ENERGY TOWN HALLS
NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE

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Cheney Pitches Conservation
New Emphasis in Energy Plan

By Dana Milbank
Washington Post; Tuesday, July 17, 2001; Page A01

MONROEVILLE, Pa., July 16 -- Vice President Cheney, who launched the Bush administration's energy initiative with a speech dismissing conservation as a "personal virtue," today tried a new, greener pitch for the embattled proposal.

"Conservation is a must," Cheney pronounced in a speech in Philadelphia delivered by his wife, Lynne, while the vice president, suffering from laryngitis, sat nearby. "We must become much more efficient in energy use.... For the country, efficiency helps us make the most of our resources, softens the impact of high prices, and reduces pollution."

As Congress considers scaling back Bush's ambitious plans to boost domestic energy production, and falling fuel prices ease the short-term energy crunch, members of the Bush Cabinet fanned out across the country today to host a series of town hall meetings in hopes of reviving the energy initiative's prospects. The vice president took to the road to sell the administration's energy policy here and in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

His words today capped a shift in emphasis -- though not a change in policy -- from the administration on the topic of energy and the environment. In April, Cheney, who led the committee that drafted the administration's energy plan, traveled to Canada to outline an energy policy dominated by expanded production, labeling conservation a "sign of personal virtue" but not the basis for a "sound, comprehensive energy policy."

Since then, however, the climate has changed dramatically. Cheney's appearances today were part of a Bush administration bid to boost its image on the topic of energy and the environment, which has been battered in recent months. According to last month's Washington Post/ABC News Poll, Americans disapproved of Bush's handling of energy issues by a margin of 58 percent to 37 percent, the president's worst showing on a major issue.

Today, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman went to Old Lyme, Conn., in her native Northeast. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta worked the Midwest, while Commerce Secretary Donald L. Evans made the case in his native South. Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton headed West to Sioux Falls, S.D., where her support for private property rights is more popular.

Bush has offered a diverse collection of proposals to stimulate energy production and encourage efficiency. These include drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, incentives for nuclear power, help for low-income households' energy costs and encouraging renewable and alternative fuels and conservation.
But little is happening so far in Congress on these plans, and even the administration’s GOP allies say the proposal to drill in the wildlife refuge is a nonstarter. The Senate has been slow to act on the energy package; Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) demanded today that the Senate consider the initiative “in a full-blown way” or he would “consider other options,” such as a filibuster.

This spring, when the administration unveiled its energy proposal to approval from energy producers and criticism from environmental groups, Bush officials spoke of a nation in an energy crisis. On the horizon were $2 a gallon gas and blackouts on both coasts, they argued.

Instead, the average price of gasoline had fallen to $1.51 as of Friday from $1.76 in mid-May, according to the Lundberg Survey of 8,000 gasoline stations. Natural gas prices have fallen even more sharply. In California, a 10 percent drop in usage, new supplies and federal price controls initially opposed by Bush have prevented blackouts.

Bush today acknowledged the challenge to the proposal from the changing situation. “I think any time there’s not an immediate problem that’s apparent to people, it’s tough to convince people to think long term,” Bush told reporters. “But it’s clear there are warning signs.”

The green lobby was ready for Cheney’s visit today. At Cheney’s first stop, to address a national gathering of county administrators in Philadelphia, Brett Hulsey, a county supervisor from Wisconsin, was waiting to present Cheney with a petition signed by 120 county officials objecting to the Bush energy plan. “Power plant pollution causes 30,000 deaths every year, twice as many as are killed by guns,” Hulsey said, passing out fliers from “Local Officials for Clean Energy.” Along Cheney’s motorcade route, a woman held a handmade sign proclaiming “Re-regulate now: keep prices affordable.”

Still, the administration may have a chance to persuade the public. A Gallup poll conducted two weeks ago found that 38 percent of respondents support Bush’s energy policy, while 32 percent oppose it — largely on grounds that it isn’t environmentally friendly enough.

Today, Cheney exuded green. Though he spoke of a need to upgrade and expand the nation’s power grid, this was put into a mix that included “diverse sources” of energy, a “balanced approach,” and a dismissal of a “false choice between more energy and a safer environment.”

After the Philadelphia speech, Cheney flew to western Pennsylvania for a town hall meeting in the Pittsburgh suburb of Monroeville to promote the energy plan before an audience selected by Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge (R).

Cheney called for construction of more refineries and said “nuclear energy makes all the sense in the world” to ease global warming. But he also made a plug for fuel-efficient, hybrid-fuel vehicles and spoke of the need to “protect and enhance the environment.”

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Cheney, On The Road, Seeks Support For Energy Program

By JOSEPH KAHN
New York Times, JUL 17, 2001

MONROEVILLE, Pa., July 16 — Vice President Dick Cheney said today that falling fuel prices in no way diminished a need for more domestic energy supplies, arguing that America was becoming overly dependent on foreign oil exporters, some of whom "do not wish us well."

The vice president's comments, at a public meeting in this southwestern Pennsylvania town, were part of the administration's effort to rally support for its energy plan even as the high gasoline and natural gas prices that gave the plan its impetus a few weeks ago continue to ease.

"If we get to the point that we totally rely on foreign sources, we will periodically pay $2, maybe $2.25, for a gallon of gas," Mr. Cheney said. "With prices easing off, we've got some people saying there's no crisis now. But we're increasingly subject to prices set by others."

