and-ride lots, bike paths and other transit improvements. But because of its runaway growth, Atlanta continues to be out of compliance.

Last winter, we were close to a major settlement that would help Atlanta clean up its air, but Georgia Governor Roy Barnes withdrew support for the deal at the last minute. Now we're back in court. "It's time for Georgia to deliver a transportation plan that pro-

ducts public health," said our transportation director Michael Repogle.

Transportation policy is an essential component in our new Living Cities program. This program seeks to transform the major urban areas where most Americans live into healthy communities. "Clean air is essential to the economic future of cities and the health of millions of Americans," said Andy Darrell, co-manager of the program. "The technology exists today to bring American cities into compliance with the Clean Air Act. Instead of being forced to litigate against bad policies, we should have the cooperation and commitment of political leaders in Atlanta and Houston to work with us on cleaning the air."



Kevin Vandivier/Wiest Collection

Are there no limits to growth? Atlanta's population grew by 45% over the last decade.

Gearing down

The following resources promote cleaner, greener cars and environmentally friendlier alternatives to driving. For a full list of organizations providing useful information, visit our web site at www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10539 or contact these groups directly:

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy's *Green Book* rates the environmental impacts of cars. 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036; 202-429-9973.

The Alliance for a Paving Moratorium advocates a car-free, unpaved America and publishes *Auto-Free Times*. P.O. Box 4347, Arcata, CA 95578; 707-826-7775.

The American Public Transportation Association lobbies for mass transit and publishes a guide to U.S. transportation. 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005; 202-898-4084.

Clean Car Campaign promotes the greening of the motor vehicle industry. You are encouraged to take the Clean Car Pledge. c/o Environmental Defense, 1857 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009; 202-387-3500.

Surface Transportation Policy Project lobbies for mass transit and against increased highway construction. 1100 17th Street, NW, 10th floor, Washington, DC 20036; 202-466-2636.

Tailpipe Tally, on the web, compares the environmental and economic costs of different vehicles: <http://209.10.107.169/tailpipetally>.



Dusty Willison/International Stock

When the open road beckons, energy-saving opportunities abound.

Green cruise control

AMERICA SUPPORTS 210 MILLION CARS. MAKE YOURS GREENER.

More Americans are using mass transit than at any time in the last 40 years. Ridership is actually rising faster than automobile use. That's good news, but it masks a grim little secret: all commuting alternatives taken together, including trains, buses, bicycles and that old standby, walking, account for just 3% of American transportation.

It's a simple fact of life: Americans love driving and often can't avoid it. From 1970 to 1999, passenger car miles traveled increased 71% and truck mileage (the category that includes gas-guzzling SUVs) jumped an incredible 225%. Transportation now accounts for a quarter of all the energy consumed in North America and produces 15% more carbon dioxide emissions than it did just a decade ago.

Perhaps you don't want your driving to contribute to the increased demand for oil drilling in treasured wilderness areas, but you do want to head off for vacation this summer. Here

are some simple steps you can take to get where you want to go and use less gas.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Plan ahead. Combine trips if possible, and consider reducing your family motor pool to one shared car. Making do with one vehicle can reduce your gas and maintenance costs by \$500 a year, plus substantial insurance savings.
- Travel light. Every 200 pounds of unnecessary weight you carry around in the trunk or back seat reduces your fuel economy by one mile per gallon.
- Inflate your gas mileage. By properly inflating your car's tires (80% are under-inflated), you can save money at the gas pump, extend the life of your tires and help the planet. If we all did this, we could save more than two million gallons of gas a day.
- Switch to low-rolling-resistance tires. "Green" tires like the Michelin Energy combine special tread designs, lighter materials, lower-profile side-

This guest article is one of a series by the editors of E/The Environmental Magazine (for subscription information: 800-967-6572 or www.emagazine.com). Opinions are the author's and not necessarily those of Environmental Defense staff.

walls and higher air pressure to reduce resistance and improve fuel efficiency without sacrificing handling or durability.

