

6 What do we know about the reasons for climate change? What can be done to stop it? What is America's stance on climate change?

Green America

The United States is, by nature, irrepressibly entrepreneurial and inventive. It is also highly decentralized, and this fact sometimes escapes us. **Hundreds of American jurisdictions at the state, county and city levels have ignored Washington's spectacular indifference to environmental crisis**, which is what we see in terms of the international treaties, and are moving ahead by leaps and bounds to curb greenhouse gas emissions and **forge a profitable green economy regardless of what goes on in Washington.**

At last count, for example, more than 700 American cities had become signatories to the **US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement**, which is meant to bring them into line with the emissions cuts called for by Kyoto. Collectively, they govern more than a quarter of the US population.

They don't care what the Bush administration thinks. Not even some of the largest American corporations are in line with Washington at this point. A remarkable consortium of them **officially begged Bush last summer to regulate greenhouse gases.**

Meanwhile, the states of California, Washington and Oregon have entered into their own little pact called the **West Coast Global Warming Initiative**, which mandates a whole set of regulations and restrictions.

"Arguably," notes Patrick Mazza, research director at Climate Solutions in Washington state, **"Northwest states and cities are several years ahead of the American curve as a result,"** and are **"already beginning to level off global warming pollution."**

Indeed, California – under Republican 'governator' Arnold Schwarzenegger – has brought in the toughest emissions and energy efficiency standards in the country.

California's non-partisan think tank "Next 10" recently issued a study of the state's efforts called "The Green Innovation Index," which shows that California's per capita energy consumption has now fallen below 1990 levels.

Next 10 also reports that, when polled, 85 per cent of Californians have been persuaded that prosperity can go hand in hand with lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Eighty five per cent, that's a huge number of people out of a population of 30 million, minus children and starlets.

Not surprisingly, Americans being Americans, the whole crisis has taken on an air of **entrepreneurial optimism**. At a speech in Seattle in early November, former president Bill Clinton told his audience that the challenge of climate change was "a godsend. It is," he explained, "in my personal view, for the United States, the greatest economic opportunity since we mobilized for World War II."

Patricia Pearson, CBC, November 30, 2007

7 How does this representation of America go together with the image the world has of the country?

8 What is the author's attitude about the future? What words and phrases does she use to get her point across? →S5

- <sup>1</sup>entrepreneurial [ˌɒntrəprəʊˈnɜːrɪəl] business-oriented, esp. when risky
- <sup>5</sup>by leaps and bounds very quickly
- <sup>6</sup>to curb to limit
- <sup>6</sup>to forge to form, to create
- <sup>9</sup>signatory person bound by signed agreement
- <sup>18</sup>to mandate to make obligatory by law
- <sup>21</sup>to level off to move toward stability or consistency
- <sup>26</sup>non-partisan not connected with one particular political party
- <sup>26</sup>think tank company that does research for hire
- <sup>30</sup>prosperity Wohlstand
- <sup>36</sup>godsend ['gɒdsend] Glücksfall

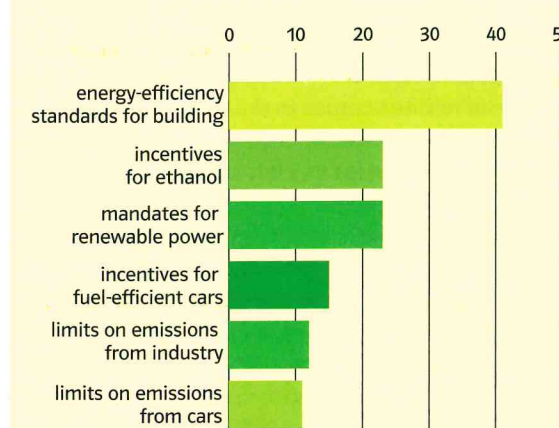
**WORD BANK**  
 Dealing with problems to tackle/address a problem • to lag behind • to refuse to see • to be a forerunner • to go about doing sth • to take measures • encouraging signs • to be optimistic

