

A Request for Questions on Clean Energy, Global Warming at 2004 Presidential Debates

To: The Commission on Presidential Debates and
Charles Gibson and Bob Schieffer, 2004 Presidential Debate Moderators

We respectfully request that the two remaining 2004 Presidential Debates include questions about the candidates' plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean energy and clean vehicle technologies, as urgent matters of both domestic and foreign policy.

We believe that the future of energy is at the crux of major challenges facing our nation today: concerns about the economy and the loss of manufacturing jobs, national security, and the environmental, public health, and financial consequences of global climate change.

There is a strong consensus in the science community that global climate change is underway and that we must dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow the rate of warming. America's major faith communities have named climate change as a matter of great moral urgency for our nation and the planet.

It is also becoming clear that as the rest of the world moves to limit emissions from burning fossil fuels, we are on the cusp of a major industrial transition, a transition the United States must choose to lead in order to preserve and create jobs for the 21st century and protect future generations.

This should not be a partisan issue. Across the nation, policymakers from both parties are working to encourage the development of renewable energy, cleaner vehicles, and energy efficiency. Voices as diverse as the Pentagon, religious leaders, labor union presidents, scientists, investors, and the editors of Fortune Magazine and BusinessWeek have expressed concern about climate change and the need for the development of a clean energy strategy.

We believe that this is a moment for a great national undertaking, one that can put Americans to work – in both high tech and manufacturing jobs – in solving the biggest challenges of the day. Both candidates have offered ideas, but the issue has not yet been presented as a matter for serious consideration to the general public.

The Presidential Debates offer the most important format for bringing these issues to the fore. We hope you will agree they merit close attention.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leo Gerard
President
United Steelworkers of America

Rev. Dr. Robert Edgar
General Secretary
National Council of Churches

James McCarthy
Alexander Agassiz Professor of Biological Oceanology
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Andy Stern
President
Service Employees International Union

Ruth Messinger
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Timothy E. Wirth
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