

# 'Voodoo Environmentalism'

Unfortunately, the Dingell-Lent Clean Air Bill Fails to Meet the President's Promise.

By Rep. Henry Waxman

As we consider the administration's clean air bill, some people are dismissing the idea of strengthening amendments with the sweeping condemnation that "perfection is the enemy of the good." That's pithy, but it misses the point.

It also suggests that a quest for environmental perfection has blocked clean air legislation in the past and may do so again.

In fact, it was industry — not environmentalists — who successfully stopped legislation throughout the 1980s. Now these same industries, especially the automakers, are arguing that we must swallow the Dingell-Lent bill (H.R. 3030) whole or forget about legislating in 1989.

Any further delay is inexcusable. President Bush has put comprehensive clean air legislation at the top of Congress's agenda and has shown more environmental leadership in eight months than President Reagan did in eight years.

Unfortunately, the Dingell-Lent bill simply fails to meet the President's rhetorical promise. Although the bill creates a credible program for acid rain reduction, it has glaring shortcomings in its provisions for protecting the American public from growing urban smog and toxic air pollution.

**Letting cars and trucks off the hook is great news to the automakers, but an economic fiasco for all other pollution sources.**

The single biggest problem with the Dingell-Lent bill is its motor vehicle provisions. The Office of Technology Assessment's recent ozone report warned that the way to win the war against smog is to adopt every pollution control strategy available.

The danger isn't overkill, it's undercontrol. And the obvious first place to look for reductions is with the biggest polluter: mobile sources.

Cars and trucks cause more than 70 percent of carbon monoxide pollution, 50 percent of hydrocarbon pollution, 45 percent of nitrogen-oxide pollution, and 50 percent of the cancer deaths due to toxic emissions.

Yet, the Dingell-Lent bill rejects many readily available and extraordinarily cost-effective mobile source control provisions. Even worse, it actually relaxes many of the current motor vehicle standards.

The bill eliminates the requirement that each car meet pollution standards in favor of a program that would allow automakers to "average" the performance of vehicles. Since car-company data show that average emissions are now below the standards proposed in the bill, auto emissions would actually be allowed to increase from today's levels.

For dozens of cities around the country, the Dingell-Lent bill spells disaster. Denver's brown cloud can't be beaten by flowing new cars to pollute more, nor can Chicago's toxic soup or Atlanta's smog. That's "voodoo environmentalism."

Letting cars and trucks off the hook is

great news to the automakers, but an economic fiasco for all other pollution sources.

Pollution cutting is a zero-sum game. What we don't cut from cars, we have to cut from shoe factories, bakeries, and other local pollution sources, where pollution control usually costs much more.

Exempting cars and trucks from new, meaningful controls simply means the President's commitment to a smog-free America won't be met.

Likewise, the Dingell-Lent approach to toxic air pollution puts other presidential promises on the chopping block.

In 1987, more than 2.7 billion pounds of toxic air pollutants were released into the air from major industrial facilities. The EPA has estimated that air toxics cause 1,500 to 3,000 cancer deaths each year, deaths that President Bush pledged to reduce by 75 percent.

Unfortunately, the Dingell-Lent bill focuses control mandates entirely on major industrial facilities.

As with smog, cars are again exempted from strict controls, and small stationary sources face no required reductions. These sources collectively cause 75 percent of the

relevant cancer cases. The bill even authorizes the EPA to exempt half of the major industrial sources of toxic emissions from regulation.

The subcommittee I chair is now in the midst of considering H.R. 3030. I will offer amendments, and so will others, to correct the deficiencies in the bill. I don't have illusions of perfection, but we should try to enact the most effective bill possible.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif) chairs the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee on health and the environment.

## IT'S JUST NOT THAT SIMPLE

Never cut down another tree. Let other nations cut down their trees and sell America the wood products for homebuilding, paper and packaging.

Cut way back on the 100 million Americans who enter the forests every year to hunt, fish, hike and ski. Make them get a ticket, just like they do for a football game. And no more cars, trucks and campers. Make them walk. After all, the logging roads they use will soon be reclaimed by nature. When our working forests are shut down.

Obviously, this is an exaggerated portrayal of the emotional appeals purists are making to Congress and the courts.

But it's no more exaggerated than the way they talk about the nation's forest products industry. It's just not that simple.

We are a special interest. We are the men, women and companies that provide the nation with wood and paper-products from forests across the nation. When we plant three billion trees a year, we're also serving the public interest of millions of Americans who rely on healthy forests for products, recreation — even their livelihoods. We have formed the American Forest Resource Alliance to help tell our part of the forest management story.

In the very near future this nation must strike a balance between the economic and environmental interests important to all of us. Decisions must be made on the basis of reality, looking at all the pieces of the puzzle.

Because the issues and answers are as complex as nature itself.

AMERICAN  
FOREST  
RESOURCE  
ALLIANCE