- Go easy on the air. Using air conditioning when driving slowly can reduce fuel economy by more than 20%. At speeds above 40 mph, however, driving with the air conditioning is actually more fuel efficient than driving with the windows open because of aerodynamic drag.
- Don't be a jackrabbit. Quick starts use twice the fuel of gradual starts. Unnecessary speedups and slow-downs can reduce fuel economy by



Thomas Kitchin/Tom Slack

Fuel savings add up on long trips.

- two miles per gallon.
- Tune it up regularly. Regular maintenance of such components as the air and fuel filters is crucial. A new oxy-

gen sensor, for instance, can improve gas mileage by as much as 15%.

- Shop around. If you're in the market for new wheels or are considering renting this summer, 2001 cars offer a huge range in fuel economy and emissions. The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's *Green Book: The Environmental Guide to Cars and Trucks*, assigns a "green score" based on fuel economy and emissions. Our own "Tailpipe Tally" web site (see box) lets you plug in the numbers for a vehicle you own or want to buy and computes its environmental costs.

By Jim Motavalli

Commuter choice is helping us out of a jam

Melvin Long used to drive solo to his job at Master-Halco, a fence manufacturer in Edgewood, MD. Now, he commutes by bus, taking advantage of transit benefits offered by his employer. Master-Halco is one of more than 60 companies benefiting from Maryland's new "commuter choice" law drafted by Environmental Defense transportation director Michael Replegle.

Under the law, employers who pay for their workers' transit costs or give their employees money instead of a parking space receive a 50% tax credit against their expenses. In several cities, the law is reducing air pollution and curbing traffic congestion, two of the chief irritants of modern American life.

"This is a cheaper and faster way to reduce congestion than building new highways," says Replegle. Similar tax credits have been adopted in Minnesota, Oregon and Washington State, and are pending in Massachusetts.

Combined with federal tax-law changes that allow employees to pay for their commute using pre-tax dollars, these tax credits can deliver the equivalent of a \$90 per month pay raise at a cost to employers of only \$30. "The biggest winners are moderate-income workers who spend a larger portion of their income on commuting," notes our transportation specialist Scot Spencer. In Washington, DC, a transit benefits program for federal employees that we promoted has removed 12,500 cars from area highways.

"Our goal is to make commuter choice a standard workplace benefit," says Replegle. "Until recently, America's only commuter benefit was a free parking space at work. That was an incentive to drive." If transit benefits



Jeff Greenberg/International Stock

Higher rush-hour tolls on a New York bridge, promoted by Environmental Defense, help encourage more efficient transit.

reached half of the nation's commuters, \$10 billion could be saved annually in fuel costs, EPA estimates.

Incentives like these could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and literally change the commuting landscape. For the first time since World War II, growth in the use of buses and trains is outpacing growth in driving. Last year, the number of miles driven by Americans actually decreased, partly due to other commuter options. "Americans aren't about to abandon their love affair with the automobile," says Replegle, "but we may be turning the corner."

Clean cars can be fun

Some may equate conservation with dreary sacrifice but new technologies can yield energy savings with no decrease in enjoyment. “As much fun as a basket of kittens,” says Betsy Perry, the owner of a gas-electric hybrid Toyota Prius. Perry, of Ypsilanti, MI, loves her new car’s 55-plus gas mileage and its performance. “It’s fast!”

Our executive director Fred Krupp is equally high on his Prius. “I’m not out to sell Toyotas. I’m trying to protect the environment,” he says of the car that cuts carbon dioxide emissions in half and slashes nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide.

The word on hybrids is spreading fast. The wait on a new Prius is four months. Honda’s aluminum-bodied, two-seater Insight, with even higher gas mileage, is selling more modestly. But it too has fanatical supporters, including John Johnson. “I’m not your typical green person,” Johnson says proudly. “I’m a car guy.”

For more on hybrids, see *Driving Forward*, the newsletter of our Clean Car Campaign at www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10541.



One happy car guy: Johnson has taken the web name “Insightman.”



S.J. Kraseman/Peter Arnold

Our plan to aid tortoises could protect many other species as well.

Investing in the gopher tortoise

A NOVEL APPROACH TO PROTECTING THREATENED WILDLIFE

Alabama’s newest bank, unveiled last month in Mobile County, has no checking accounts or automated teller machines. It is a conservation bank—Alabama’s first.

