...to a sounder climate policy

Most people acknowledge that human-induced climate change is a long-term risk. And it is by now becoming better understood that the Kyoto Protocol approach would be a serious mistake. But if not Kyoto, what?

Central to any future policy should be the understanding that man-made greenhouse gas emissions arise from essential energy use in the everyday activities of people, governments and businesses. Consequently, efforts to control emissions have important economic and social consequences. In our view, the most effective way to respond to all concerns and risks is through programs that encourage *economically justified near-term actions*, and that *promote climate understanding* and *technological innovation for long-term solutions*.

Efforts to control emissions have important economic and social consequences

Here are some concrete proposals:

Encourage voluntary actions. These would include management systems for energy efficiency, cost-effective investments such as cogeneration in manufacturing and energy efficiency in businesses and homes. These suggestions are much more than empty words. In ExxonMobil's case, we have installed over 2000 megawatts of cogeneration capacity, which typically reduces energy use by 30 percent.

Promote carbon storage through protection and expansion of forests and emphasis on soil management, such as no-till agriculture.

Focus international efforts on a framework that supports technology transfer and information sharing. Encouraging open markets, freer investment flows and protection of intellectual property embodied in technology would accelerate the commercialization and global spread of energy-efficient technologies.

Conduct scientific research to improve society's ability to predict possible consequences (positive as well as negative) of future climate change. Programs should concentrate on factors that seriously limit current understanding. These include the effects of clouds, aerosols, sea ice, deep-ocean circulation, hydrology and natural climate variability. We also need to improve the monitoring of climate.

Realistically appraise and address barriers to renewable energy (wind, solar) and nuclear energy. Although each has potential to help meet energy demand without adding to greenhouse emissions, they face serious technical, marketplace and political barriers.

Undertake research on promising long-term technological options. For example, we are involved with automobile companies in joint research that could significantly reduce future emissions by using fuel cells powered by hydrogen from advanced gasoline. Other possibilities include clean-coal technology for electricity generation; separation and storage of CO_2 emissions; and geoengineering to remove carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere.

These suggestions share some common characteristics. They are designed to include practical near-term steps, while at the same time they encourage the development of long-term technical solutions. They avoid regulatory straitjackets and invite participation by all nations. Because they are flexible, policies can change as experience and knowledge are gained.

This approach also offers the opportunity for all companies, the scientific community and governments to work together on a climate policy that makes sense for the future.

ExxonMobil™