1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
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3	MASSACHUSETTS, ET AL., :
4	Petitioners :
5	v. : No. 05-1120
6	ENVIRONMENTAL :
7	PROTECTION AGENCY, ET AL. :
8	x
9	Washington, D.C.
10	Wednesday, November 29, 2006
11	
12	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
13	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
14	at 10:02 a.m.
15	APPEARANCES:
16	JAMES R. MILKEY, ESQ., Assistant Attorney General,
17	Boston, Mass; on behalf of Petitioners.
18	GREGORY C. GARRE, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General,
19	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on
20	behalf of Respondents.
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1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	JAMES R. MILKEY, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioners	3
5	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	
6	GREGORY C. GARRE, ESQ.	
7	On behalf of the Respondents	25
8	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
9	JAMES R. MILKEY, ESQ.	
10	On behalf of Petitioners	52
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:02 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first today in 05-1120, Massachusetts versus
5	Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Milkey.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JAMES R. MILKEY
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
8	MR. MILKEY: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
9	please the Court:
LO	If I may, I'd like to frame the merits very
L1	quickly and then turn immediately to standing. Although
L2	the case before you arises in an important policy area,
L3	it turns on ordinary principles of statutory
L 4	interpretation and administrative law. EPA made a
L5	decision based on two grounds, both of which constitute
L 6	plain errors of law reviewable under any standard.
L7	EPA's principle grounds was that it lacked authority
L8	over the emissions of the four substances at issue, even
L9	if they, in fact, endanger public health and welfare.
20	That legal conclusion fails as a matter of law.
21	As a fallback position, EPA declined to
22	consider if these substances are endangering public
23	health and welfare, claiming its policy approach made
24	more sense than the regulatory scheme encompassed in
25	section 1202 of the Clean Air Act. Although EPA

- 1 possesses a good deal of discretion in applying the
- 2 statutory endangerment test, it cannot rest its ruling
- 3 on impermissible grounds as it did here.
- 4 We are not asking the Court to pass judgment
- 5 on the science of climate change or to order EPA to set
- 6 emission standards. We simply want EPA to visit the
- 7 rulemaking petition based upon permissible
- 8 considerations.
- 9 And now, Your Honor, I'd like to turn to
- 10 standing. Petitioner showed a wide variety of injury in
- 11 fact, all of which are the kinds of harms the statute
- 12 was aimed at preventing. For example, our uncontested
- 13 affidavits establish that as a matter of physics, the
- 14 more greenhouse gases accumulate in the air, the more
- 15 temperatures are going to rise, ocean waters expand, and
- 16 the seas rise. And of course as the seas expand, they
- 17 rise everywhere around the world. Some areas such as
- 18 Massachusetts will be hit particularly hard because
- 19 we're also subject to a land subsidence, but that --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I thought that the standing
- 21 requires imminent harm. If you haven't been harmed
- 22 already, you have to show the harm is imminent. Is this
- 23 harm imminent?
- MR. MILKEY: It is, Your Honor. We have
- 25 shown that the sea levels are already occurring from the

- 1 current amounts of greenhouse gases in the air, and that
- 2 means it is only going to get worse as the --
- 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: When? I mean, when is the
- 4 predicted cataclysm?
- 5 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, it's not so much a
- 6 cataclysm as ongoing harm. The harm does not suddenly
- 7 spring up in the year 2100, it plays out continuously
- 8 over time. And even to the extent you focus on harms
- 9 that occur in the future, there's nothing conjectural
- 10 about that. Once these gases are emitted into the area,
- 11 and they stay a long time, the laws of physics take
- 12 over.
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, there's a lot of
- 14 conjecture about whether -- I gather that there's
- 15 something of a consensus on warming, but not a consensus
- 16 on how much of that is attributable to human activity.
- 17 And I gather that -- what is it? Something like seven
- 18 percent of the total carbon dioxide emissions are
- 19 attributable to automobiles in the United States?
- MR. MILKEY: It's actually about 6 percent,
- 21 Your Honor.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: 6 percent? Thank you.
- MR. MILKEY: But it's important to point out
- 24 as well, though, that in the ruling we challenge, EPA
- 25 has disavowed authority over all U.S. sources of

