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Bush Attendance at Earth Summit

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Senator * or Department*: BAUCUS

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Record Type*: Speeches & Remarks

MONTH/YEAR of Records*: April-1992
(Example: JANUARY-2003)

(1) Subject*: Environment
(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject*: Bush Attendance at Earth Summit

DOCUMENT DATE*: 04/07/1992
(Example: 01/12/1966)

* "required information"

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The largest international meeting on the environment in 20 years will convene this June in Brazil. This "Earth Summit" -- the first since 1972 -- is a rare opportunity for leaders of the world to start solving the globe's pressing environmental problems. Many heads of state have committed to attend this important event.
But not our President. When asked if he would attend, he waffled. He said that he is in the middle of an election year and may need to stay home.

If he was staying home to implement the Clean Air Act he so proudly signed a year and a half ago, I would support him. But he is not.

The reality is that the "environmental" President has lost his credentials.
Rather than working to protect the environment, the White House has repeatedly blocked EPA from releasing clean air regulations, despite explicit deadlines in the law. This creates uncertainty and leaves States and industries potentially subject to sanctions for not meeting the requirements of the Act. Meanwhile, Americans continue to breathe air so polluted it threatens their health.

To add insult to injury, the White House has pushed EPA to violate nearly three dozen statutory deadlines in the 16 months since the Clean Air Act was signed into law.
And to make matters even worse, in one of the few actions the President did take, he explicitly violated the law. He excused the automobile industry from installing canisters in cars that capture toxic and smog-forming vapors. This illegal and overtly political decision was made only days before the Michigan primary.

The President has continued to use partisan politics as an excuse to pollute.
He has sacrificed the health of Americans in the search for more delegates to the Republican National Convention.

Perhaps we should not be surprised, since the President recently said he would do anything to be reelected.

It has become so outrageous that a member of Congress is suing EPA Administrator Bill Reilly to force him and the Agency to comply with the law.
We hear the President is backing away from his commitment to cleaner air for all Americans because he fears the economic impact.

Yet research conducted for the President’s own EPA shows that the Clean Air Act creates jobs. If properly implemented, it will spur growth in the pollution control industry. And the technologies and jobs created by this demand will help improve our balance of trade.
So with his record, I can understand why the President would not go to Rio. If he goes, his inaction on clean air -- and on global warming -- would be all too clearly displayed. But avoiding the Earth Summit will not immunize him from criticisms at home on his environmental record.

In signing the Clean Air Act, he promised us cleaner air. Now he is breaking his promise and going back on his word.