His comments show how the administration is scrambling to hone a new message to promote its energy priorities in Congress. Lawmakers have so far resisted calls to open new federal lands to oil and gas exploration.

When President Bush unveiled his energy plan in mid-May, gasoline prices were close to $2 a gallon, and California was in the middle of a power emergency marked by repeated blackouts and wholesale electricity prices averaging close to 20 times those that prevailed a year earlier.

The situation is now nearly reversed, with gasoline prices tumbling and California faring far better during the normally peak summer months than analysts expected.

Mr. Bush reflected today on how selling his plan had become harder without the price spikes. Speaking from the Oval Office, he told reporters that people should reflect on long-term energy security, not today's price at the pump.

"I think any time there's not an immediate problem that's apparent to people, it's tough to convince people to think long term," he said.

He said there were still "warning signs" of a crisis, even if supply shortages no longer seemed acute.

The vice president's event in this town near Pittsburgh was part of a broad effort by the administration to raise awareness of energy issues in the face of polls showing that most Americans believe that the environment should not be sacrificed for the sake of more energy supplies.
Five cabinet secretaries and 25 Congressional Republicans fanned out around the country today to promote the idea that the nation needed more energy supplies and that the quest for new oil and gas need not sully the air and water.

Mr. Cheney, hoarse from a bout of laryngitis, frequently called on several aides to speak for him tonight. Earlier in the day in Philadelphia, his wife, Lynne Cheney, delivered a speech for him.

Billed as a town hall, the session here in Monroeville was more a Republican political rally. Gov. Tom Ridge and three of the state's Republican lawmakers in Congress praised the administration's energy blueprint in speeches that consumed more than half the allotted hour.

On a sprawling green banner that filled the space behind the podium, the words "conservation" and "efficiency" appeared as prominently as "security" and "independence." That summed up the theme of the day: that to increase domestic energy supplies would in no way harm the environment.

In the Philadelphia appearance earlier in the day, the vice president, with Mrs. Cheney as his stand-in, referred repeatedly to energy efficiency and conservation, hardly mentioning the supply crisis he spoke of often in the spring.

Promoting the energy plan in Toronto last April, Mr. Cheney emphasized the urgency of finding new sources of oil and gas while making it easier for companies to produce electricity and gasoline.

"Conservation may be a sign of personal virtue," he said then, "but it cannot be the basis of a sound energy policy."

That comment prompted political assaults from Democrats and environmentalists, who argued that the administration had minimized the potential to save energy while stressing new supplies.

Today Mr. Cheney struck a contrasting note. "Conservation is a must," his Philadelphia speech said.

The speech exalted the "snow-capped mountains and clear skies and clean streams" of Wyoming, his home state. It described the Bush energy plan as a kind of environmental manifesto, covering "the entire range of energy concerns facing the American people — from our need for greater efficiency to better stewardship of the environment."

America can have more energy and a better environment, he said, maintaining that his opponents had presented a "false choice" between the two. Oil companies, the speech said, now use such sophisticated technology to explore for oil that they can do so "literally unnoticed," with no damage to natural habitats.

Many environmentalists say even the most advanced drilling technology can damage the environment, as does the infrastructure that accompanies oil and gas fields.
The emphasis on saving energy is in part recognition of political reality. Many Republicans in Congress never embraced the idea that the nation faced a severe energy crisis. Resolutions banning new oil, gas and coal exploration in sensitive areas have passed both houses of Congress, while the only new measures gaining broad support are those that seek to improve the energy efficiency of automobiles and appliances.
Bush Energy Team Tries Spotlighting Conservation

By Susan Page,
USA TODAY; 7/16/2001 - Updated 10:50 PM ET

MONROEVILLE, Pa. — The White House tried a new tone Monday as it tried to restart President Bush's stalled energy plan. Vice President Cheney, five Cabinet members and two dozen congressional Republicans held "town hall meetings" across the country in which they emphasized a commitment to the environment and toned down an early focus on more drilling and nuclear power plants.

"Conservation is a must," Lynne Cheney declared to the National Association of Counties' conference in Philadelphia as she delivered a speech that was prepared for her husband. He sat on stage, sidelined by laryngitis. The statement contrasted with a speech this spring in which he described conservation as "a personal virtue" that can't solve the nation's energy problems.

Critics weren't convinced that the new words represented a true change of heart. A letter to Cheney signed by more than 100 county officials in 25 states expressed concern that the energy plan would weaken clean-air protections, increase oil drilling in environmentally sensitive lands and harm renewable-energy programs. "He needs to fund more conservation in this and less polluting power plants," said Brett Hulse, a supervisor of Dane County, Wis.

Later, Cheney appeared here at Allegheny County Community College. Half of the hourlong session was consumed by speeches by elected officials, all of whom lauded the administration's approach.

Questions from the audience, chosen by Republican Gov. Tom Ridge's office to represent a cross-section of the community, were friendly and deferential. Cheney said he was confident that Congress would pass a comprehensive energy bill this year.

But White House hope for quick passage has dimmed since a decline in energy prices brought a decline in public concern.

Cheney called for increasing domestic exploration, including in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, to reduce dependence on foreign oil. And he made a pitch for more nuclear power plants because they don't contribute to global warming.

In Washington, Bush told reporters, "It should be clear to the American people that we're dependent upon foreign sources of crude oil when every quarter we worry about whether or not OPEC is going to run the price of crude up."

