

Tucson Citizen

Editorial

Our Opinion: New hopes for environment under Democratic rule

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Tuesday marks the first Earth Day in eight years that engenders hope instead of despair.

Whatever one's opinion of the Bush administration, no one can deny its anti-science, pro-business approach wreaked havoc on our environment.

President Bush for six years denied even the existence of global warming, and his 2001 refusal to have the U.S. sign the Kyoto treaty outraged environmental and government leaders worldwide.

Indeed, the Bush administration even bucked a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2007 that greenhouse gases must be regulated under the Clean Air Act.

Not until Friday was the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finally free to report that carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases endanger public health.

This step toward reality, just in time for Earth Day, explains the new hope Americans harbor as President Obama and a Democratic Congress work to speed America's fight against global warming and accelerate our use of renewable energy sources.

Corrections are critical in other areas as well:

- The Bush administration eviscerated the Endangered Species Act, and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar should right that wrong straightaway. The famed Center for Biological Diversity, based in Tucson, is in the vanguard pushing for that fix. (See article below.)
- The National Park System has suffered myriad onslaughts, from permission for uranium drilling beside Grand Canyon National Park to attempts to weaken air quality standards in parks; allow park visitors to carry loaded, concealed guns; and lift the

snowmobiling ban in Yellowstone, where the government also let 1,167 bison be slaughtered in 2008.

- The Bureau of Land Management made cleanup at oil and gas drilling sites purely voluntary, and it opened Colorado's Roan Plateau to such drilling despite local, state and congressional opposition.

These examples, however, only skim the surface of deep damage to our public lands, air and water quality and overall environment.

Now Mother Nature gets a second chance, and all Americans should join forces to heal her wounds and produce real reasons to celebrate Earth Day.
