

Congress of the United States

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SCHAEFER SAYS QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED BEFORE CLIMATE CHANGE TREATY IS SIGNED

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As chairman of the relevant subcommittee with jurisdiction over the climate change issue, Schaefer has held numerous hearings on the issue and continues to monitor developments closely. The following statement is from Rep. Dan Schaefer (R-CO), chairman of the House Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Energy and Power:

"I am extremely concerned with the direction current climate change negotiations seem to be taking. My concerns do not mean that I don't care about the environment. I take my responsibility to protect the planet for future generations very seriously. But I also want to make sure that the actions we are taking to protect the environment achieve demonstrable results.

"Our subcommittee has had a number of opportunities to hear from Clinton Administration witnesses on the subject of global climate change. However, the Administration has never been able to satisfy Committee Members that the treaty obligations they are preparing to undertake will either improve the environment or not cause undue harm to the U.S. economy.

"I believe that whatever steps we take must be flexible and cost-effective. I too think it is important that we develop a system that sends a long-term signal to industry so that it may have time to adapt. In fact, these are good goals in any environmental context.

"Two years ago, the Administration agreed that it would agree to legally binding greenhouse gas emission reductions in December 1997. It did this not knowing the level of reductions it would be called upon to make or the time frame in which it would have to make those deductions. The Administration has not yet told Congress or the American people to what extent any such agreement will impact the United States economy. With just six months to the signing date, too many questions remain unanswered.

"It is my hope that the Administration will not sign a blank check and then leave it to other nations, with different national interests, to fill in the blanks. I continue to wait for the Administration to tell me specifically what they are planning to propose so that we can determine for ourselves if it is good for this country and the global environment.

"If the Administration has not completed its analysis and assessment and determined what level of emission reductions are real and achievable with adequate time for consultation with Congress, industry and labor it should not enter into any agreement. In addition, it should not enter into any agreement until we have worked out with the international community the mechanisms to implement it. I encourage the Administration to maintain flexibility in the negotiating process."