The president went on, "It should be worrisome to people that the state that's had the best conservation efforts is the state that's had brownouts," a reference to California's temporary power cutoffs this year. "We're going to take a very strong effort to convince the American
people that we've got a plan that couples not only sound conservation but the need to develop new sources of energy."

The administration's new campaign comes in the wake of polls that show Bush has damaged his standing, particularly among moderate voters, with the perception that he is more concerned about oil and gas interests than the environment.

The Democratic-controlled Senate and the Republican-controlled House have passed a series of votes in recent weeks that emphasized conservation, sometimes at odds with the administration. However, Cheney's speech in Philadelphia praised Congress for "putting the final touches on legislation enacting the president's recommendations on conservation."

The rhetoric was not tempered on one topic: the proposed Kyoto accord among industrialized nations in 1997, which is intended to reduce global warming. The Bush administration opposes it. Cheney's speech said the treaty "would have produced little or no net benefit to the global environment while imposing massive job losses on the American economy."
Cheney Spearheads Push On Bush Energy Plan

By Chriss Swaney
Reuters; July 16 11:50 PM ET

With gasoline prices falling, top Bush administration officials, led by Vice President Dick Cheney, mounted an election-style campaign on Monday to promote President Bush's energy strategy amid signs of waning public support.

Cheney flew to Pennsylvania barely two weeks after undergoing heart pacemaker surgery to repeat the Bush administration's position that the United States can reduce its reliance on OPEC oil by boosting domestic production and scaling back regulation.

"The fact is that for the foreseeable future we're going to be reliant on petroleum products for our transportation needs. That means we need adequate supplies," Cheney told 250 people at a national town hall energy meeting near Pittsburgh. The meeting was organized by Pennsylvania's Republican Gov. Tom Ridge, a Bush ally.

The vice president noted that oil price fluctuations on the world market not only affect the price of gasoline for motorists, but also the cost of home heating oil and power.

Aside from Cheney, five cabinet members and dozens of members of Congress fanned out across the country to promote the Bush plan to boost production while modestly curbing consumption. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta and Environmental Protection Administration chief Christine Todd Whitman made town hall appearances from Connecticut to South Dakota.

In Argonne, Ill., south of Chicago, Abraham told an audience the administration's energy strategy looks to the future.

"We've been relying heavily on conservation and imports but over the next 20 years we can't continue in that direction," the energy secretary said. "That's why the plan President Bush presented to the American people makes sense."

Abraham also said the Bush's energy plan was balanced "with more than 60 percent of our energy needs over the next 20 years being met with conservation."

No cabinet members were dispatched to California, where Bush's response to the electricity crisis has been widely criticized.

With congressional committees due to take up energy legislation soon, Democrats dismissed the town hall meetings as staged events.

In Philadelphia, a case of laryngitis forced a pale-looking Cheney to let his wife Lynne speak for him at a meeting of the National Association of Counties.
While his voice lasted, Cheney laid out a Bush plan that would boost oil imports from non-OPEC petroleum producers such as Kazakhstan, build more refineries, expand nuclear power and stem community-based clean air standards that he blamed for an inflexible market dominated by boutique fuels.

Two months ago, when gasoline prices were forecast to hit a startling $3.00 per gallon, Bush unveiled a broad proposal to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other federal lands to oil drilling and boost coal use by power plants.

In mid-May, the average U.S. gasoline prices rocketed to a record $1.71 per gallon. By last week, the nationwide average retail pump price had fallen to $1.44 per gallon.

Bush warned on Monday that lower gasoline prices are no safeguard against future volatility in prices.

"It should be clear to the American people that we're dependent upon foreign sources of crude oil when every quarter we worry about whether or not OPEC is going to run the price of crude up," he told reporters.

In recent days, Bush has sought to emphasize more energy conservation to blunt criticism that his plan focuses on production and would benefit big oil companies that made large contributions to the Republican Party.

The president faces broad bipartisan opposition to his plan to allow oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Public opinion surveys also have shown growing unease on the plan's impact on the environment.

The administration also was dealt a setback earlier this month when the House of Representatives voted to ban drilling in the Great Lakes and off Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast.
Cheney, Team Fan Out For Energy Plan

by SCOTT LINDLAW
Associated Press, July 17, 2001

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — President Bush warned against complacency in the face of falling gas prices Monday, as a hoarse Vice President Dick Cheney headlined a Republican roadshow promoting the national energy strategy he shaped.

"I think anytime there's not an immediate problem that's apparent to people, it's tough to convince people to think long-term," Bush told reporters in the Oval Office as he plugged the energy plan. "But it's clear there are warning signs" of a crisis, he said.

Cheney, suffering laryngitis, drafted his wife, Lynne, to deliver an energy speech to the National Association of Counties in Philadelphia. He kissed her and watched from stage right after she playfully shooed him away from the microphone, saying, "Dick, they did give you a chair."

Mrs. Cheney defended the administration's energy policy, with a heavy emphasis on environmental protection, conservation and high-tech energy solutions.

"President Bush and the vice president do not accept the false choice between more energy and a safer environment," she said.

Her husband just weeks ago said conservation, though a "personal virtue," was not the basis of a sound energy policy. Mrs. Cheney declared, "We must become much more efficient in energy use."

She also made clear that the administration is not rethinking its rejection of a global-warming treaty known as the Kyoto Protocol. Bush's scrapping of the treaty is one of the greatest points of friction between the United States and European countries. Bush travels to Europe Wednesday.

