

NEWS FROM MAINE ATTORNEY GENERAL STEVEN ROWE

MAINE, CONNECTICUT AGs CALL ON ASHCROFT TO INVESTIGATE WHITE HOUSE ROLE IN LAWSUIT

Email suggests conspiracy between White House and conservative think tank.

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In a letter sent today, Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe and Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal called on United States Attorney General John Ashcroft to investigate whether officials at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) solicited a conservative Washington think tank to sue the federal government in order to invalidate a government document warning of the impacts of global warming.

The two state attorneys general obtained an email document through a Freedom of Information Act request that revealed a great intimacy between CEQ and the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) on strategizing about ways to undermine the United States' official reports and the authority of its officials.

Rowe and Blumenthal called for the investigation after discovering an email sent in June 2002 by an executive at CEI, Myron Ebell, to Phil Cooney, the Chief of Staff at CEQ, thanking Cooney for "calling and asking for our help." The email goes on to suggest strategies for minimizing the problem of global warming, including finding a "fall guy (or gal)...as high up as possible" in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to blame for the report, and indicating that CEI might call for then-EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman to be fired.

According to the official White House website, the White House CEQ "coordinates federal efforts and works closely with agencies and other White House offices in the development of environmental policies and initiatives." According to the CEI's website, the organization is "a non-profit, non-partisan public policy group dedicated to the principles of free enterprise and limited government."

The lawsuit was filed by CEI against the White House Office of Science and

Technology Policy and the National Science and Technology Council. In the suit, CEI argues that the *National Assessment of Climate Variability and Change (National Assessment)* and EPA's *Climate Action Report 2002* should be invalidated. The *National Assessment* is a peer-reviewed study documenting global warming and identifying its dangers. Its findings were relied upon in the EPA's *Climate Action Report 2002*, which was produced by the United States pursuant to its obligations under the 1992 Rio Treaty on climate change. CEI alleges that the federal report failed to meet scientific standards for objectivity and utility.

Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe stated, "It appears that certain White House officials conspired with an anti-environmental special interest group to cause the lawsuit to be filed against the federal government."

"The idea that the Bush Administration may have invited a lawsuit from a special interest group in order to undermine the federal government's own work under an international treaty is very troubling."

"We believe an investigation is necessary to determine whether the idea of this lawsuit came from the White House itself, and if so, whether it represents improper conduct by public officials."

Maine, Connecticut and Massachusetts filed a lawsuit in June, 2003 against the EPA alleging that the federal agency is required under the federal Clean Air Act to regulate emissions of carbon dioxide.

To view the letter to Ashcroft and the email between CEI and CEQ, click here: <http://www.maine.gov/ag/dynld/documents/Ashcroft.pdf>.

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