The “deposits” are conservation credits earned by preserving habitat for the gopher tortoise, a threatened species. The customers are landowners who could not get building permits because tortoises live on their property.

Working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Mobile Sewer and Water Commissioners and others, we designed the conservation bank to protect tortoises while also helping property owners. Due to development, the longleaf pine forests preferred by the tortoise have been fragmented and severely degraded. The tortoises, which live up to 70 years, have become isolated on small lots and have trouble reproducing.

“If we hadn’t done something,

many gopher tortoises in this area would have been doomed,” says our economist Robert Bonnie. The money from the sale of credits will be used to relocate the tortoises safely and manage their new habitat, 220 acres of longleaf pine forest set aside by the Mobile water commissioners.

We also plan to set up a fund to help low-income landowners purchase credits. If the bank is successful, this new approach may be used to save thousands of acres for gopher tortoises.

Recently, we helped International Paper design a similar conservation bank in Georgia for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Already, the number of woodpeckers has increased from a lonely three males to 30 birds, an impressive return on investment. “These projects serve as a model for the future of endangered species on private land,” says Bonnie.



ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

finding the ways that work

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Good news for Gulf reef fish

Few boats left the harbor at Panama City, FL, the day fishermen got together to demand a management plan advanced by Environmental Defense.

The fishermen got what they wanted—a panel charged with developing a plan for Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs) for the severely depleted Gulf of Mexico red snapper. IFQs would allow fishing throughout the year with each fisherman allotted a share of the total catch. Now fishermen dash to sea in frantic mini-seasons that endanger both fishermen and fish stocks. Quotas have been under a nationwide moratorium, but Congress is now moving toward allowing regional fishery councils to devise their own quota systems. We helped secure the support of then-Governor George W. Bush for the project.

The advisory panel will issue recommendations that should help convince Congress to allow implementation of IFQs. For the first time, an environmentalist will have a designated seat. “Years of building trust with fishermen led to their bringing environmentalists and others to the table,” said our biologist Pamela Baker. Our role will be to make the plan effective in rebuilding damaged fish stocks.

“This is what the fishermen have been waiting for,” said Baker. “It’s a model for future cooperative decision-making in managing threatened fisheries.”



Texas Parks and Wildlife

More fish to fry: Red snapper would benefit from the new plan.



Diana Stratton/Tom Stack

Our work with ranchers is helping avert a showdown on the range.

High noon for Utah prairie dog

To most Americans, the prairie dog is a beloved symbol of America’s wide-open spaces. For some ranchers, however, it’s a pest that hinders their ability to work.

For half a century, landowners—with the help of government agencies—decimated prairie dog populations. Finally, in 1973, the Utah prairie dog was placed on the federal endangered species list.

Authored by our economist Robert Bonnie, researcher Margaret McMillan and ecologist Dr. David Wilcove, a new Environmental Defense report outlines how economic incentives can save the Utah prairie dog and help ranchers in the process. The report, *A Home on the Range*, notes the importance of the prairie dog as a

keystone species. By clipping the grass around its colony, the prairie dog supports other vanishing wildlife, including the swift fox, mountain plover and sage-grouse.

Coincidentally, many of the actions that ranchers would take to improve their lands for grazing, such as clearing away brush and restoring native grasses, are beneficial for prairie dogs. Since ranchers often lack the money for such range improvements, Environmental Defense proposes ways to pay ranchers to improve grazing lands in exchange for creating new prairie dog towns.

“We hope to create an environment where ranchers begin to treat prairie dogs as an asset and manage their land to attract them,” said Bonnie.

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The food that grows on water

To boaters on the innumerable lakes of Northern Wisconsin, wild rice is a nuisance, a weed that clogs propellers and depresses recreational industry profits. To the Ojibwe Indians who have been here for thousands of years, rice is a sacred crop.

Once wars were fought over rice. Today, Wisconsin's and Minnesota's pristine rice rivers are threatened by damming, weeding, mining and recreation. Particularly endangered is Wisconsin's historic Rice Lake, where a mining company wants to build an underground zinc mine.

Scientists working with Environmental Defense are researching how to preserve the wild rice and educating the recreation industry about the threats.

