

## Remarks of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

I am delighted to be here and so pleased that my schedule could be worked out. I am happy to be here with the hearty band that is here and committed to this issue and so pleased to learn, as I just did, how many people are here from other parts of the country, not just New York and New England.

I think that speaks very well to the efforts that have been undertaken by so many of you over the years to make this issue a front burner priority for our entire country.

I want to thank the Center for Environmental Information for sponsoring this conference, and all the other groups who are co-sponsoring it.

I want to thank Bernard and the Adirondack Council for providing me with the opportunity to speak but, more than that, for all of the hard work and dedication that has gone into years and years of better understanding and addressing the challenges posed by acid rain.

I am very honored to serve on the Environment and Public Works Committee, following in Senator Moynihan's footsteps. He was a great advocate and champion of what needed to be done on acid rain in the Senate.

Now, Senator Schumer and I have banded together to keep up that fight and hopefully find more and more allies throughout the Congress and the country.

I know that both Senator Schumer and Congressman Sweeney have been here and have addressed many of the issues that we are so concerned about in New York.

We know that the kind of continuing deterioration that we have seen means that, although there have been efforts over the past 20 years to address this issue, we haven't done anything near what we need to do.

We, for example – I am sure this has been said over and over again – already live with the fact that 41 percent of the lakes in the Adirondacks are affected in some way, some to the point of all the life being gone from them.

In 40 years, left unabated, we will have mostly dead lakes in the Adirondacks, other parts of New York, other parts of our country.

Someone mentioned to me as I walked in, Big Moose Lake, where I was privileged to go during the last year and speak about my commitment to ending acid rain.

The Hubbard Brook study that was released earlier this year is another loud alarm bell warning us what we need to do.

Here is what we are trying to do, and this is where we really need your help. Senator Schumer, Congressman Sweeney, Boehlert and McHugh in New York, have all joined together in sponsoring the acid rain control act. We need more sponsors. We need more people who view this as a priority.

Senator Schumer and I have also joined with a bipartisan group of our colleagues in the Senate in introducing the clean power act of 2001.

We are trying to have as many different approaches to this issue as we possibly can, to reduce NO<sub>x</sub>, to reduce sulfur dioxide, to reduce mercury.

The clean power act also calls for reductions of carbon dioxide. We are hoping that the administration, despite their reversal on carbon dioxide, will find it appropriate and appealing to at least move on sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury.

I didn't get to hear the previous panel, but I know that focusing on the economic benefits of decreasing acid rain is one of the most important arguments we can make, and I commend those of you who are doing the work to quantify those benefits.

Clearly, there are benefits from tourism, there are benefits from energy savings, there are economic benefits of all kinds. We have to get that message out more clearly.

I hope that the emphasis that has finally come to this issue in the Congress means that, for example, on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, both the chairman – Chairman Smith of New Hampshire – and the ranking member, Harry Reid of Nevada, have said that they are willing to move a multi-pollutant bill in Congress.

We have already had three hearings on air issues in the committee, including one this week on global climate change.

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We are working very hard to find common ground with our friends and colleagues in the midwest, who acknowledge that they are homes to the plants that do so much of the damage to our lakes in the Adirondacks and further north in New England.

N.Y. Attorney General, Elliot Spitzer, testified before our committee a few weeks ago on clean air and particularly what we needed to do to further reduce emissions.

He had quite an interchange with Senator Voinovich from Ohio. Senator Voinovich kept saying, yes, but Ohio meets the clean air standards.

Attorney General Spitzer said, yes, because you built smokestacks 700 feet into the air so that the soot and particles and emissions are carried far away from where you are.

We are looking for a kind of common ground and objective analysis that will give us the opportunity to move our colleagues, who think this is somebody else's problem, who don't see it as a national problem, in their interest to address.

We are very open to ideas about how we can provide some encouragement and even incentives so that other representatives and senators will join us in this crusade.

I am optimistic that, on a bipartisan basis, we can move legislation addressing acid rain and other air quality issues in the committee.

The brownfields bill, which just passed the Senate 99 to nothing is a perfect example. It has been tied up in the committee and in the senate, held hostage to superfund reform for several years.

Finally, a bipartisan group said, look, this has got to end. We have got to have a bill on brownfields. It won't be everything that all of us want, but it will get the process going again to get brownfields cleaned up, to get redevelopment going.

I was pleased that two amendments I offered about public participation and environmental health were accepted by Senator Smith as part of the manager's package.

We have got an example coming out of that committee of what was once a very contentious issue, that pitted regional interests against one another, sectoral interests against one another, and we now have a victory we can claim.

I am hoping we will have fast action on that

bill in the House, so that we can point to a real environmental victory for America.

I would like to see our efforts on acid rain be the next victory. I would like to see if there is any way we can push it by the end of this year.

We are going to continue to hold hearings on air issues in the Environment and Public Works Committee. I am hoping that we will have a hearing on the acid rain problem in New York and have many of you who have been working on these issues for years be part of testifying and try to establish a public record that will impact on the Senate's deliberations.

