

## **Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)**

### **National News at the time the White House e-mail went missing**

(\*\*\*\* = Dates specified by Waxman in January 17, 2008 letter to Fielding)

#### **November 1, 2003 - January 11, 2004**

For these dates, CREW searched LexisNexis using the terms “Council on Environmental Quality”, “Environmental Protection Administration”, “Clean Air Act” and “Clean Water Act”.

No [speeches or press releases](#) from CEQ for the time period.

#### **October 29, 2003:**

Mike Levitt confirmed as head of EPA. (Jennifer Lee, After a Long Delay, Senate Confirms Utah Governor as Head of E.P.A., *The New York Times*, October 29, 2003.)

#### **\*\*\*\*November 6, 2003:**

Bush administration officials draft a rule that would significantly narrow the scope of the Clean Water Act, stripping many wetlands and streams of federal pollution controls and making them available to being filled for commercial development. (Elizabeth Shogren, Rule Drafted That Would Dilute the Clean Water Act, *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 2003.)

James L. Connaughton, Chairman of the CEQ writes a letter to the Editor of the Oregonian about the Senate rejecting the Climate Stewardship Act of 2003. (James L. Connaughton, Senate Right to Reject Climate Bill, *The Oregonian*, November 6, 2003.)

#### **\*\*\*\*November 7, 2003:**

Democratic senators and attorneys general from the Northeast [call for an investigation](#) into a policy change by the Environmental Protection Agency.

#### **\*\*\*\*November 9, 2003:**

Dana Perino, spokesperson for the CEQ, defends Bush on protecting wetlands. (Sammy Fretwell, Vanishing Wetlands, *The State (Columbia, SC)*, November 9, 2003)

**\*\*\*\*November 13, 2003:**

Senate plans on beginning debate on the Clean Air Act New Source Review (NSR), but time for debate is cut off. “The hint of an NSR debate drew staff from the White House Council on Environmental Quality to Capitol Hill early in the day. Time ultimately ran out on the VA-HUD bill, however, before the NSR amendments could be raised.”(Darren Samuelsohn, [EPA Spending Bill Headed for FY '04 Omnibus](#), *Environment and Energy Daily*, November 13, 2003)

Robert F. Kennedy publishes a [scathing article](#) on the Bush Administration’s environmental record in Rolling Stone.

**\*\*\*\*November 14, 2003:**

EPA and CEQ sued by NRDC over dealings with Pesticides companies for lowering environmental protections. (Sara Shipley, [Group Sues over Industry’s Input on Atrazine Rules](#), *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 14, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*November 18, 2003:**

House and Senate [pass an Energy Bill](#). There is some concern about a provision to open Indian lands to energy development, which would cut the EPA and CEQ out of the regulatory process. (Michael Burnham, [Energy Bill Would Boost Production on American Indian Lands](#), *Environment and Energy Daily*, November 18, 2003)

**\*\*\*\*November 25, 2003:**

Majority of Members of the House write a letter to President Bush urging him not to roll back Clean Water protections. Connaughton defends White House policy. (John Heilprin, [House members urge Bush to retain Clean Water Act protections](#), *The Associated Press*, November 25 2003)

**\*\*\*\*November 26, 2003:**

DOE releases proposed “guidelines for the voluntary reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and reduction efforts” resulting from “an interagency process” of which CEQ was a member. (Press Release, U.S. Department of Energy: DOE Releases Proposed Guidelines for Voluntary Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, *PR Newswire*, November 26, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*November 30, 2003:**

New York Times writes a story where CEQ is fingered as the administration’s “information clearinghouse for news releases” pertaining to 9/11 environmental and air quality issues. A Senate Committee will later approve EPA and CEQ’s actions. (Kirk Johnson and Jennifer 8. Lee, [When Breathing Is Believing; New Yorkers Doubt E.P.A.](#)

Credibility on Air Safety, but Truth Is Complex, *The New York Times*, November 30, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 3, 2003:**

