



Jim Jeffords



Report From Washington

ENVIRONMENT

Spring 2003

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Fellow Vermonter:

During my years of public service I have always worked hard to protect the environment and to ensure that people are not exposed to environmental hazards. I know that most Vermonters share these values, whether generations of their families have helped to create Vermont's working landscape or they have been drawn here more recently by the beauty and high quality of life of our state.

Differences with President Bush on environmental protection contributed to my decision to leave the Republican Party in May of 2001 and seek Chairmanship of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee. The EPW Committee oversees the Federal policy on clean air, clean water, fish and wildlife, surface transportation, emergency response, and more. This newsletter summarizes some of my work, first as Chairman and more recently as Ranking Member of the EPW Committee.

In 2003 the EPW Committee will be responsible for writing a new Federal transportation bill to guide the nation's transportation investments over the next six years. This is one of the most important bills to come before Congress in any year; our transportation system touches all of our lives, determines where we live and work, and is among the largest potential sources air and water pollution.

In addition to working on the transportation bill, I will again introduce clean air legislation, work for a sustainable national energy policy and promote a full environmental agenda. It will also be important to respond to the Administration's steadily growing assault on our bedrock environmental laws. Although I will be Ranking Member rather than Chairman of the EPW Committee in 2003, I will continue to work as effectively as possible promoting an environmental agenda that most Vermonters share.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords, I-Vt.

Lake Champlain Basin Program Act of 2002

One of the greatest successes of the past Congress was the passage of the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Lake Champlain Basin Program Act of 2002. This new legislation, which I introduced along with Senator Patrick Leahy and New York Senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer, builds on 10 years of solid progress in improving the health of Lake Champlain. This law authorizes \$55 million over the next 5 years to support the Environmental Protection Agency and other partners of the Lake Champlain Basin Program in protecting the environment and cultural resources of the Champlain Valley. My bill builds on the success of the Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990, which Senator Leahy and I also introduced along with New York Senator Moynihan. That law brought together Vermont and New York, federal agencies, and Canada to assess the Lake's plan for the future. The Lake Champlain Basin Program is an international model for lake management.

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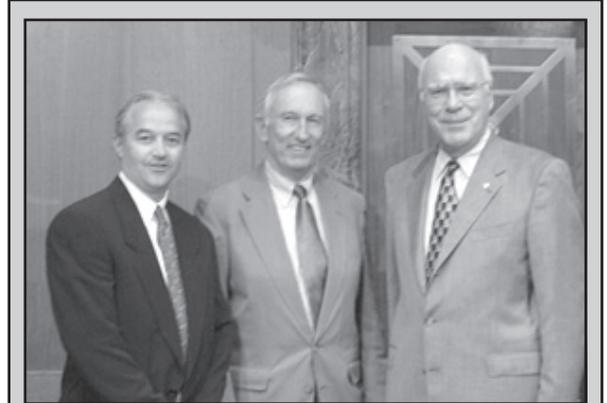
Committee Approves Jeffords' Historic Clean Power Act

Right now in America each year, there are about 30,000 premature deaths related to power plant pollution, about 160 million people breathing unhealthy air, and significantly higher risks of cancer and developmental problems in urban areas from toxic tailpipe pollution**. If global warming proceeds as scientists expect, weather will become increasingly more hostile and difficult to predict.

We must address this vital environmental and public health issue.

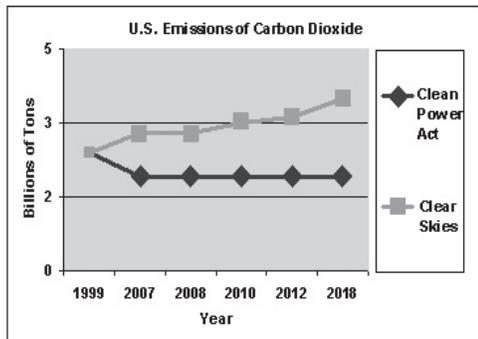
Last summer the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved historic legislation to slash most power plant emissions, including carbon dioxide. The Clean Power Act, which I first introduced more than five years ago, requires that within six years utilities must reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by 83 percent, mercury emissions by 90 percent and carbon dioxide by 23 percent. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that scientists say is a major cause of global warming; the other pollutants cause premature deaths, acid rain respiratory illness and haze.