- 1 emissions, which constitute about 20 percent of
- 2 global --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, but that doesn't go to
- 4 the harm that you're claiming. I mean, we're talking
- 5 about the, you know, the standing issue right now. And
- if you've been harmed, you've claimed harm because of
- 7 carbon dioxide emissions, right?
- 8 MR. MILKEY: Agreed, Your Honor. But my
- 9 point was that they disclaimed authority over all
- 10 sources of carbon --
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: I understand, but that has
- 12 nothing to do with whether you have standing. That has
- 13 to do with the merits of the case. But on the standing
- 14 point, only new cars would be affected, right? So even
- 15 the reduction of the 6 percent would take a few years,
- 16 wouldn't it?
- 17 MR. MILKEY: It would take a few years, Your
- 18 Honor, but it is a basic premise of the Clean Air Act
- 19 that vehicle fleets regularly turn over --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I understand. But it goes
- 21 to how imminent the harm is and how remediable the
- 22 imminent harm is. If, in fact, the 6 percent will only
- 23 be reduced to maybe five and a half in the next few
- 24 years, your --
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, we have shown in

- 1 the record that a 40 percent reduction in carbon dioxide
- 2 from cars is currently feasible. And since those
- 3 emissions account for --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Not in the first year.
- 5 MR. MILKEY: No, no. We agree, Your Honor.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean ultimately, when all
- 7 the cars currently on the roads are off and the new cars
- 8 with, you know, whatever measures you think will reduce
- 9 the carbon dioxide are on the road, then 40 percent
- 10 would be the figure.
- 11 MR. MILKEY: Yes, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But whatever position
- 13 holds for motor vehicles would similarly hold for power
- 14 plants, and has there been any application to EPA with
- 15 respect to carbon dioxide in power plants?
- 16 MR. MILKEY: There has, Your Honor. In
- 17 fact, EPA has turned down a rulemaking petition to
- 18 regulate them under the new source performance standard
- 19 section of the Clean Air Act, and that is currently on
- 20 appeal in the D.C. Circuit, but it is currently stayed
- 21 pending the outcome of this case, and it just --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Do you get the
- 23 benefit of that broader allegation in establishing your
- 24 standard? In other words, if you've challenged EPA's
- 25 refusal to apply a particular level of greenhouse

- 1 regulation to a particular model of car, can you say,
- 2 well, they're following the same approach to a coal
- 3 powered -- coal fueled power plant, and so we get to
- 4 establish a broader injury? Or, aren't you limited to
- 5 the specific legal challenge you're raising here?
- 6 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, I think it's
- 7 actually more direct in the sense that in the decision
- 8 we challenge here, they said greenhouse gases are not
- 9 air pollutants under any regulatory provision of the
- 10 act. So at least on --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Don't you have to
- 12 show injury from their decision here? The fact that
- other people, or you presumably as well might be injured
- 14 by their decisions that you are not challenging here,
- that doesn't help your standing here, does it?
- 16 MR. MILKEY: I believe it does, Your Honor,
- 17 because we cannot win that other case unless we win this
- 18 case here in terms of the authority question. And in
- 19 any event, it is important to point out that because of
- 20 the scale of the problem, relatively small percentage
- 21 deductions in global emissions can lead to real world
- 22 results.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: But at the outset, you
- 24 made this, some of this perhaps reassuring statement
- 25 that we need not decide about global warming in this

- 1 case. But don't we have to do that in order to decide
- 2 the standing argument, because there's no injury if
- 3 there's not global warming? Or, can you show standing
- 4 simply because there is a likelihood that the perceived
- 5 would show that there's an injury?
- 6 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, especially in this
- 7 case where none of our affidavits were challenged, I
- 8 don't think the Court needs to go there ultimately on
- 9 the merits because we showed through our uncontested
- 10 affidavits that these harms will occur. There was no
- 11 evidence put in to the contrary, and I would add that
- 12 the reports on which EPA itself relies conclude that
- 13 climate change is occurring in --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Those affidavits
- 15 talked about the fact that if the government starts to
- 16 regulate, the technology is going to change, if the
- 17 technology changes, other governments will adopt it, and
- 18 all that, and that strikes me as sort of spitting out
- 19 conjecture on conjecture, the sort that we disapproved
- 20 of.
- 21 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, although we believe
- 22 we have shown other governments will follow suit, we are
- 23 not in any sense relying on that. We can easily show
- 24 our standing without relying on that. And that's
- 25 because --

