

October 2003 : The U.S. Senate rejects a Global Warming Bill

The U.S. Senate rejected a plan, co-sponsored by Sens. John McCain, a Republican, and Joe Lieberman, a Democrat, to curb carbon dioxide emissions from industrial smokestacks as a source of global warming. It was the Senate's first vote in more than six years on the controversial issue of climate change.

This bill would have required industrial plants — but not motor vehicles — to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to 2000 levels by 2010.

The Bush administration said the bill would seriously harm the U.S. economy.

"Let's get real here: this is a very minimal proposal that should be a first step," McCain told the Senate, showing pictures of Arctic Sea ice loss and melting at Glacier National Park. "But we have to start somewhere. We will be back, because these pictures will continue to get worse and won't improve until we begin to address this issue."

"The earth from space looks so beautiful, and yet so fragile," said Nelson, a Florida Democrat who flew on space shuttle Columbia in 1986. "When we face a major change in climate," he said, "it is going to have devastating effects on the ecological balance of the earth."

However, Republican Sen. Larry Craig, of Idaho, said there was no need to introduce a "massive new regulatory process" for industrial carbon dioxide. He said : "It is not a pollutant...It does not represent a direct threat to public health."

Sen. James Inhofe, a Republican from Oklahoma, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the bill's biggest opponent, said, "Like Kyoto, this is an extreme approach." Inhofe has in the past called global warming a hoax perpetrated by environmentalists on the American public.

Proponents say addressing global warming will in the long run help the economy, but the White House said it strongly opposed the bill because it would require "deep and immediate cuts in fossil fuel use" to meet an "arbitrary" goal, and drive up household energy bills and gas pump prices.

"These increases in energy prices would effectively operate as a tax on American consumers and would have a severe negative impact on job creation," the White House said in a statement.

Sen. Kit Bond told senators the bill would cripple the U.S. economy:"Now is not the time to place more burden on our families and our communities".

Will it be the right time five years from now ? See what happens in 2008.