



NEWS RELEASE

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Complete Flexibility Must Be Focus of Buenos Aires Conference *GCC Looks at Details on Sinks, Rules for Emissions Trading*

Buenos Aires, October 29, 1998 – Rules for emissions trading and participation of developing countries in the Kyoto Protocol will be high on the agenda as the 4th Conference of Parties to the International Framework Convention on Climate Change begins. With so many complex issues outstanding, Global Climate Coalition leaders said today they do not expect much progress on either front -- a position shared by many conference leaders.

“The United States is looking for a workplan to decide how emissions trading and the Clean Development Mechanism will work,” GCC Chair Connie Holmes said. “We do not support the Protocol and do not believe it can be ratified by the U.S. Senate in its current form. But, if emission caps are ever imposed, these market tools will be absolutely necessary to lessen high economic burdens placed on our citizens.”

“We support the Administration’s desire to have an unrestricted system,” Holmes said. “The rules must be simple, reasonable and easily enforced without creating large new bureaucracies. But, it will take a long time to get these rules right and to involve developing countries. We hope that our negotiators avoid the temptation to set arbitrary deadlines.”

As the recent U.S. government Energy Information Administration study shows unrestricted trading is necessary or the costs to our economy will not just be high, they will be devastating and thousands more jobs will be lost, Holmes added.

Participation by developing countries is also on the agenda, but it is doubtful that countries such as China and India will agree to take actions to reduce the rate of emissions growth they will experience in pursuing economic development.

“Developing countries said ‘no’ in Kyoto, ‘no’ in Bonn in June and we expect them to say ‘no’ again in Buenos Aires,” Holmes said. “No matter what happens, China and India must make a commitment because of the size of their emissions.”

Last year the Senate passed the Byrd-Hagel resolution on a 95-0 vote that requires that both issues, rules on trading and participation by developing countries be resolved before the Senate will consider ratification.

In another area, carbon sinks are expected to be revisited because of a recent study by scientists at NOAA, Columbia University and Princeton published in Science magazine in mid-October. The study illustrates the importance of sinks in mitigating carbon emissions and decisions at COP-4 must not eliminate or restrict their use.

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Note to editors, producers: B-roll, Animation, video graphics of greenhouse gas in atmosphere, breakdown of gases in the atmosphere and possible energy price increases are available. For more information, please contact Frank Maisano at (202) 628-3622.