Unfortunately, on environmental issues our President is moving us backward instead of leading us forward. In November the Bush Administration announced devastating new regulations that will gut clean air laws, allowing power plants to avoid installing simple anti-pollution equipment when they modernize. This departure from the Clean Air Act will prolong the life of out-of-date power plants belching out pollution, not only contributing to growing rates of childhood asthma, but also to the unsightly haze that taints the beauty of our magnificent parks and scenic vistas.

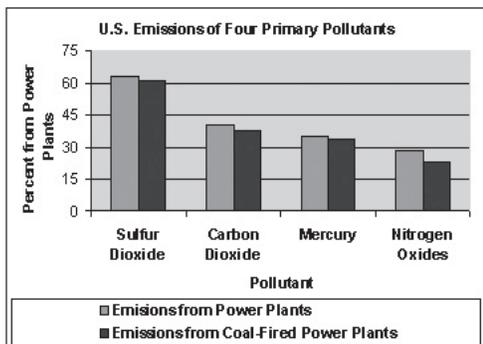


Senator Jeffords stands with Vermont Attorney General William Sorrell (left) and Senator Pat Leahy during a joint hearing of the EPW and Judiciary Committees. The hearing explored Administration policies to weaken clean air regulations.

Senator Jeffords introduced the Clean Power Act to curb U.S. emissions of four primary pollutants.



Compared to the Clean Power Act, the Bush Administration's "Clear Skies" proposal would not affect U.S. emissions of carbon dioxide, a major pollutant.



Much of U.S. emissions of four primary pollutants come from coal-fired power plants.

I will continue to fight for passage of the Clean Power Act and other legislation to ensure we leave the air we breath cleaner for future generations.

** *Death, Disease and Dirty Power: Mortality and Health Damage Due to Air Pollution from Power Plants*, Abt Associates, October 2000. (http://www.cmatf.org/publications/reports/death_disease_dirty_power.html)

30th Anniversary of Clean Water Act: Where Do We Go from Here?

In commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act, I hosted former U.S. Senator Robert Stafford, R-Vt., via teleconference from Vermont to testify before the Environment and Public Works Committee on his inspired role in creating one of the best environmental laws on the books, the Clean Water Act of 1972. Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine, testified at the hearing. It was a special moment, to hear the wisdom and remember the leadership of two Senators who served their states and their country so well.

Since its enactment, the Clean Water Act has helped to drastically reduce the number of waters deemed unsafe for fishing and swimming, double the number of households whose sewage receives secondary treatment, and slow the rate of wetlands loss by 75 percent. Yet continued water pollution and associated public health threats point to the need to be vigilant in implementing the Clean Water Act and strengthening this successful law whenever possible.

Water pollution continues to be a "clear and present" problem. It is real and it deserves our attention. We must take action to respond to America's call for cleaner water. That is why I worked during my tenure as Chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to provide the best and cleanest water we can to every American in every region of the country.

Jeffords' Bills Address Water Issues

- Wastewater Treatment Works Security and Safety Act**
 Would provide \$15 million for grants to help small communities conduct vulnerability assessments, develop emergency response plans, and address potential threats to the treatment works.
- Water Infrastructure Act**
 Would ensure that states have the most efficient, safest, and most flexible water supplies possible. This bill would provide adequate resources to make this goal achievable while not micromanaging states' efforts.



