

## **Letter to the Editor, Voice of the Times**

By Deborah L. Williams  
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We applaud Tom Brennan's assessment of the global warming crisis (Voice of the Times, July 24). He asserts that Alaska is the perfect place to study the impacts of global warming, which are already much more severe here than elsewhere in the U.S – we agree. Brennan advocates a massive national research and development effort to develop successors to the internal combustion engine – we agree.

The obvious solution is affordable, renewable clean energy. Some of this technology already exists and should be applied now. The United States has the brainpower and wealth to develop the rest, and it is definitely time for the Bush Administration and Congress to deal effectively with global warming. Waiting only means that the situation worsens, the damage spreads, and solutions become more costly and difficult. Shortsightedness may rob us of a whole new era of national growth and prosperity. The U.S. is losing out on huge potential markets, such as the 2 billion humans currently without electricity while America becomes increasingly dependent on foreign oil.

We often hear that renewables (photovoltaics and windmills) are not economic. The fact is the price of coal, oil, and natural gas never includes the full costs, in terms of environmental and health impacts, which are instead shouldered by the public and planet. Furthermore, renewables have to compete with heavily-subsidized fossil fuels. Since 1992, for example, the U.S. government approved \$7.2 billion in public financing for 38 Enron projects in 29 countries. Imagine how many wind generators and solar panels a similar investment in renewables could have paid for.

Brennan wrote that how we respond to the global warming threat “could be crucial for the future of the planet.” We agree. Rather than a partisan issue, this is about the kind of world we leave future generations. Senator Ted Stevens should be commended for recognizing this, for publicizing Alaska's plight, and for pleading Alaska's case.