9 Contrast the 'typically' American attitude to environmental challenges to a 'typically' European one.

10 Look at the two graphs below and point out how the environmental standards depend on where you live. →S27

Green at heart

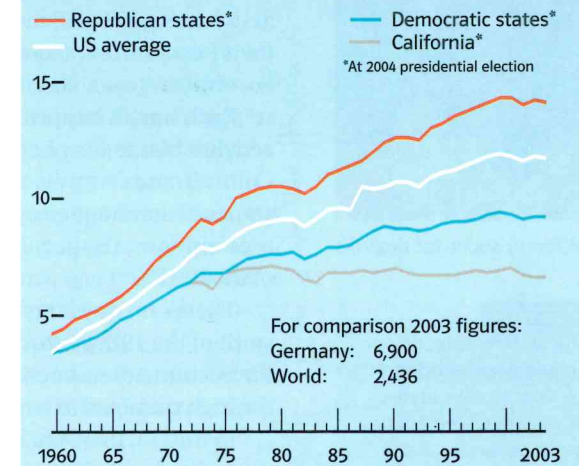
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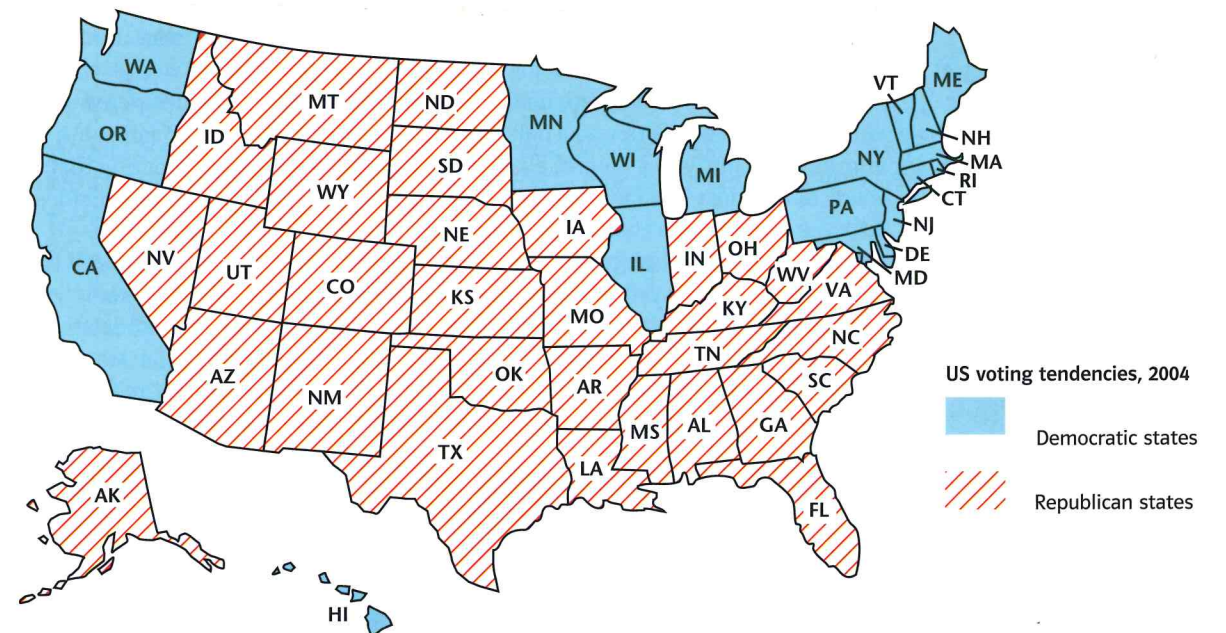
Sources: American Coalition for Ethanol; Alliances to Save Energy; The Economist

The redder, the greedier

Electricity consumption per person, KWh, in thousands



Source: California Energy Commission



11 [🌐] Check out the online links and report on some of the suggestions made there on how to fight global warming. List the ideas presented there that support the view offered in the text, saying that Americans share a 'can-do' mentality?

12 Mediation: As part of an internship for a newspaper you have been asked to research current environmental attitudes in the US. Sum up the main points of this article in German. →S33