Rice embodies the Ojibwe's most deeply held religious beliefs, and they nurture it carefully. "It's a special gift from the Creator to the Indian people," says Jerry Smith, an Ojibwe healer. Harvest ceremonies include rice chiefs and rice camps. But too often the crop stands in the path of progress. "If wild rice is to survive," says Timothy Tynan, a biologist, "native opinions must play a larger role."

Our trustee Dr. Joy Zedler helped Tynan evaluate impacts of motorboats on wild rice. She would like to see a collaborative program to restore damaged rice beds to "help undo environmental injustice."



Tim Tynan

This wild rice is sacred to the Ojibwe Indians.



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Hugh Morton

Acid rain makes a potent case for stronger emissions cuts.



Ronn Maratea/International Stock

As major storms increase with climate change, we'll see more damaging dredge-and-fill projects by the U.S. Army Corps.

Beach projects threaten habitat

As this year's hurricanes line up their arsenal of destruction, beaches from North Carolina to Florida are built up by human engineering only to be washed away. Erroneously called beach nourishment, the process of replacing beaches eroded by storms is big business, paid for by taxpayers.

In Dare County, NC, the Army Corps of Engineers plans to dump 75 million cubic yards of sand (8 million dump truck loads) over the next half century.

Environmental Defense is calling for a comprehensive environmental impact statement of Army Corps operations at Southeastern Atlantic beaches. Often located where sea level rise makes their de-

struction inevitable within five years, these projects can accelerate erosion of pristine beaches downstream. Meanwhile, property values are kept artificially high and house buyers in flood zones are not informed of the risks.

Such engineering projects threaten entire ecosystems. Dredging sand destroys habitat for benthic animals like worms and clams, disrupting the food chain. Sand washed from engineered beaches onto offshore reef habitat can harm juvenile fish.

“The fact is we don't know much about the biological impacts of beach engineering because few independent studies exist,” says our marine ecologist, Dr. Michelle Duval.

Environmental Defense Newsletter

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Power to the people

With blackouts looming, many Californians are concerned about rising temperatures this summer, not this century. Yet steps to address the present power crunch could also help reduce global warming. That's one message of a new Environmental Defense report that examines how a warming climate is likely to affect Los Angeles and the Southland.

Scientists agree that global warming is upon us. By the time a child born today is a college sophomore, the earth may warm by up to 2° Fahrenheit. Warming in Southern California could yield poorer air quality, more heat waves and a rise in respiratory illnesses. Other possible consequences are heavier winter rainfall, declining marine species, coastal erosion and increased El Niño-type conditions.

Prompt action now could decrease climate change and help us adapt. Says Janine Bloomfield, one of the report's authors: "Today's policy decisions on energy, transportation and land use will affect our climate for decades to come. Conservation, efficiency measures and the use of renewable energy will reduce our electricity requirements, slow the pace of change and help prevent worst-case scenarios."

Hot Prospects is available at www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10540



Corbis

The future under global warming?



Diana Stratton/Tom Stack

Our work with ranchers is helping avert a showdown on the range.

High noon for Utah prairie dog

To most Americans, the prairie dog is a beloved symbol of America's wide-open spaces. For some ranchers, however, it's a pest that hinders their ability to work.

For half a century, landowners—with the help of government agencies—decimated prairie dog populations. Finally, in 1973, the Utah prairie dog was placed on the federal endangered species list.

Authored by our economist Robert Bonnie, researcher Margaret McMillan and ecologist Dr. David Wilcove, a new Environmental Defense report outlines how economic incentives can save the Utah prairie dog and help ranchers in the process. The report, *A Home on the Range*, notes the importance of the prairie dog as a

keystone species. By clipping the grass around its colony, the prairie dog supports other vanishing wildlife, including the swift fox, mountain plover and sage-grouse.

Coincidentally, many of the actions that ranchers would take to improve their lands for grazing, such as clearing away brush and restoring native grasses, are beneficial for prairie dogs. Since ranchers often lack the money for such range improvements, Environmental Defense proposes ways to pay ranchers to improve grazing lands in exchange for creating new prairie dog towns.

"We hope to create an environment where ranchers begin to treat prairie dogs as an asset and manage their land to attract them," said Bonnie.

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