

## President Announces Energy Plan, Conservationists Concerned

By Som Lisaius, KOLD News 13

Speaking before reporters on the White House lawn Monday, President Bush issued an executive order calling for federal agencies to start regulating vehicle emissions by the time he leaves office. In short, the goal of the President's plan is to decrease American gas consumption by 20 percent in the next 10 years.

"It's a complicated legal and technical matter and it will take time to resolve," the President said from the Rose Garden.

But according to some, doing so shouldn't be that complicated and it shouldn't be that technical--especially since, the President's father enacted something similar 15 years ago. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the President's announcement is actually a step backwards: one that goes all the way back to the first Bush administration and the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

"Would have required that by 2010, 30 percent of the emissions of the vehicles were running on alternative fuels--so as you can see this is a major step back."

Brian Nowicki is a conservation biologist for the Center for Biological Diversity. And he says the government's failure to limit greenhouse gases has already had a profound impact on the environment.

"This is an issue that is extremely and especially important," he says.

Which is why Nowicki says time is of the essence. A ten year plan may be a step in the right direction, but Nowicki says the consequences are already evident today. "More frequent drought's here in the southwest, we are more likely to see increased extreme temperatures, heat events, increased forest fires--we are going to see some of the harsher impacts as far as North America."

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 called for 30 percent of all vehicles to be operated by alternative fuels by 2010. As we stand today, that's probably not going to happen. Though one manufacturer in particular has taken the lead in that regard Toyota hopes to offer a hybrid option on every vehicle they make within the next few years.