You know, the same emissions from midwest power plants that cause acid rain in the northeast generally degrade the quality of our air.

You know, they contribute to the smog problem which, as we learned this week from the American Lung Association, is only getting worse in many areas of New York and states across the nation.

I think that my constituents in western New York, particularly in beautiful Chautauqua County, were surprised to learn how bad their air was.

That had never been an issue that they had focused on, and now there is a lot of publicity about the deteriorating air in places that always considered themselves kind of rural and off the beaten path.

We also know that if we are going to address air issues, we are going to have to be very vigilant about the energy policy that this administration puts forth.

I know there are people here from the EPA and from the administration. I would just make a heartfelt plea. We cannot address our energy problem at the expense of our environment.

We can have a balanced energy program that emphasizes both supply and demand, that will focus on conservation and the development and promotion of cleaner sources of energy.

What we are hearing is that the plan will be largely one of advocating increased production. The budget that has been proposed to the Congress cuts significantly those programs in EPA and the Department of Energy that try to provide credits and incentives for efficiency, for cleaner forms of energy.

I really would just hope that the administration

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will think very, very hard about this issue. It will do us little good to try to move forward on an acid rain bill if an energy bill is pushed through the Congress to meet our short-term energy needs that exacerbates our environmental and air problems.

We cannot be short sighted about what we need to do. I hope that we will be able to make that case. Your meeting here today provides even greater impetus and more voices to the extraordinarily urgent message that we can and we must develop a clear set of standards to govern air emissions, deal with acid rain, and have a balanced approach to energy.

There are a lot of veterans in this room. Some of you have met with me on several occasions. A number of you came to a forum on the environment that Attorney General Spitzer and I hosted in Rensselaerville a few weeks ago.

I am absolutely committed to these issues and will do everything I can, working across the aisle and with both houses of Congress.

The time is really now. I heard reports that some of your meetings with unlikely members were quite productive, that there are those who have not been interested in, or supportive of, these efforts in the past who, for whatever reason – epiphanies, ideology, politics, whatever reasons – are now willing to sign on and be part of the solution, not the exacerbation of the problem.

We have to move quickly to take advantage of that opening, because it is, indeed, an opening, but I don't know how big it is or how long it will stay. Your meeting could not be more timely.

To those of you from New York, I thank you for your decades of effort and diligence, and for the support many of you gave to me.

For those of you from other parts of the country, I am so glad you are here. I am so pleased you are part of this effort.

I urge you to do everything you can, both with your elected members and colleagues back home, to sound the call to action, that we will and we must address acid rain this year, before it ends, before we cause any more damage, and it must be addressed in a bipartisan effective manner. Thank you all very much.

## QUESTIONS

AUDIENCE: I hope I can ask this question

without being too nervous. You made such an excellent point about the need to tie together clean air and clean energy policy and whatever.

What would you suggest that we in this room do tomorrow to do this, and then, how can we help you move forward with this kind of alignment?

SENATOR CLINTON: I think there is a lot that each one of us in this room can do from our various capacities. I would urge you to go home and get on local radio programs, write letters to the editor, hold press conferences with like-minded people, talk about what has been discussed and learned here at this conference.

Talk about the importance of combining clean energy and clean air and clean water issues together. You know, the environment has always been a kind of sleeper issue.

It breaks through public consciousness when people have to face hard choices, and that is where we are right now.

The more that all of us – I would particularly urge each of you as members of groups, as citizen activists, as officials, to really take every chance you have, both to speak to the public and to speak to your senators and representatives.

Write to the White House. I really believe – I have always believed this and now, as an elected official, I believe it even more, that communication matters.

If people believe that there is a groundswell of opinion and activism out in the country on behalf of clean energy, clean air and clean water, they will sit up and take notice.

Our problem often is that the numbers and the intensity are on the other side, and the arguments are made with so many resources behind them.

So, what we can't match necessarily for resources for ads on television, we have to match, as best we can, with every other medium available to us.

I know that Deb Callahan, who I spoke with a few days ago through the League of Conservation Voters, is getting very serious, which I applaud, as has the Sierra Club and others, to become major players in the political process. The environment has to have that kind of force behind it in order to be taken seriously.

I think we have wonderful openings, because a

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lot of the issues that the administration has addressed in the last few months have really been outside the mainstream and outside people's understanding of what is right.

It doesn't appear that they share our values if they don't want to deal with arsenic in the water. That is something nearly everybody gets and understands.

It is a little troubling that a promise is broken. During a campaign we are going to see CO<sub>2</sub> addressed. Once the White House is attained, that promise goes out the window.

If you look at the progress that has been made, there was a front page article in one of the papers today about a very fuel-efficient automobile.

We have invested federal dollars the last eight years in new generation vehicles. It was a partnership with American auto makers to move more fuel efficiency forward. That is being cut back or even cut out in the Bush budget.