Report from Washington



Making America's Transportation Network Cleaner, Safer, and More Efficient

To meet growing demands placed on roads and highways in and around our major metropolitan areas, our city planners will have to focus increasingly on various transportation modes that meld easily together: subways, light rail, pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes, trains, smart growth city and town planning. During my tenure as Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I held a series of bipartisan hearings to learn more from leading experts and citizens about transportation and clean air, innovative financing for projects, freight transportation, controlling sprawl around our cities, how to deal with today's congestion, and many more topics. With these hearings, my staff and I are better prepared to reauthorize the Transportation Equity Act next Congress.

In a time of larger budget deficits, it is critical that every dollar appropriated for transportation projects is spent wisely. There is real competition for Federal funds and every project is expected to do the best with what it's given. I have been a vocal supporter of adequate funding for our country's transportation infrastructure, both roadways and railways. States, including Vermont, cannot bear the burden of transportation costs alone and I have worked in the Senate to ensure that they won't have to.

Transportation is a means to an end. To encourage prosperity, the U.S. must have a strong economy, a healthy environment, and safe communities. In Vermont, we have put an emphasis on wise spending, local involvement in policy decision-making, and far-sighted answers to long-term problems. Another initiative with a Vermont feel is the National Covered Bridge Preservation Program, which I authored in 1998. In 2001, I announced that \$1.84 million in grants was awarded to Vermont for restoration and re-roofing of historic covered bridges around Vermont.



Senator Jeffords speaks at a rally calling for cleaner air, water, and communities.

Historic Brownfields Bill Becomes Law

Last year, Congress took an historic step toward bolstering economic development by passing the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act. This bill, which was signed into law on January 11, 2002, will provide funds to clean up lightly polluted sites know as Brownfields. The bill seeks to protect our small businesses, revitalize once abandoned factory sites, and give new life to our aging industrial sites and their communities.

For the first time ever, Vermont communities can apply for Federal Brownfield cleanup funding. This legislation authorizes \$250 million a year over the next five years for both assessment and cleanup grants nationally, including petroleum sites, and state program enhancement. To apply go to: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm>.

I am pleased to have played an integral role, through this exemplary legislation, in efforts to encourage development of our urban cores, reduce development demands in greenfields, and promote our economic base by supporting our small businesses. This year's legislation has been many years in the making. I am gratified that our communities will now be better equipped to redevelop brownfields and sustain small businesses in the years ahead.

Bush Administration Attacks Superfund Program

I am concerned about the Administration's management of the Superfund program. Fewer toxic sites are being cleaned up. EPA is claiming a shortfall in funding. Yet, the Administration refuses to urge reauthorization of the Superfund tax. This means that taxpayers, instead of polluters, are paying an increasing percentage of Superfund site cleanup costs.

The Superfund program is experiencing a slowdown in the cleanup of toxic waste sites. From Fiscal Year 1997 through Fiscal Year 2000, an average of 85 sites per year were cleaned up. This year, 42 sites were cleaned up. EPA acknowledges that funding was not available to continue cleanup efforts at seven sites, including the Elizabeth Mine in Strafford.

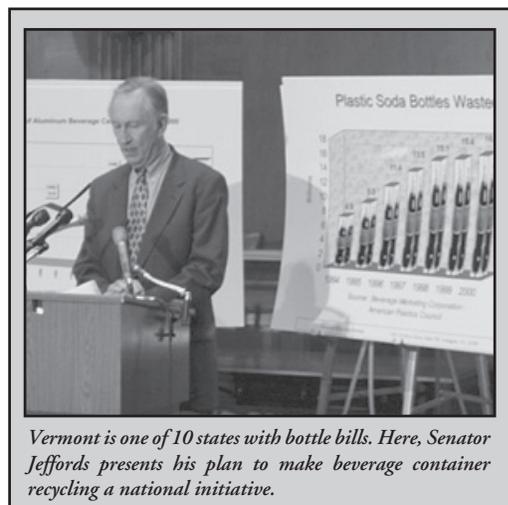
The Administration's refusal to back reauthorization of the Superfund tax demonstrates an implicit agenda: reversal of the "polluter pays" principle. From 1980 to 1995, the Superfund Trust Fund paid 83 percent of site cleanup costs. In 2004, it is estimated that this will drop to 28 percent. That means that taxpayers, not polluters, will pay 72 percent of Superfund site cleanup costs. That is inexcusable.

