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**AS PRIVATE CITIZENS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY TAKE ON THE  
CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL WARMING, FRONTLINE INVESTIGATES WHY FEDERAL POLICIES  
ARE SO FAR BEHIND**

**FRONTLINE presents**  
*Hot Politics*  
**Tuesday, April 24, 2007, at 9 P.M. ET on PBS**

**[www.pbs.org/frontline/hotpolitics](http://www.pbs.org/frontline/hotpolitics)**

*"The way it happened was the equivalent to flipping the bird, frankly, to the rest of the world ... on an issue about which they felt so deeply."* That is how former New Jersey governor and the former head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Christine Todd Whitman describes the U.S. withdrawal from the Kyoto agreements in *Hot Politics*, a new film from FRONTLINE and the Center for Investigative Reporting, airing Tuesday, April 24, 2007, at 9 P.M. ET on PBS (check local listings).

As more and more Americans look for a response to the realities of climate change, FRONTLINE correspondent Deborah Amos investigates the political decisions that have prevented the United States government from confronting what is one of the most serious problems humanity faces today.

In February, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that global warming is "unequivocal" and asserted with 90 percent confidence that greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from human activities, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels, have been the main cause.

Yet, as correspondent Amos reports, since 1992—from the time then-president George H.W. Bush insisted that the first world climate change treaty make CO<sub>2</sub> emission targets voluntary, through former President Bill Clinton's failure to pass a promised broad-based energy tax or to push for U.S. Senate ratification of the Kyoto treaty, through President George W. Bush's 2001 reversal of a campaign pledge to push for mandatory limits on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and his complete withdrawal from the Kyoto process—the executive branch of the U.S. government has failed to join in the climate change agreements that much of the rest of the world has chosen to adopt.

*Hot Politics* goes behind the scenes to examine the forces behind this failure, probing the impact of a well-financed energy industry campaign that challenged the broad scientific consensus on the human causes of

climate change in an effort to stall federal regulation of the carbon emissions that might impact their companies.

*Hot Politics* details the frustrations of federal officials like Eileen Claussen, one of Clinton's chief international climate negotiators, who resigned from her position in 1997 because she felt the Clinton-Gore administration had dropped the ball by failing to push for Senate ratification of the Kyoto climate treaty. She tells FRONTLINE, "I thought it was dishonest to go and negotiate a treaty that you had no hope of getting ratified in the Senate ...It's better to have good rhetoric than bad, but it's actually better to want to do something."

*Economist* correspondent Vijay Vaitheeswaran tells Amos, "By the time Bill Clinton's administration was finished, we saw greenhouse gases so much higher than they were at the beginning of the decade that any president—not just George W. Bush, but any president—even an Al Gore presidency would have found it very, very difficult to meet the Kyoto targets. That's the dirty little secret."

During the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush outflanked his opponent, Al Gore, on the issue, promising to work toward a mandatory "carbon cap," or ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. As president, Bush appointed former New Jersey governor Christie Todd Whitman, who also backed mandatory carbon caps, as his EPA administrator. But as *Hot Politics* reveals, Whitman's efforts to implement the new caps were derailed at the White House, apparently at the insistence of Vice President Dick Cheney. "I think he probably had a great deal to do with it," says Whitman. "I had long conversations with him. It wasn't a lot of back-and-forth with him. And he sort of smiles and nods, and you don't really know where he is on a lot of things."

Soon after, the Bush administration withdrew any U.S. support of the Kyoto protocols and then began a process of stifling the dissemination of key findings by government scientists about climate change. "In my thirty-some years in the government," says top NASA climate scientist James Hansen, "I've never seen constraints on the ability of scientists to communicate with the public as strong as they are now."

In interviews with climate scientists and environmental activists, and with political insiders including Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), former U.S. Senator Tim Wirth (D-Colo.), as well as Whitman, Claussen and others, *Hot Politics* investigates why the U.S. federal government lags so far behind much of the world in responding to global climate change.

*Hot Politics* is a FRONTLINE co-production with the Center for Investigative Reporting, Inc. The film is produced and written by Peter Bull and is reported by Deborah Amos. FRONTLINE is produced by WGBH Boston and is broadcast nationwide on PBS. Funding for FRONTLINE is provided through the support of PBS viewers. Additional funding for FRONTLINE is provided by The Park Foundation. Additional support for *Hot Politics* is provided by Deer Creek Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, and The Nathan Cummings Foundation. FRONTLINE is closed-captioned for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers and described for people

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