



# Boston Society of Architects

*A Chapter of The American Institute of Architects*

July 27, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The Honorable Richard B. Cheney  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush and Vice President Cheney:

We write to you on behalf of the Boston Society of Architects— Committee on the Environment, with regard to the May 2001 National Energy Policy (NEP) report.

We commend this administration's intentions to develop a focused and purposeful national energy policy that will ensure energy resources be available to this and future generations. Unfortunately, after reading and discussing the report, we conclude that the National Energy Policy Development Group underestimates the United States' potential to enhance energy performance and develop renewable energy resources. A national energy policy based on petroleum, coal and nuclear resources is economically and environmentally short-sighted. We seek a revised policy, weighted in conservation, efficiency, performance and renewable resources.

The NEP report acknowledges that our nation's growing dependence on oil imports is of great concern due to market volatility and national security. The NEP's proposed solution calls for increased domestic drilling, with the environmentally sensitive Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) as a focal point. Such a strategy puts protected habitats at great risk without assuring the United States of a long term energy solution. Expanded investment into oil exploration, drilling, and infrastructure diverts focus and funding from research and development into sustainable domestic energy resources. This administration should strive to transition the domestic energy industry and the nation away from oil dependence.

The NEP proposes "clean coal technology" and "non-emitting" nuclear energy as appropriate fuel sources to round out the nation's energy supply. We do not consider either fossil fuel to be practical or an acceptable accommodation of our nation's environmental standards. Coal releases energy through a combustion process, of which carbon dioxide is an inherent byproduct. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas and major contributing factor to Global Warming. Likewise, "spent nuclear fuel" and other radioactive waste is an inevitable byproduct of nuclear power generation. Neither the National Energy Policy Development Group, nor "best science" can guarantee that the proposed Yucca Mountain deep geologic storage facility will be able to accommodate a continuous production of radioactive nuclear waste adequately or safely.

The NEP report does propose some expansion of existing energy conservation programs and the development of renewable energy resources. Funds totaling \$39.2M for the fiscal year 2002 are dedicated

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to research and development of all renewable technologies. However, when compared to the \$200M per year for ten years bestowed solely on “clean coal” research, it is clear that renewables are not a real priority for this policy. Furthermore, we find the National Energy Policy Development Group’s recommendation that a portion of the renewable energy research funding come from ANWR oil bid bonuses, ironic at best.

As building designers, we see tremendous potential for increased energy performance and conservation. As noted by a New York Times briefing, dated June 05, 2001, Californians reduced energy use in May, 2001 by 11 percent (over May 2000) through modest means of turning off lights, cutting back on air conditioning, replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents, and using Energy Star appliances. This unorganized mass response to an energy crisis exceeded energy advisors’ forecasts by four percent. We ask: what could a focused National Energy Policy that emphasizes research and development of energy efficiency in building systems and transportation technologies achieve?

Twenty years ago, when confronted with similar issues regarding national security and energy policy, the Federal Administration and this nation missed a critical opportunity to redirect our energy efforts toward efficiency and renewable energy resource development. We are at the crossroads again. This time, we seek to ensure that future generations are granted the same level of environmental health and comfort as we enjoy today.

Sincerely,

(signed by the following)

Charlotte Matthews  
Co-Chairperson  
Committee on the Environment, BSA

Deane Rykerson, AIA  
Co-Chairperson  
Committee on the Environment, BSA

Peter Nobile, AIA  
Committee member  
Committee on the Environment, BSA

Kenneth Fisher, AIA  
Committee member  
Committee on the Environment, BSA

cc: Spencer Abraham, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy EPA  
Christine Todd Whitman, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency DOE The  
Honorable Edward M. Kennedy, United States Senator  
The Honorable John F. Kerry, United States Senator  
The Honorable Barney Frank, United States Congressman  
The Honorable Jane Swift, Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Honorable Thomas Menino, Mayor, City of Boston  
Boston Globe - Letters To the Editor  
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