The Kyoto treaty "would have produced little or no net benefit to the global environment, while imposing massive job losses on the American economy," she said.

The Bush administration unveiled its energy strategy in May, but is still trying to spur action in the Senate, which has since turned over to Democratic control and is unlikely to address energy legislation before September. Several energy bills are advancing in the House with two committees expected to move legislation this week.

One bill promotes clean coal technology, calls for a modest increase in fuel economy for sport-utility vehicles and requires new energy savings by federal agencies. Another bill would allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, which Bush has advocated.
The various energy bills are expected to be combined into one bill in the coming weeks with a vote possible before the August recess, according to GOP lawmakers. A floor fight over the Arctic refuge drilling and fuel-economy provisions is likely.

Mrs. Cheney sounded optimistic when she said, "This very week, Congress will be putting the final touches on legislation enacting the president's recommendations on conservation."

The vice president was chief architect of the administration plan, which calls for increased production of oil and natural gas; upgrading the networks that carry petroleum-products and electricity; increased reliance on nuclear power; and stepped-up conservation and use of such clean fuels as wind and solar power.

The tour by Cheney, five Cabinet members and some 25 members of Congress was meant to take the administration's case directly to voters.

Most of the officials, including Cheney, employed town hall forums where they faced questions from the public.

At the Argonne National Laboratory outside Chicago, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said the United States will continue to rely on the Middle East for oil, but also on "new sources at home and around the world, so that we don't find ourselves in an energy supply challenge in the future."

After the Philadelphia appearance, Cheney flew to the Pittsburgh suburb of Monroeville for his town hall meeting.

Republican Gov. Tom Ridge, a Bush ally, selected the 250 audience members, though Ridge spokesman Tom Charles said the crowd represented a wide array of views, including at least two environmentalists.

Cheney's office hand-picked the first questioner - the head of a local Chamber of Commerce, who asked what the administration and business leaders could do "as a team" to bring down gasoline prices.

Cheney offered a prescription that included reducing foreign dependence on oil and building more refineries. But, he said, "There's not any one silver bullet there."

Cheney nursed his throat with hot tea all day, and his voice held out as he fielded nine questions over a half-hour.

Outside the Community College of Allegheny County, about 70 demonstrators chanted, "Clean solutions, not pollution!" in protest against the administration plan.

"Nuclear power is not safe, not clean, not reliable, not cheap and not sustainable," said Judith Johnsrud, vice chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Sierra Club. "We don't want any more Three Mile Islands in Pennsylvania."
Cheney told reporters aboard Air Force Two that a weekend cold had given him laryngitis. "Suddenly, the voice was gone," he said in a near-whisper.

The vice president has a history of heart disease and had a dual-action pacemaker implanted about two weeks ago. Asked about the general state of his health, he playfully hopped up and down in the aisle of his plane, prompting an order from his wife to "stop it!"
In Support Of Energy Plan, White House Burns Some Gas
Politics: Cheney, other Bush officials fan out to make what the president admits is a tough case.

BY MEGAN GARVEY
Los Angeles Times; July 17 2001

MONROEVILLE, Pa. — With his top officials dispatched to several states to try to recharge the White House’s coolly received energy policy, President Bush on Monday conceded that the plan may be a harder sell now that oil prices are down and California is experiencing fewer rolling blackouts.

"Any time there’s not an immediate problem that’s apparent to people, it’s tough to convince people to think long-term," Bush said.

Vice President Dick Cheney, the plan’s chief architect, joined other top administration officials and Republican members of Congress in public meetings to bolster support for the initiative.

At a town hall meeting in this Pittsburgh suburb, Cheney, suffering from laryngitis, used his ailing voice to warn that a failure to generate new energy would be a "storm cloud out there on the horizon for the American economy."

Earlier in the day, in comments delivered by his wife, Lynne, a last-minute stand-in, the vice president offered a retooled message about conservation that signaled a marked change from his comments of just a few months ago.

"Conservation is a must," Lynne Cheney told a conference of county executives gathered in Philadelphia, reading her husband’s speech from a TelePrompTer.

Previously, Cheney touted supply-oriented solutions and dismissively called conservation a "sign of personal virtue" but "not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy."

Those comments, as well as Cheney’s former role as head of a Texas-based oil supply company, had made the vice president a target for foes of the White House approach. And in the last few months, between problems with his heart and the flap over his conservation remarks, the man considered by many to be the most powerful vice president in history had been less visible on the national stage.

But he was front and center Monday—hoarse voice notwithstanding.

Elsewhere, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton, Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta and Environmental Protection Administration chief Christie Whitman made town hall appearances from Connecticut to South Dakota.

Democrats on Capitol Hill criticized the public relations blitz, saying the massive tax cut will make it difficult to fund any conservation initiatives. An energy bill dealing with nuclear energy,
hydropower, clean-coal technology and conservation is scheduled to come before the House Energy and Commerce Committee today.

They also questioned why none of the president's surrogates were dispatched to the region struggling the most with energy supply needs: the West Coast.

"Out of 105 recommendations in the [administration's] plan, not one is relevant to the situation in California, Oregon, Washington or other parts of the West," said Rep. Bob Filner (D-San Diego).

In front of a friendly audience under hot lights in the gymnasium at the Community College of Allegheny County, Cheney strained his voice to answer questions.