1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Same argument if the 2 automobile emissions were 1 percent contributors? 3 MR. MILKEY: It would be the same argument. 4 And I would add that EPA in other contexts has 5 determined on several occasions that a 1 percent 6 contribution is significant under the Clean Air Act. 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How is that 8 consistent with our taxpayer standing cases where the argument is that a taxpayer doesn't have standing to 9 10 challenge an illegal expenditure as a general matter simply because his contribution, the benefit that he's 11 claiming is so small and so widely dispersed? 12 13 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, it is different 14 because here is particularized injury that we have 15 The injury doesn't get any more particular than 16 states losing 200 miles of coastline, both sovereign 17 territory and property we actually own, to rising seas. 18 JUSTICE ALITO: If you look ahead, I don't 19 know how far imminence allows you to look ahead, but 20 let's say we're looking at 5 years or 10 years, what 21 particularized harm does the record show that Massachusetts will, or faces an imminent threat of 22 23 suffering, that can be traceable to the reductions that 24 you want to produce through these regulations? 25 MR. MILKEY: Well, Your Honor, if I can deal

- 1 with the traceability part of that question first,
- 2 traceability is easy to show here because the extent of
- 3 our harm is caused by the overall amount of the gases in
- 4 the air. And being focused on the 20 percent of all
- 5 U.S. sources, or the 6 percent of the cars, that's still
- 6 a sizeable portion of the problem, so we know that 6 or
- 7 20 percent is there.
- 8 In terms of the particular harms, similarly
- 9 we have shown --
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: 6 percent is the total
- 11 emissions, the total contribution from motor vehicles in
- 12 the United States, right?
- 13 MR. MILKEY: To the global carbon dioxide
- 14 emission.
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: To the global. And so, the
- 16 reduction that you could achieve under the best of
- 17 circumstances with these regulations would be a small
- 18 portion of that, would it not?
- MR. MILKEY: It would be, we have shown in
- 20 the record it would be about a two-and-a-half percent
- 21 over the time it takes to turn the fleet over. But it's
- 22 important that given the nature of the harms, even small
- 23 reductions can be significant. For example, if we're
- 24 able to save only a small fraction of the hundreds of
- 25 millions of dollars that Massachusetts parks agencies

- 1 are projected to lose, that reduction is itself
- 2 significant.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That assumes
- 4 everything else is going to remain constant, though,
- 5 right? It assumes there isn't going to be a greater
- 6 contribution of greenhouse gases from economic
- 7 development in China and other places that's going to
- 8 displace whatever marginal benefit you get here.
- 9 MR. MILKEY: Yes, Your Honor. But reducing
- 10 domestic emissions will reduce our harm, the harm we
- 11 would otherwise face regardless of what --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Not if your harm is
- 13 the alleged loss of coastline. Not necessarily. It
- 14 depends upon what happens across the globe with respect
- 15 to greenhouse emissions.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, we would still lose
- 17 coastline but we would not lose as much because these
- 18 harms are cumulative, and while reducing U.S. emissions
- 19 will not eliminate all the harm we face, it can reduce
- 20 the harm that these emissions are causing.
- 21 So it will necessarily reduce our harm and
- 22 satisfy redressibility.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, do we know that
- 24 that's a straight line ratio, that a reduction of
- 25 two-and-a-half percent of carbon dioxide -- well, two

- 1 and a half overall would save two-and-a-half percent of
- 2 your coastline? Is that how it works? I'm not a
- 3 scientist, but I'd be surprised if it was so rigid.
- 4 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, I don't believe
- 5 it's established it's necessarily a straight line. But
- 6 I want to emphasize that small vertical rises cause a
- 7 large loss of horizontal land. For example, where the
- 8 slope is less than 2 percent, which is true of much of
- 9 the Massachusetts coastline, every foot rise will create
- 10 a loss of more than 50 feet of horizontal land. And for
- 11 example, in the State of New York, the Oppenheimer
- 12 affidavit projects that New York could well lose
- 13 thousands of acres of its sovereign territory by the
- 14 year 2020. So the harm is already occurring. It is
- 15 ongoing and it will happen well into the future.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What's your
- 17 strongest case from this Court to support your standing
- 18 allegation?
- 19 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, what I would say to
- 20 that is our standing here is so much more direct and
- 21 particularized than, for example, the harm this Court
- 22 found sufficient in Laidlaw, which was --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Laidlaw was a
- 24 specific citizen suit provision, wasn't it?
- MR. MILKEY: It was, Your Honor.

