

U.S. targets methane omissions in fight against global warming

By JOHN HEILPRIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Seeking to bolster its credentials on global warming, the United States signed an agreement Tuesday with 13 other nations that calls for investing up to \$53 million in companies that will profitably control emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas.

Emissions of methane, mainly from landfills, are ranked second behind carbon dioxide emissions among industrial gases scientists blame for warming the earth's climate.

"Today we're planting a seed," Mike Leavitt, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, told representatives of the countries at a ceremony co-sponsored by the American Petroleum Institute and the National Mining Association. "Together we will reap an environmental and economic harvest."

Earlier Tuesday, Sen. John McCain called on President Bush to do more to fight global warming. McCain, R-Ariz., pointed to a study on rising Arctic temperatures as further evidence that changes in the earth's climate aren't being addressed seriously enough.

"Some of us believe that the accumulation of knowledge argues that we act, rather than continue to accumulate knowledge," McCain said in

criticizing the Bush administration's climate strategy as research-heavy. Until then, McCain had been playing down his policy differences with Bush to support the president's re-election.

McCain said the study "clearly demonstrates that climate change is real and has far-reaching implications for society."

Not so, said Sen. James Inhofe, chairman of the environment committee, who has described global warming as a hoax. In a statement, Inhofe called the study yet another scare tactic.

"Alarmists continue to pursue doomsday scenarios about global warming, but without releasing the basis for their claims," said Inhofe, R-Okla.

The study released last week by the Arctic Council and the International Arctic Science Committee says the Arctic is particularly vulnerable to warming from industrial greenhouse gases. It projects that polar bears could become extinct, and that seals, caribou, reindeer herds and the people who depend on those animals for food also could be threatened by the thinning sea ice, melting glaciers and thawing permafrost.

James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, said Tuesday that the administration's climate strategy is far broader than generally perceived.

"We're carrying forward an aggressive program of technology partnerships and international partnerships that will reduce the greenhouse gas intensity of the American economy by 18 percent," Connaughton said. "Our programs go far beyond our many billions of dollars in science," he said, referring to research and technology programs that he said exceed \$5 billion yearly.

The administration has acknowledged that Bush's climate plan, unveiled in 2002, will not reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere. Instead, it calls on industry to voluntarily reduce the amount of greenhouse gases released as a percentage of economic growth — 18 percent by 2012, or about 1.5 percent a year. That is about the same rate of reduction that has occurred over the past 12 years.

Bush in 2001 abandoned a campaign pledge to restrict carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, then rejected an international climate treaty for mandatory controls on carbon dioxide and other gases that many scientists blame for warming the atmosphere.

McCain has held more than a dozen hearings to build support for a bill he sponsored with Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., to impose modest mandatory controls on U.S. greenhouse gases.

Mother arrested after boys found dead of malnutrition, dehydration

By ERIN VAN BRONKHORST
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KENT, Wash. — A woman with a history of child neglect complaints was arrested in a drunken stupor after her two young boys were found dead in their apartment of malnutrition and dehydration, authorities said.

Police entered the apartment of Marie G. Robinson, 36, in this Seattle suburb after the children's father, newly released from jail, said he had been unable to contact her by phone for 10 days and had gotten no response when he knocked at the door.

Officers found the bodies of Justice W. Robinson, 16 months, in a crib, and Raiden A. Robinson, 7 weeks, in a bassinet.

Their mother was passed out from alcohol intoxication, lying in bed with

covers over her head, prosecutors said. Another of Robinson's children, a 2-year-old boy, was hungry and skinny, said Officer Paul A. Petersen. He was checked by emergency technicians and placed in the care of the grandmother.

Robinson was arrested for investigation of child mistreatment and second-degree murder. A judge set her bail at \$2 million Tuesday. Prosecutors planned to file charges today.

Medical examiners classified both deaths as homicides. Authorities have not said how long the children had been dead.

The woman's attorney, Colleen O'Connor, said Robinson has been distraught and confused since her arrest Sunday.

"She can't stop crying and she's shaking," O'Connor said.

State records show Robinson was

investigated on complaints of child neglect in October 2003 and February this year. Two complaints in September 2002 were considered not serious enough for an investigation.

The child welfare director for those counties, Chris Robinson, who is not related to the defendant, said the two earlier cases were referred to public health nurses who help struggling mothers.

"The question for us is, was it reasonable for us to do anything else? At this point, it will take a more thorough review by us to answer that question," Robinson said.

Christopher Bone, 32, the children's father, was released Sunday after serving 2 1/2 months in jail for failing to appear in court on driving-related misdemeanors, authorities said.



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