In one of the night's few sharp moments, Pennsylvania Gov. Thomas J. Ridge, a Republican, took a swipe at California, noting: "We weren't the first state to deregulate natural gas or electricity, but we were the first state to do it right."

Cheney again pushed many of the same tenets of the policy his energy task force unveiled this spring: responsible exploration and production, the need to reduce dependence on foreign oil sources, and the role new technology can play in meeting energy demands.

At the day's first event, he watched from the sidelines in Philadelphia as Lynne Cheney, taking his place at the lectern, reiterated the administration's strong opposition to the Kyoto treaty.

"President Bush agrees that the approach of Kyoto was flawed and unworkable," she said on the eve of the president's second trip to Europe, where the U.S. position is controversial. "It would have produced little or no net benefit to the global environment, while imposing massive job losses on the American economy."

But the same speech contained his most extensive and positive comments to date about the role of conservation during an energy crunch.

"This is one of the guiding principles of the president's energy policy: making better use of energy, through conservation and the latest technology," his wife said for him.

The administration's stress on conservation, however, came with caveats, both from Bush and Cheney.

During an Oval Office ceremony where he received a bust of Winston Churchill, Bush sounded a note of caution about California's woes.

"It should be worrisome to people that the state that's had the best conservation efforts is the state that's had brownouts," Bush said, emphasizing the need for a long-term energy policy that includes developing new sources of energy.
Cheney's speech warned that he and Bush "do not accept the false choice between more energy and a safer environment." And during the brief time Cheney used his own voice Monday, he once again pointed out the reality of current U.S. energy needs when it comes to petroleum.

"The fact of the matter is we are dependent and will be dependent on gasoline," he said.

For some of the White House's biggest environmental critics, the subtle policy shift expressed Monday didn't change any minds.

"Conversions begin with lip service," said Carl Pope, president of the Sierra Club. "But all we're seeing so far is lip service. I hope we see more."

Times staff writers Edwin Chen and Richard Simon contributed to this story from Washington.
Lower Gas Prices Threaten Bush Energy Plan

By Bill Sammon
THE WASHINGTON TIMES; July 17, 2001

President Bush yesterday acknowledged that falling energy prices are making it "tough to convince people to think long-term" about his energy plan, which Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott complained is languishing in Congress.

But the White House warned Americans against being lulled into a false sense of security by gasoline prices that regularly fall before spiking again. And the administration has decided to sidestep Congress by dispatching senior administration officials across the country to take the energy plan directly to the public.

"I think any time there's not an immediate problem that's apparent to people, it's tough to convince people to think long-term," Mr. Bush told reporters in the Oval Office. "But it's clear that there are warning signs."

The president cited California, where severe energy shortages have caused brownouts, although mild weather and federal conservation efforts have mitigated the problem somewhat.

Still, Mr. Bush cautioned against complacency.

"It should be worrisome to people that the state that's had the best conservation efforts is the state that's had brownouts," he said. "And even though there may not be a brownout today, it's an indication that we need an energy policy."

Mr. Lott agreed, but made no attempt to hide his frustration at the reluctance of Senate Democrats to begin work on the Bush energy plan, which entails boosting production and refinery capacity, the construction of new nuclear plants and drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.

"We don't have a commitment yet in the Senate as to when we would take up an energy-policy bill," the Mississippi Republican told reporters. "It had been my intent to bring it up in the Senate before the Fourth of July recess. Now we're into July. Time marches on, and we don't have anything scheduled."

Even the president's efforts at sidestepping Congress have run into problems. Vice President Richard B. Cheney was scheduled to kick off a string of town-hall meetings touting the energy plan yesterday, but came down with a case of laryngitis. He asked his wife, Lynne, to deliver an afternoon speech in Philadelphia so that his voice might be strong enough for him to participate in an evening town hall in Monroeville, Pa., east of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Cheney was accompanied by three Republican members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation, including Sen. Rick Santorum, who implicitly blamed former President Bill Clinton for the energy crisis. "Our current energy situation has resulted from years of shortsighted domestic policies and a nonexistent energy plan," he said.

While Mr. Cheney and his entourage were stumping in Pennsylvania, a trio of Republican congressmen from Texas staged their own town-hall meeting in Houston. Reps. Tom DeLay, Kevin Brady and John Culberson planned to discuss how the GOP-controlled House, unlike the Democrat-controlled Senate, will act on the Bush energy plan.

But while Republicans tried to create a sense of urgency around the Bush plan, the press argued that falling gas prices have left the president without a mandate for change. The Energy Department reported yesterday that the nationwide average price of gasoline was $1.41 per
gallon for regular unleaded. That is a decrease of 2.4 cents from a week ago and 13.3 cents from a year ago.

White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer said, "Clearly, more people focus on problems in energy when they're in the middle of something extraordinary. But as the history of energy in the United States has shown, these trends don't stay in one direction for very long."

He added: "While many politicians have alternated between denial and blame, President Bush thinks the best course of the nation is to stay steady and true."