1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So doesn't that make 2 it somewhat analytically distinct from this case? 3 MR. MILKEY: I don't believe so, Your Honor. 4 Here I think the fact that the States are showing harm 5 not only to them in a property sense, but in their 6 sovereign capacity --7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What's your authority for 8 that? I have the same question as the Chief Justice. I was looking at your brief for the strongest case. 9 10 Suppose there were a big landowner that owned lots of 11 coastline. Would he have the same standing that you do or do you have some special standing as a State, and if 12 so what is the case which would demonstrate that? 13 14 MR. MILKEY: Well, Your Honor, first of all, 15 we agree that a large landowner would himself or herself 16 have --17 JUSTICE SCALIA: What of a small landowner? 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: No, no. I'm asking 19 whether you have some special standing --20 MR. MILKEY: Yes --21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- as a State and, if so, 22 what's the authority for that? 23 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, first of all, I do 24 think we have special standing. For example, here it's 25 uncontested that greenhouse gases are going to make

- 1 ozone problems worse, which makes it harder for us to
- 2 comply with our existing Clean Air Act responsibilities.
- 3 And the -- in the West Virginia case, which
- 4 is a D.C. Circuit case, the Court found that that itself
- 5 provided an independent source of standing. In terms of
- 6 Supreme Court cases, the -- it's been -- for 200 years,
- 7 this Court has recognized loss of state sovereign
- 8 property as a traditional --
- 9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I don't know. 1907
- 10 was Georgia versus Tennessee Copper, and that was
- 11 pre-Massachusetts versus Mellon. That seems to me your
- 12 best case.
- 13 What about a small landowner? I asked the
- 14 question about a big landowner. Suppose you have a
- 15 small landowner and he owned a lot?
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, I think if someone
- 17 is losing property because of this problem, then that
- 18 person would have standing, but we're nowhere near a de
- 19 minimis threshold here. We have shown we own property,
- 20 200 miles of coastline which we're losing, and we think
- 21 the standing is straightforward.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: No, I'm not sure -- I think
- 23 our opinions have even said it, but certainly
- 24 commentators have often said it, that really the far
- 25 margin of our standing cases has been, you know, the

- 1 famous scrap case, in which the allegation was that the
- 2 added pollution from municipal incineration of municipal
- 3 waste which would -- which couldn't be transported by
- 4 rail for burial because the ICC rates were too high,
- 5 that added pollution interfered with the students' --
- 6 they were Georgetown Law students -- their hiking in the
- 7 George Washington Forest along the Blue Ridge.
- 8 That seems to me a much more immediate kind
- 9 of damage; yet that's been referred to as really the far
- 10 margin of our standing cases. You're talking not about
- 11 their being affected by ambient air but being affected
- 12 by a stratospheric effect which then has another
- 13 consequence that you allege.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, once these are
- 15 emitted the laws of physics take over, so our harm is
- 16 imminent in the sense that lighting a fuse on a bomb is
- 17 imminent harm. It may take --
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Milkey, does it make
- 19 a difference that you're not representing a group of law
- 20 students, but a number of States who are claiming that
- 21 they are disarmed from regulating and that the
- 22 regulatory responsibility has been given to the Federal
- 23 Government and the Federal Government isn't exercising
- 24 it? I thought you had a discrete claim based on the
- 25 sovereignty of States and their inability to regulate

- 1 dependent on the law Congress passed that gives that
- 2 authority to the EPA. I thought that was --
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, you are correct
- 4 that we are saying that provides us also an independent
- 5 source of our standing.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't understand
- 7 that. You have standing whenever a Federal law preempts
- 8 State action? You can complain about the implementation
- 9 of that law because it has preempted your State action?
- 10 Is that the basis of standing you're alleging?
- 11 MR. MILKEY: In short, Your Honor --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do you know any case that
- 13 has ever held that?
- 14 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, I would cite you to
- 15 the amicus brief of the State of Arizona et al., which
- 16 cites several cases, albeit not in this Court, that
- 17 stand for that principle.
- 18 Your Honor, if I may turn to the merits
- 19 quickly, section 202(a)(1) provides EPA jurisdiction
- 20 over any air pollutant that motor vehicles emit. It's
- 21 not restricted to certain types of air pollutants or to
- 22 air pollutants that cause certain kinds of harm. And
- 23 not only does the act define air pollutant with
- 24 comprehensive breadth, but we know these four substances
- 25 are air pollutants from other evidence.