Washington Post Reports that the EPA is working to undo mercury emissions regulations under the Clean Air Act. (Eric Painin, White House, EPA Move to Ease Mercury Rules, *The Washington Post*, December 3, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 4, 2003:**

Several state file FOIAs with the CEQ and other agencies regarding the roll back of the Clean Air Act. The action is part of a lawsuit filed by 12 states in October 2003 to try and stop changes to the Clean Air Act. (Frederic J. Frommer, Wisconsin seeks information on how Clean Air rules were adopted, *The New York Times*, December 4, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 9, 2003:**

CEQ asks EPA and FDA to brief them on the upcoming communication on mercury risk in seafood. (The intent of the meeting was to "make sure the message being sent is consistent and if not, how we can explain it." A CEQ spokesperson confirms the briefing was requested "for informational purposes" but says there is no effort to delay the fish advisory.) (*White House Fears Mercury Fish Warning May Bolster Critique of Air Rule*, 10 RISK POLICY REPORT (December 9, 2003).)

**\*\*\*\*December 11-12, 2003:**

The CEQ conducts a series of meetings in Tennessee to discuss recommendations from a task force on how federal agencies should implement the National Environmental Policy Act. (Tom Charlier, Environmental talks to be held this week, *The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, TN)*, December 11, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 12, 2003:**

FDA and EPA jointly release a draft advisory warning people about mercury levels in certain fish. (Eric Pianin, Federal Warning on Tuna Planned, *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 15, 2003:**

With efforts to change the Clean Air Act with the Clear Skies Initiative stalling in Congress, the EPA releases the same policies "administratively." The changes now allow for mercury, formerly designated a hazardous air pollutant, to be traded like sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. (Jennifer Lee, E.P.A. Plans to Expand Pollution Markets, *The New York Times*, December 15, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 16, 2003:**

Supreme Court agrees to intervene in the dispute between two non-profit groups and Vice President Dick Cheney over documents related to the White House energy task force in 2001. (Charles Lane, High Court Will Review Ruling on Cheney Task Force Records, *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2003)

**\*\*\*\*December 18, 2003:**

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) gave its formal approval of an agreement that calls for member export credit agencies (ECAs) to evaluate the environmental impact of the projects that they are considering. CEQ is a member of OECD. (Press Release, U.S. Department of Treasury: OECD Reaches Agreement on Environmental Guidelines for Export Credit Agencies, *FDCH Federal Department and Agency Documents, Regulatory Intelligence Data*, December 18, 2003.)

**\*\*\*\*December 19, 2003:**

James Connaughton reiterates the Administrations desire to drill for oil and gas in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge, but admits defeat for now. (Julie Deardorff, A land rich in beauty, oil, *Chicago Tribune*, December 19, 2003)

Old coal-fired power plants are permitted to burn less cleanly than new plants, raising health concerns. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency weakens a provision of the Clean Air Act that required coal-fired power plants, chemical plants, oil refineries and other industries to install new pollution controls when modifications to their equipment result in increased emissions. (Julie Deardorff, An Unclear Future, *Chicago Tribune*, December 19, 2003)

**\*\*\*\*January 3, 2004:**

Former Senator Robert Dole, lobbying for Syngenta, a pesticide company which produces a chemical that the EPA issued a health and safety ruling on, meets with White House Deputy Chief of Staff Joe Hagin to discuss the controversy over the pesticide. (Louis Jacobson, Dole's Lobbying Stirs Up Environmentalists, *The National Journal*, January 3, 2004.)

**\*\*\*\*January 11, 2004:**

CEQ holds its last of four regional forums to discuss the future of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA.) Environmental groups complain that the meeting was not well publicized and serves only as a vehicle for the administration to further weaken environmental protections. (Environmentalists: public left out of forum on landmark legislation, *The Associated Press*, January 7, 2004; Steve Lipsher, Environmental-law

reform plans greeted with distrust at forum Feds deny accusations of weakening NEPA,  
*The Denver Post*, January 11, 2004.)