

August 2, 2006

Clinton Foundation to Work to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

By [JENNIFER STEINHAUER](#)

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 1 — The Clinton Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has focused on combating [AIDS](#), poverty and childhood obesity, will turn its attention to greenhouse gases, former President [Bill Clinton](#) said here Tuesday.

Mr. Clinton announced his new initiative at the [University of California](#), Los Angeles, hours after the [California Environmental Protection Agency](#) released a report predicting that the state would become hotter and drier by the end of the century.

California, like the rest of the nation, has grappled for weeks with record temperatures and the ensuing power failures. More than 100 people have died in the state in recent days from heat-related illnesses, renewing debate about the role of [climate change](#) in weather patterns.

Prime Minister [Tony Blair](#) of Britain, who joined Mr. Clinton on Tuesday, met with political and business leaders in Los Angeles earlier this week to consider climate issues. And Gov. [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), who announced Monday with Mr. Blair that they would work to fight global warming, has made environmental concerns a centerpiece of his re-election campaign. Other states and regions have similar initiatives.

Mr. Clinton said in an interview on Tuesday that his interest in climate issues arose during his presidency and had grown in recent years as he followed news reports on heat-trapping gases, watched with chagrin as the United States rejected the Kyoto Protocol and observed his wife, Senator [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#), negotiate energy policy with “[Republicans](#) who were recalcitrant on the issue.”

He said he would focus heavily on the climate issue over the next year.

“It seems to me that there is now a consensus in the world that climate change is real and that we have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” he said. “What we need now is more information about how to do it quickly, economically, and organize the efforts to

do it. It seemed to me that the challenge was quite a bit like the work I've done on AIDS.”

For its first act, the foundation, with a \$3 million grant from three donors, has formed a partnership with the Large Cities Climate Leadership Group, led by the mayor of London, to work on reducing emissions of heat-trapping gases in cities, which generate roughly 70 percent of the world's such gases.

“This is probably the only thing that Barbra Streisand and [Rupert Murdoch](#) agree on,” Mr. Clinton said, referring to two of the donors. The third is Anson M. Beard Jr., a New York investor.

The group's purpose, Mr. Clinton said, will be to create a consortium through which cities can buy energy-saving products, similar to the way the foundation lowered the price of AIDS drugs for some nations. The group will also create common measurement tools, allowing cities to establish a base line for the gas emissions and determine the effectiveness of programs to lower them.

Mr. Clinton said he did not believe that his program would put him at odds with the Bush administration, which has resisted some efforts to address global warming and questioned some of the science behind assertions about greenhouse gases. “They said repeatedly that they're not against market-based solutions to these problems,” Mr. Clinton said.

Last year, a climate scientist at [NASA](#) said he had been threatened by White House political appointees for speaking out about the dangers of greenhouse gas emissions. Many conservative research groups and others challenge the immediate threat of global warming.

Scientists and researchers said Tuesday that the Clinton effort was a practical one. “This is something the scientific community welcomes because there is very, very strong consensus among all scientists that this is something that needs to be addressed, this increasing danger that may occur in the future,” said Michael D. Mastrandrea, a climate expert at [Stanford University](#).

Also Tuesday, a report on climate change, released by the California Environmental Protection Agency and compiled by the California Climate Change Center, said regional

temperatures would be as much as 10 degrees higher by 2100, leading to severe air pollution, dwindling water supplies and an increase in heat-related deaths.

The report also warned that the heat could virtually eliminate winter snowmelt, the primary source of California's drinking water. As temperatures rise, it said, residents can also expect to see increasing threats from pests and pathogens, wildfires and coastal flooding.

The center relied on research from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the University of California, Berkeley, and research scientists from government agencies and universities around the United States.

The cities partnership will begin with 22 of the world's biggest cities, including Chicago, Los Angeles and New York. "I really think this is a race against time," Mr. Clinton said.

Carolyn Marshall contributed reporting from San Francisco for this article.