

IOGCC NEWS RELEASE

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STATES DEMAND MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN GLOBAL WARMING POLICIES

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Concerned about possible economic ramifications, governors of the oil and gas producing states are calling on President Clinton and other federal leaders to employ more cautious, inclusive policy setting on the global warming issue.

Acting by resolution, a majority of the 29 member states of the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC) voiced concern about possible federal efforts to implement greenhouse gas reduction measures without consulting states and Congress. The resolution was enacted during the organization's 1998 Midyear Meeting, held in Overland Park, Kan., last week.

Gov. Ed Schafer of North Dakota, who authored the resolution, said the opinions of many stakeholders are needed in the decision-making process.

"This is too important and potentially costly an issue to be decided on a purely political basis or without solid scientific footing," Schafer said. "It's time for all viewpoints to be heard, and the states are among the most affected stakeholders."

The IOGCC resolution urged President Clinton and the U.S. Department of State international negotiating team to "proceed cautiously with regard to . . . commitments for greenhouse gas mitigation strategies." Of particular concern is that undue cost burdens to American energy consumers be avoided.

States would bear a significant portion of the costs, the IOGCC resolution contended, and therefore should be included in setting policy. The resolution urged President Clinton, Congress, the U.S. Department of State, and other federal agencies to "include the interests and seek the expertise of the states as part of any national debate regarding the relationship of greenhouse gases to global climate changes to ensure fully coordinated policies."

The IOGCC also called for a coordinated research effort to evaluate the "effects of human activities on the accumulation of greenhouse gases and their possible contribution to the impact on global climate change" and supported more focus on voluntary activities to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"We need to avoid impossibly harsh mandates that result in a shock wave to our state and national economies," Schafer said. "Industry should be given the opportunity to demonstrate that voluntary programs can be effective. This is a model that has worked well for states time and time again, and should be given a fair shot at the federal level."

The IOGCC resolution also pointed to the need for other nations to be held to a similar standard as the United States and other developed nations.

"The United States should not be a signatory to any protocol which would mandate new commitments for the developed countries, unless the protocol also mandates specific scheduled commitments for developing countries," the resolution stated.

The IOGCC is in its 63rd year of operation. Its mission is to promote the conservation and efficient recovery of domestic oil and natural gas resources, while protecting health, safety and the environment. Wyoming Gov. Jim Geringer serves as chairman.

For more information on the IOGCC, call 405/525-3556.

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