The standards for fuel efficiency in cars, they need to be raised. I joined Senator Schumer and Senator Feinstien with a bill to raise them. We need to get people to focus.

It is opportune, because people are worried about their electricity rates and supply. If they only knew what it would mean to increase fuel efficiency in cars or standards in refrigerators, and that energy efficiency is the second biggest source of energy we could tap into, as well as being an economic driver – upstate New York has a lot of jobs that could be created and built on if we moved toward more energy efficiency, like fuel cells technologies.

There are a lot of arguments we could make. I would just urge you to find every possible opportunity to do that.

Call those radio talk shows. Get yourselves booked as a guest. I am serious. You don't have to be an expert.

You know, look in the mirror, talk to a friend about how to make your points, but don't leave the field to people who are paid to put forth a different point of view.

AUDIENCE: I understand the Senate environment Democrats aren't willing to move a multi-pollutant bill that doesn't address less than four pollutants, without CO<sub>2</sub>.

With the President opposing regulating CO<sub>2</sub>,

doesn't that mean that bill is sort of in a logjam right now, that can't really be addressed unless the President changes his mind?

SENATOR CLINTON: That is why I am on both bills. I think there are opportunities in pushing both bills forward at the same time.

We have a lot of very strong support on both sides of the aisle and in both houses of Congress for the clean power act, which is a four-pollutant bill.

I think we should keep pushing that. There are Republicans who stood with us when Joe Lieberman and Harry Reid and I and others introduced that bill, because they know that just because the President reverses himself and says CO<sub>2</sub> is not a problem doesn't mean that it is not a problem. We want to continue to push that.

At the same time, we want to have real progress on NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> and mercury. I think there is a deal in there. I don't think we get to where there is a deal unless we push as hard as we possibly can and get as much support behind both. I think we are in a stronger position.

I would hope that this President thinks that he needs an environmental victory. I would love it to be acid rain. That would be fine with me.

If we can't address CO<sub>2</sub> this session, CO<sub>2</sub> is not going anywhere. In fact, we are getting more of it every day. So, it will be around for us to deal with. But at least we can make some progress.

MS. LAMBERT: Thank you for coming, Senator. I am Kathy Lambert with the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation. I think as you know, the only way we can tell if we are solving this problem is to track it.

I was wondering if you could support a modest investment of about \$15 million in scientific monitoring equipment that hasn't been updated in decades to help solve this problem.

SENATOR CLINTON: Absolutely. I would be happy to support that. That is part of a bigger problem, if I may, and I don't want to be partisan. I know this is a non-partisan group.

If you go back to the 1980s, the Reagan administration began to undermine our capacity to collect data across the board in everything, social policies, environmental policies, scientific efforts, began to dismantle a lot of the government programs that collected data.

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We saw a further assault on data collection beginning in 1995 with the Republican-led Congress. That is extremely dangerous. I would just say that, no matter Republican, Democrat, independent, if we don't have good data, we don't make good policy.

If we don't have good data, we can't marshal the arguments about why we need to do what we need to do.

I am hearing increasingly from so many different constituents and parts of New York and parts of our economy about how crippled we are now because we don't have good data.

We haven't invested in upgrading our data collection in the public sector. We are far behind the private sector.

Often, sort of ruefully but jokingly, we say that Washington is sometimes the only evidence-free zone I am aware of, because when you come with evidence, and oftentimes it is very sound evidence but it is not politically correct or politically popular and so, if there are 100 people saying X and there are two people saying Y, it is more convenient to go with Y than X.

We have got to get better data. I would certainly be willing to support that effort, and any other kinds of information technology needs that the environmental community has are ones that I would be open to.

We don't want to be in a position where the information is largely held on one side of the political equation and is, therefore, easily manipulated for whatever political end is to be sought.

I will just end, because I know that was the last question. I think we have a wonderful opportunity. I really do.

I believe that, with coordination and focus on the part of our environmental groups, with setting some priorities and kind of going down the list saying we have focus here and then we are going to win one and then we are going to move on, I think the next two years could, in a kind of odd way, maybe, a kind of unpredictable way, be very good because they got off to such a bad start.

I think that is something that we can take advantage of and hold them accountable for. It means that all of us are going to have to do our part and be very vigilant and be willing to get out there and to make our case, and to make our case in language, in using examples that people who are not already immersed in the issue can understand.

I mean, I am guilty of policy wonkism from time to time. You know, we talk four pollutant and two pollutant. Most average people don't have any idea what it means.

When we say that, you know, the loons are gone from Loon Lake, and you don't see any more moose around Big Moose Lake because they can't drink the water, people kind of get that.

When you say that it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to keep 50 parts per billion arsenic in our water when all the scientific studies say we should drop it at least to 10, people kind of get that, too.

I think we have to make our arguments with clarity and strength, but we have to just be persistent and diligent.

I don't want to jinx us, but I think we can have some real progress on acid rain, and wouldn't that be great, and we could all celebrate because of your work over the years. Thank you very much.

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