-Dave Boyer contributed to this report.
Cheney Spearheads Push on Bush Energy Plan

By Chriss Swaney
Monday July 16 11:52 PM ET

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"It should be clear to the American people that we're dependent upon foreign sources of crude oil when every quarter we worry about whether or not OPEC is going to run the price of crude up," he told reporters.
In recent days, Bush has sought to emphasize more energy conservation to blunt criticism that his plan focuses on production and would benefit big oil companies that made large contributions to the Republican Party.
The president faces broad bipartisan opposition to his plan to allow oil and gas-drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Public opinion surveys also have shown growing unease over the plan's impact on the environment.
The administration also was dealt a setback earlier this month when the House of Representatives voted to ban drilling in the Great Lakes and off Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast.
Cheney’s Words, His Wife’s Voice

By Tom Infeld
Philadelphia Inquirer; Monday, July 16, 2001

The spirit was willing, but the voice was weak. Vice President Cheney traveled to Philadelphia today for the first time since his election, but he had to forgo the speech he planned to deliver at the convention of the National Association of Counties at the Convention Center. The reason: a sudden bout of laryngitis.

"He woke up this morning sort of croaking and making some noises, but you couldn’t really call it talking,” Cheney’s wife, Lynne, told an audience of about 3,000 county-government officials from around the country.

Cheney, in a dark suit and red tie, stood smiling and silent beside his wife on stage. Amid laughter, she motioned for him to take a seat.

A former chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Lynne Cheney proceeded to deliver the speech herself, reading it flawlessly from video-projection screens.

The intent of the vice president’s prepared remarks was to pump political life into President Bush’s national energy policy, a plan that emphasizes increased production and investment in technology and that - with the recent easing of gasoline prices - has begun to fade in Washington.

When Bush announced his policy in mid-May, gas prices were 30 cents per gallon higher on average than they are now, and West Coast cities were suffering widespread blackouts that have not occurred recently.

Administration officials said over the weekend that Cheney and members of the Bush cabinet would be fanning out across the country, starting yesterday, to help revive the national sense of energy urgency.

Former New Jersey Gov. Christie Whitman, now head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, was several hours ahead of Lynne Cheney in speaking yesterday at the convention.

The Cheneys, whose motorcade to Philadelphia International Airport caused traffic restrictions in the city at rush hour, flew later to Pittsburgh for a town meeting at Allegheny County Community College that was billed as the main event of their day.

Environmentalists and some politicians in both major parties have criticized the Bush plan for what they see as an overemphasis on energy production - including offshore drilling for natural gas - and an underemphasis on conservation.
The 15-minute Cheney speech at the Convention Center sought to tackle that concern. It referred only once to "clean coal" technology and only once to oil production, but it included six references to energy efficiency.

"Most Americans believe in showing consideration for the land and life around us," Lynne Cheney said. "President Bush and this vice president do not accept the false choice between more energy and a safer environment.

"Indeed," she said, "an energy shortage is bad for the environment, as we've seen in California, where dirtier plants have been running harder to keep the lights on. It is possible to have more energy and a better environment - as we've already seen with incredible advances in the technology employed in locating and producing energy."

Dick Cheney, a former energy executive, was a major architect of the administration proposals, which calls for facilitating the licensing of scores of new power plants.

Yesterday afternoon, about a half hour before Air Force Two touched down at the airport, a cluster of people associated with environmental groups protested the Bush policy on the street outside the Convention Center.

One woman, wearing cardboard caribou antlers, tried to catch the eyes of drivers and pedestrians with a poster that protested the possibility of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

An elaborate balloon sculpture, in the shape of an oil well, carried a sign that read: "Clean energy solutions, not more pollution."

"We want to address the fact that the energy policy focuses on coal, oil and nuclear energy," said Eric Ring of Havertown, chairman of the Sierra Club in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

"This is not good for the environment, and it's not good for America," he said.

Inside the Convention Center, the Cheneys got a much friendlier greeting.

"We've had a long-standing relationship with the vice president over the years," said Jeffrey D. Arnold of Alexandria, Va., the legislative director of the county association.

The association's 113-member board of directors unanimously adopted a resolution Sunday applauding the Bush plan, he said. Delegates are expected to approve the resolution during today's closing session of their six-day meeting.
FOX SPECIAL REPORT WITH BRIT HUME

July 16, 2001 Monday
Fox News Network

HUME: All right, Carl. Thanks very much.

As gasoline prices fall, the White House acknowledges there may no longer be an immediate energy crunch. But officials there insist there's still a need for a long-term energy strategy. Bush administration officials are on the road this week, holding town meetings across the country to talk to Americans about the president's energy plan. And it's no coincidence these town hall events come just as lawmakers on Capitol Hill start to consider parts of Mr. Bush's proposal. Fox News's Brian Wilson has the story.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BRIAN WILSON, FOX CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): With gas prices slowing dropping and the country experiencing fewer blackouts and brownouts, the Bush administration is finding it difficult to keep voters focused on the need for a new, comprehensive energy plan. The president says it's natural to lose interest when there's no pending crisis, but...

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: It's clear that there are warning signs. It's clear to -- it should be clear to the American people that -- you know, that we're dependent upon foreign sources of crude oil when, you know, every quarter we worry about whether or not OPEC is going to run the price of crude up.

WILSON: So on the week when elements of the Bush energy plan will start wending their way through Congress, Bush cabinet members were dispatched to communities around the country to talk about the need for a long-range energy policy. Transportation Secretary Mineta was in Ohio, Commerce Secretary Evans in North Carolina, Interior Secretary Norton was dispatched to South Dakota, and EPA Director Whitman was in Connecticut.

Vice President Cheney, the architect of the Bush plan, was in Pennsylvania, where because of a scratchy throat, his wife spoke on his behalf about...

LYNNE CHENEY, DICK CHENEY'S WIFE: ... setting a new policy that covers an entire range of energy concerns facing the American people.