I am committed to ensuring the integrity of the Superfund program. Vermonters should not be concerned about how and when a toxic waste site in their community will be cleaned up. It is my mission to ensure that Superfund functions exactly as it was intended—to clean up toxic waste sites quickly and completely, and to ensure that those that made the mess, pay the bill.

Bottle Bill: Good for Vermont, Good for America

As Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I sponsored the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2002 to promote beverage container recycling across the U.S. My bill set 10 cents as the minimum deposit, required return rates of 80 percent, and allowed the beverage container industry to set up its own system for gathering returned bottles and cans.

In Vermont, thanks to deposit-bearing containers, between 95 percent and 98 percent of containers are recycled, compared with the national 1999 rate of between 30 percent and 40 percent. On Earth Day 2002, I held a press conference to garner support for the national "Bottle Bill" and to show it as a practical way to lower our country's dependence on foreign oil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and conserve our natural resources. Currently 10 states have bottle bills; thirty new bottle bills were proposed in state legislatures in 2002.



Vermont is one of 10 states with bottle bills. Here, Senator Jeffords presents his plan to make beverage container recycling a national initiative.

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Lake Champlain Basin Program Act of 2002

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Lake Champlain has improved dramatically in the 20 years I've worked on this issue. During that time, we successfully sued to stop toxic discharges by International Paper Company. Over the years we have invested millions of dollars to improve sewage treatment plants, manage manure on our farms and clean up the worst toxic dump sites in the lake.

Much remains to be done. We must avoid losing ground to polluted stormwater from new developments and keep out new invasive species. I will also renew my efforts to stop the flow of toxic mercury deposited on our region from dirty coal-burning plants to our west.

There is also an untapped potential for Lake Champlain to be the centerpiece of a National Heritage Area, with great economic benefit to the region. To that end I will reintroduce the Champlain Valley Heritage Partnership Act, which passed the Senate last year but was not approved by the House.

Lake Champlain is the West Coast of New England and we are in a great position to protect the lake while also benefiting from its cultural and economic value.

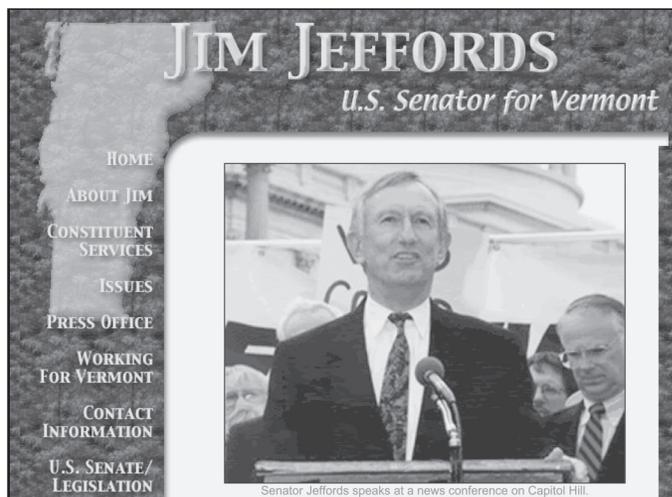
GRANTS ALERT

Looking for information on how to obtain Federal funding for a project or program?

Please call Pat Menduni, Grants Coordinator, in my Rutland office at (802) 773-3875.

If you have access to the Internet, my website has a grants alert page filled with helpful links to Federal programs and agencies and a non-profit gateway.

www.senate.gov/~jeffords/grants.html



VISIT ME ON-LINE!

Use my website to read my latest press releases, learn more about issues before the EPW Committee, and contact me with questions and comments.

www.senate.gov/~jeffords/issue_environment.html