

On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day, 25 million people joined around the country to demand a safer, cleaner and healthier world. The impact of that first Earth Day was astonishing. In rapid succession, and with large, bipartisan majorities, Congress passed the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and the Superfund Act.

Thirty-six years later, our air is cleaner, our drinking water is safer, our rivers no longer catch fire, and the bald eagle is no longer endangered. And yet these key bipartisan achievements of the 1970s are now under attack.

Unfortunately, on this Earth Day – a day on which we celebrate the programs and protections that were put in place as a result of the environmental movement thirty-six years ago – we find the Bush administration once again taking a step backwards in the efforts to achieve a safer, cleaner and healthier world.

The Administration's proposed 2007 Budget proposes \$25 billion in cuts to environmental programs over the next five years – dramatically underfunding a host of programs instituted to ensure clean and drinkable water, continued preservation and conservation of open space, and the ability of our family farmers to protect and enhance natural resources.

In our region, the Bush Administration's proposed budget leaves us far short of the amount necessary to significantly improve the health of our greatest natural asset - the Chesapeake Bay.

The President's request cuts funding for EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office by approximately \$350,000. It also eliminates or cuts additional programs crucial to cleaning up the Bay including Farm Bill Conservation programs that help farmers reduce agricultural runoff entering the Bay, the Small Watershed Grant program, the Chesapeake Bay Targeted Watershed Grants Program, and the Clean Water State Revolving Program.

In addition gutting environmental protections, the Bush administration continues to pursue a 19th century energy policy, with an increased reliance on drilling and dependence on fossil fuels – rather than the 21st century energy policy that we need. In lieu of federal action, more than half of our state governments are embracing programs designed to lower greenhouse-gas emissions and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. America should work toward finding an

economically sound, environmentally friendly way to reduce global warming and diminish America's dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

I am working with others in Congress to implement a plan that would help the United States achieve energy independence by 2020. Our plan calls for significantly increasing production of alternate fuels from America's heartland including bio-fuels, geothermal, clean coal, fuel cells, solar and wind; promoting hybrid and flex fuel vehicle technology and manufacturing; and enhancing energy efficiency and conservation incentives. With the American can-do spirit and technological know-how, we can work together to revolutionize our sources of energy.

The health of our environment is a direct result of our commitment to its protection and preservation.

On this Earth Day, I urge all citizens to join with me in striving to do better in our personal efforts to preserve the environment and calling upon the Administration to reassess its values by providing the focus and resources necessary to preserve our planet for future generations.