1 For example, Congress itself expressly 2 referred to carbon dioxide as an air pollutant in section 103(g). And since by definition all air 3 4 pollutants are air pollution agents, we know that 5 Congress understood carbon dioxide to be an agent of air 6 pollution. And if air pollution --7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Moving from your authority argument to the exercise of authority, the 8 clause 202(a)(1) requires EPA to prescribe standards 9 10 which in their judgment cause or contribute to air 11 pollution reasonably anticipated to endanger public health. And they say they haven't made that judgment 12 13 yet, so they're not in violation of that statutory 14 command. 15 MR. MILKEY: That is correct, Your Honor; 16 but they have said that they have put off making a 17 judgment based on impermissible grounds. While EPA's 18 explanation is difficult even to follow, one overarching 19 point shines through and that is the agency does not 20 agree with taking a regulatory approach regardless of 21 how it might otherwise come out. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Let's say the first 22 23 day this law is passed, there are a lot of air 24 pollutants that come out of motor vehicles. I mean, is 25 EPA immediately in violation of this statute if they

- don't issue emissions regulations for every one those
- 2 air pollutants on day one?
- MR. MILKEY: No, Your Honor. EPA has a lot
- 4 of room to move based both on the endangerment standard
- 5 itself and on background principles of administrative
- 6 law.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And presumably the
- 8 principle that they want to deal with what they regard
- 9 as the more serious threats sooner. They want to deal
- 10 with lead first and then they want to deal with other
- 11 stuff. I mean, what is the -- when did they -- I
- 12 guess -- move into an abuse of discretion in not
- 13 exercising a judgment with respect to a particular
- 14 pollutant?
- MR. MILKEY: The answer to that, Your Honor,
- 16 is that when they do not rely on any of those grounds,
- 17 they do not rely on lack of information, they did not
- 18 rely on background principles of administrative law.
- 19 What though said here is -- and -- that they did not, in
- 20 fact, contest the seriousness of the problem. But note,
- 21 in two back to back sentences on page A-82 of the third
- 22 petition they say: We must address the, issue but we
- 23 disagree with the regulatory approach.
- The very section in which they explained why
- 25 they weren't going to regulate is entitled "Different

- 1 Policy Approach." Rejecting mandatory motor vehicle
- 2 regulation as a bad idea is simply not a policy choice
- 3 that Congress left to EPA.
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But if you are right and
- 5 then it went back and the EPA then said, well, an
- 6 obvious reason also is constraint on our own resources,
- 7 we have the authority to say what comes first, Congress
- 8 -- we couldn't possibly do everything that Congress has
- 9 authorized us to do; so it's our decision, even though
- 10 we have the authority to do this, we think that we
- 11 should spend our resources on other things.
- 12 Suppose they said that? You said they
- 13 didn't say it this time around, but how far will you get
- 14 if all that's going to happen is it goes back and then
- 15 EPA says our resources are constrained and we're not
- 16 going to spend the money?
- 17 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, while background
- 18 administrative law principles provide EPA at least some
- 19 room to move, we think it's important that EPA say that.
- 20 If they -- it's a very different opinion if they say, we
- 21 are not going to regular here because we just don't want
- 22 to spend the resources on this problem and we want to
- look elsewhere.
- 24 If they want to say that, they can say that
- 25 and then, if at all, there'd be a narrow arbitrary and

- 1 capricious challenge on that. But the point is here
- 2 they relied on the impermissible consideration that they
- 3 simply disagreed with the policy behind the statute.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's not all they
- 5 said. I'm looking at A-85 and they said establishing
- 6 emissions now would require EPA to make scientific and
- 7 technical judgments without the benefit of studies that
- 8 are being developed to reduce the uncertainty in the
- 9 area. That's different than saying they disagree with
- 10 the regulatory approach.
- 11 MR. MILKEY: It is and it isn't, Your Honor,
- 12 because that statement will alleges be true. There will
- 13 always be scientific uncertainty. Agencies will always
- 14 have an understandable interest in seeing more
- 15 information. They never --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: There's a difference
- 17 between the scientific status of the harm from lead
- 18 emissions from vehicles that -- when you have lead in
- 19 the gasoline, to the status, the status of scientific
- 20 knowledge with respect to the impact on global warming
- 21 today? Those are two very different levels of
- 22 uncertainty.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, when EPA regulated
- 24 lead back in the ethyl days, as the Court court itself
- 25 took note, there were huge amounts of uncertainty at