WILSON: The most controversial part of the Bush energy plan is drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. But key Democrats in the House, like Congressman Nick Rahall of West Virginia, are voicing concerns about other parts of the plan. Rahall said recently, "You plop a controversial item like ANWR in a long bill and hope everyone focuses on that. Meanwhile, lying below the surface is a whole bevy of equally contentious items that consequently may escape the same level of scrutiny."

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Obtained and made public by the Natural Resources Defense Council, March/April 2002
But the president insists his plan is balanced, something his team will be stressing.

BUSH: And so we're going to take a very strong effort to convince the American people that we've got a plan that -- that couples not only sound conservation but the need to develop new sources of energy.

WILSON (on camera): The Bush energy plan faces an uphill battle in the Democratically controlled Senate, and Republican leader Trent Lott has suggested that if the Democrats don't give the measure a full hearing, he might try to attach bits and pieces of it to various appropriations bills.

In Washington, Brian Wilson, Fox News.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

HUME: As Brian noted, Vice President Cheney is holding a town meeting on the administration's energy policy at Allegheny County Committee College in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, just outside Pittsburgh. Fox News's Rick Leventhal is there.

Rick, what is expected to happen at that event tonight?

RICK LEVENTHAL, FOX CORRESPONDENT: Well, they're calling it, Brit, a campaign-style town hall meeting, about 250 residents, local residents here, gathering inside this converted gymnasium now for this event. Not just Cheney, though. He'll be joined by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, Senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum, and also Representative Melissa Hart. But certainly, a distinguished panel here that will be talking to the assembled group here about the administration's energy package and answering a lot of questions.

The group, by the way, was hand-selected by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge's office. There are said to be industry officials, some elected representatives, also some consumers, they're described as, and conservationists, as well, expected to represent the state of Pennsylvania, as a whole. It's going to last about an hour, and they're going to be focusing on the energy plan, on any, perhaps, objections that might be raised by the crowd, hoping to answer some questions. And as you heard Brian talk about, the main goal here is to build support and explain the president's plan and get people to get behind it.

Brit?

HUME: Doesn't sound like there are many Democrats on the bill.

LEVENTHAL: Well, we could take a poll, if you like. But again, the governor's office stressed that it is trying to provide a representative of the state, you know, a good cross-section of the state of Pennsylvania, so that there will be some -- some questions from both sides.

HUME: All right. Thanks very much, Rick Leventhal.
INSIDE POLITICS

July 16, 2001 Monday
CNN

Well, the White House energy push is back on the road. Ahead, a new strategy that has the vice president traveling to Pennsylvania, and other cabinet members fanning out.

Plus the Republican turned independent who rocked the United States Senate. He's back in the limelight. What Senator Jim Jeffords is doing now.

And later: Will these senators find out you can't get there from here? White House hopefuls and the lessons of history when INSIDE POLITICS continues.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SESNO: Lots of members of the Bush administration are on the move today. Their mission: to put the issue of energy and the president's plan right back on the front burner. The vice president and five other top administration officials are headed to cities around the country. Vice President Cheney will be hosting a town hall tonight in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, while Interior Secretary Gale Norton heads to South Dakota, Commerce Secretary Don Evans visits North Carolina, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham hosts a meeting in Illinois, EPA head Christie Todd Whitman goes to Connecticut, and Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta heads to Ohio.

So we'll head to Major Garrett at the White House. Major, what's the strategy here besides a lot of frequent flyer miles?

GARRETT: A lot of frequent flyer miles and a lot of small media markets, Frank. If you noticed, all of those cities are small cities. The White House expects lighter-than-usual -- well, heavy press coverage, but not the intense kind of media scrutiny that they would get in bigger cities. That's point No. 1. Point No. 2 is to emphasize, if ever so subtly, the conservation angle to the Bush energy plan.

How is that going to be conveyed? Well, each and every Cabinet secretary -- and there are also about 20 other House Republican who are doing the exact same thing -- they all took them something the White House provided. What was it? A big green backdrop, all green. What does it say? "Energy for the 21st Century."
Well, you don't need to be a brilliant sort of political strategist to figure out the green backdrop is supposed to tell people, well, conservation is very much important.

What the Bush White House is trying to do is adapt to the political realities it now encounters. The energy plan that was passed a key House subcommittee last week is heavy on conservation. It's pretty lean on production. The White House knows that's where the political winds are blowing, trying to get out in front of them and say to all voters: Look, we had a plan when there looked to be a crisis. Maybe there's not a crisis now, but we still have a plan. Give us credit for that.

SESNO: And the administration, of course, pointing out all along here, Major, that this is a long-range plan to look down the line not just 10 days but 10 years. Major, the price — the average price of regular gas in mid-May when the plan was announced was $1.71 a gallon, a buck-71. Now it's about $1.44.

As the price of gasoline has come down, apparently so has the sense of urgency among Americans. A poll that we've got here that we want to show you shows that in May 58 percent thought that the energy situation was very serious. In July, 47 percent. How does that waning sense of urgency or crisis affect the prospects of what the president wants to accomplish?

GARRETT: Well, it makes the energy production thing all the less attractive on Capitol Hill and conservation all the more attractive. But I was talking to several White House officials and they know, they said: Look, when we were saying when we were first came to office that the economy was bad, all sorts of people accused us of talking down the economy. And one said to me: Why doesn't anyone give us any credit for talking down energy prices?

