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SUBJECT: Miami Herald EDITORIAL (6/23/03) re: Spinning the Environment

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04:50 PM -----

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06/23/2003 09:55:18 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Dana M. Perino/CEQ/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Miami Herald EDITORIAL (6/23/03) re: Spinning the
Environment

Posted on Mon, Jun. 23, 2003

SPINNING THE ENVIRONMENT
WHITE HOUSE TINKERS WITH EPA REPORT
Miami Heald
EDITORIAL

When it comes to providing information to the public, the Bush administration is developing a decidedly mixed record. Nowhere does this tendency emerge more often than when the subject is energy policy. White House officials seem inclined to be forthcoming only selectively. That's apparently what happened to the Environmental Protection Agency's comprehensive report on the state of the environment. The report became less comprehensive after White House editing of a section on global warming, according to information from EPA officials. The EPA's take on global warming is based on scientific studies that warn of risks to public health and the environment from such pollution sources

as auto and factory emissions, early drafts of the report show. The edited version instead will offer a view more popular with the energy industry: Global warming is only a theory; the Earth is a complex place with many natural variables that could be causing temperatures to rise.

That, indeed, is part of what's happening in Nature, where, over much time, changing conditions have brought on both ice ages and steamy jungle conditions in different eras. But scientific studies by federal agencies, beginning with NASA, also have found profound effects on the Earth's atmosphere from rising levels of air pollution. However, the public will have to search somewhere other than the current version of the EPA report to learn the whole story.

The first example of the administration's reticence in this area occurred when Vice President Dick Cheney balked at revealing the people and what entities they represented who helped him craft the administration's energy strategy two years ago. Environmental groups say they only know who Mr. Cheney didn't speak with: their representatives. This may help to explain why U.S. energy strategy is based so heavily on increased oil and natural-gas production and less so on conservation and research and development of alternative energy sources. This national policy affects us all, and Americans have the right to know who helped shape it.

Such selectivity on when to tell and when not to tell ill serves the Bush administration and the American people. It also hinders affected government agencies, which are supposed to be impartial. The EPA is the people's advisor and regulator on environmental and health issues. Its judgments must be based on facts, science and objective analysis, not political spin.