

June 1, 2006

Greetings:

Steelworkers have always fought for a better life for our children.

Today, two of the greatest threats to our children's future are the destruction of good-paying jobs and the environment in an economy where multinational corporations compete globally without regard or loyalty to their home countries.

But destruction of what we hold dear is not inevitable. Just as Canadians and Americans responded to the challenges of World War II by harnessing the ingenuity and productivity of its working people, we can retool our economy and rebuild it on sound environmental principles.

Such an endeavor could create millions of new jobs for our economy, regenerate our manufacturing capability and capture emerging energy efficient technologies for the benefit of all that secure us from being victimized by changing conditions.

We outline key environmental challenges and our strategies for success in this report, *Securing Our Children's World*, which was developed by the USW's International Executive Board Environmental Task Force, created in 2005. The report was approved by a unanimous vote of the IEB on February 28, 2006, on a motion made by District 9 Director Connie Entrekin and seconded by District 7 Co-Director Bill Gibbons.

To ensure membership input into the report, the USW conducted hearings in eight U.S. and Canadian cities over the course of three months. They were held in Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Atlanta, Houston, Portland, Ore., Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

I would like to thank all those whose hard work made this report possible including task force co-chairs Dave Foster and Jim Pannell and IEB members Terry Bonds, Jon Geenan and Steve Hunt. I would also like to thank Mike Wright and Diane Hemmingway from the International Health, Safety and Environment Department and Les Leopold from the Public Health Institute for their input and support. Staff appointed to assist included legislative director Bill Klinefelter and Andy King, head of the Health, Safety and Environment Department in our Canadian National Office.

This report is an update of a seminal 1990 report by our union entitled, "Our Children's World," which exposed the false choice between good jobs and environmental protections in North America and made the case that global warming is the single most important environmental issue of our lifetime.

In many ways, the environmental challenges we identified in 1990 have not changed but have become more severe. The then speculative damages caused by global warming have since been conclusively demonstrated by the melting of the polar ice cap and the rising number of deadly storms across the globe.

The question now is not whether global warming is happening, but how do we slow it, reverse it, and manage the devastating effects to our benefit as trade unionists.

The future of manufacturing will belong to those nations that solve the problems of the world's growing shortage of fossil fuels through energy-efficient technologies and building and process redesigns.

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The technological solutions to environmental problems are within our grasp. Although some environmental friendly technologies require continued research, none are beyond our technical capacity.

Renewable energies like wind and solar power and mass transportation systems can create millions of new jobs. In Germany, for example, 40,000 people are employed directly in its wind energy industry, which consumes more steel there than any other industry, except for automobile manufacturing.

The real barriers are not technical, they are economic and political. Despite the Bush Administration's horrible record in environmental issues on the national and global arenas, local and state governments are increasingly pledging action on their own.

As a union, we cannot stand aside from these issues. Our choices are to be victims of change, or to control that change to the benefit of ourselves and our children.

This report lays out a clear choice in favor of controlling our destiny, and those of our families and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "L".

Leo W. Gerard
International President