It was sort of a joke, but there is something that the administration would at least like to get some credit for, saying, look, when we put this package out, there was a lot of criticism that it was all long term, no short term, and we've said from the beginning short-term solutions aren't going to be found from this White House or on Capitol Hill or anywhere within the federal government. We have to look at the longer-term needs of energy of this country. And what Congress wants to do first and foremost is address those needs through conservation.

Billy Tauzin, who is a key player on this — the House Republican from Louisiana said — once we have the conservation measures in place, then in a year or two we'll have a much better idea of how much we can
achieve through conservation. Then we'll hit the production issue -- Frank.

SESNO: Major Garrett at the White House.
NBC Nightly News

White House and other lawmakers move to push Bush's energy plan
July 16, 2001 Monday

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

Now, to the White House and the selling of this energy plan. It was conceived 'back when the outlook was bleak. It may be a tougher sell now that the current situation has brightened or has it? NBC's Campbell Brown is with us tonight from the White House.

Campbell, good evening to you.

CAMPBELL BROWN reporting:

Brian, tonight the White House is waging a major campaign to convince Americans they need the president's energy plan even without a full-blown energy crisis.

Today, the Bush administration marshals the forces, Vice President Cheney, Cabinet members, Republican lawmakers, going on the road, adopting former President Clinton's favorite format, the townhall meeting to push the president's energy plan. But Bush's biggest hurdle, the good news on the energy front, dropping gas prices, California getting a break. Today, even the president concedes his plan is now a harder sell.

President GEORGE W. BUSH: I think that any time there's not a, you know, an immediate problem that's apparent to people, it's tough to convince people to think long term.

BROWN: But the White House is trying, warning today that the crisis is not over yet.

Mr. ARJ FLEISCHER (White House Press Secretary): These trends don't stay in one direction very long.

BROWN: The reason White House officials say Congress should act on Bush's plan without delay.

Both House and Senate committees are expected to vote in the next two weeks on bills to increase US supplies of oil, gas, coal and nuclear energy. But Democrats are pushing more emphasis on conservation and also slowing things down.

Senator JEFF BINGAMAN (Democrat, New Mexico): I don't think we should delay, but at the same time I don't think we should rush forward to just reinforce what we've been doing for the last half century.

BROWN: For Bush, the fight with Congress is only half the battle. Political analysts say he's also still trying to overcome the public perception he's aligned with the energy industry, pushing for more supply at the expense of environmental concerns.

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Mr. CHARLIE COOK (National Journal): The Bush administration saw their ratings on energy go way down in the spring. It sort of bottomed out May or June. And while they've gotten a little better, it's still a big problem for the administration.

BROWN: And that's why the president has been spending a lot of time lately talking about conservation measures. But despite the push, even White House aides say they don't expect Congress to take real action on energy until the fall. Brian:

WILLIAMS: Campbell Brown from the White House lawn. Thanks.
ABC World News Tonight
Challenges for President Bush as he tries to build support for energy plan
July 16, 2001 Monday

We begin tonight with the president's latest effort to get the nation's attention about energy. When the president first introduced his energy plan, which was long on production and shorter on conservation, he painted the nation's energy situation as a crisis. California energy crisis was in the news everyday, and the price of gasoline was certainly on its way up. Today, the president is facing opposition to his plans in the Congress, and so he's trying again. And it may be even harder to have the nation see it the president's way. Our correspondent at the White House today is Michele Norris.

MICHELE NORRIS reporting:

Well, with--with gas prices dropping significantly, the White House has shifted into campaign mode. Cabinet members have fanned out across the country to build support for the White House energy plan.

(VO) When the president introduced his energy plan in May, gas prices had peaked. The nationwide average was 1.76 per gallon. The average price at the pump has since fallen to 1.51 per gallon, and the price is expected to drop further by the end of the year. Similarly, prices for natural gas, which fuels the nation's power plants, have fallen by half in the past six months. The reason, the fuel industry has pumped up production. That's the story in electricity-starved California, where today, Governor Gray Davis opened the state's fourth new power plant in just the past three weeks.

Governor GRAY DAVIS (Democrat, California): We are building power plants like there's no tomorrow, because that's the best long-term solution.

NORRIS: (VO) Another sign that the energy emergency has entered at least a temporary phase of calm. Great news for consumers.

Unidentified Woman #1: It's getting a lot better though. At least now we can afford to get gas in the car.

Unidentified Woman #2: Yeah, it's gone down, but it's not like, 'Woo! Party, it's so cheap.'

NORRIS: (VO) But a major challenge for the White House as it tries to sell its energy plan.

President GEORGE W. BUSH: Anytime there's not a—a—you know, a—a—an immediate problem that's apparent to people, it's tough to convince people to think long term.
NORRIS: (VO) So the president sent his team on a national road show. Vice President Dick Cheney was the featured speaker in Philadelphia. But because of laryngitis, his wife spoke for him.

Ms. LYNNE CHENEY: New technologies are proving we can save energy without sacrificing our standard of living.

NORRIS: (VO) Across the country, cabinet members try to raise support for the plan that calls for increased reliance on nuclear power, increased oil and gas production and increased conservation.

(OC) As the price scare has faded, so too has momentum on this issue. Without the looming sense of crisis, it would be tough to get Congress to even focus on the plan. Peter:

JENNINGS: Thank you Michele. Michele Norris at the White House.