- 1 that time. And EPA has a lot of discretion in
- 2 evaluating that, that uncertainty.
- 3 And if the EPA determined that the level of
- 4 uncertainty was such that it was not reasonable to
- 5 anticipate endangerment, that is perfectly appropriate.
- 6 It would also be appropriate if the agency determined
- 7 that there was so much uncertainty that they couldn't
- 8 even form a judgment on that. That would be applying
- 9 the endangerment statute at the same time it put off.
- 10 But the point is they did not say any of that. They
- instead relied on impermissible grounds.
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Milkey, I had -- my
- 13 problem is precisely on the impermissible grounds. To
- 14 be sure, carbon dioxide is a pollutant, and it can be an
- 15 air pollutant. If we fill this room with carbon
- 16 dioxide, it could be an air pollutant that endangers
- 17 health. But I always thought an air pollutant was
- 18 something different from a stratospheric pollutant, and
- 19 your claim here is not that the pollution of what we
- 20 normally call "air" is endangering health. That isn't,
- 21 that isn't -- your assertion is that after the pollutant
- leaves the air and goes up into the stratosphere it is
- 23 contributing to global warming.
- MR. MILKEY: Respectfully, Your Honor, it is
- 25 not the stratosphere. It's the troposphere.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: Troposphere, whatever. I
- 2 told you before I'm not a scientist.
- 3 (Laughter.)
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's why I don't want to
- 5 have to deal with global warming, to tell you the truth.
- 6 MR. MILKEY: Under the express words of the
- 7 statute -- and this is 302(g) -- for something to be an
- 8 air pollutant it has to be emitted into the ambient air
- 9 or otherwise entered there.
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, and I agree with that.
- 11 It is when it comes out an air pollutant. But is it an
- 12 air pollutant that endangers health? I think it has to
- 13 endanger health by reason of polluting the air, and this
- 14 does not endanger health by reason of polluting the air
- 15 at all.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, respectfully, I
- 17 disagree, and there is nothing in the act that actually
- 18 requires the harm to occur in the ambient air. In fact,
- 19 some of the harm here does occur there.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, it talks about air
- 21 pollution all the time. That's what the, that's what
- 22 the thing is about, air pollution. It's not about
- 23 global warming and it's not about the troposphere.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, we are not saying,
- 25 first of all that global warming is air pollution, any

- 1 more than we're saying that asthma is air pollution.
- 2 They're both effects. I would point you to the example
- 3 of acid rain, where the pollutant there, sulfur dioxide,
- 4 the problem is it causes its harm after it leaves the
- 5 air, after it gets washed out. Air pollutants do not
- 6 need to cause harm in the ambient air.
- 7 Your Honor, I would add that our
- 8 interpretation satisfies common sense because, while EPA
- 9 has plenary authority over substances that motor
- 10 vehicles emit, those substances are regulated only if
- 11 EPA determines that they cause endangerment. By
- 12 defining the term "air pollutant" comprehensively,
- 13 Congress has not prejudged what may cause endangerment,
- 14 but it has allowed other pollutants to be regulated as
- 15 their harms become appreciated. It is EPA's
- 16 interpretation that fails the common sense test. They
- 17 have suggested that the term "air pollutant agent"
- 18 creates an independent test so important that it may
- 19 prevent some harmful compounds from being regulated
- 20 without providing any hint of what the term means or how
- 21 it applies in this case. And they cannot explain any
- 22 number of anomalies such as the fact that methane is
- 23 already a regulated air pollutant, yet they claim they
- 24 can't look at its climate effects.
- 25 Your Honor, if there are no more questions

- 1 I'd like to reserve my time.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 3 Mr. Milkey.
- 4 Mr. Garre.
- 5 ORAL ARGUMENT OF GREGORY G. GARRE,
- 6 ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENTS
- 7 MR. GARRE: Thank you. Mr. Chief Justice,
- 8 and may it please the Court.
- 9 After carefully considering the issue the
- 10 nation's expert agency in environmental matters
- 11 concluded that Congress has not authorized it to embark
- 12 on the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions to address
- 13 global climate change. And that even if it has, now is
- 14 not the time to exercise such authority, in light of the
- 15 substantial scientific uncertainty surrounding global
- 16 climate change and the ongoing studies designed to
- 17 address those uncertainties. Plaintiffs have provide no
- 18 reason to override that quintessential administrative
- 19 judgment.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Garre, doesn't the
- 21 EPA's decision on the first, "we don't have any
- 22 authority, " doesn't that infect its subsequent decision,
- 23 "well, even if we did, we wouldn't exercise it." But
- 24 they've already decided they don't have authority.
- MR. GARRE: Your Honor, I don't think that

- 1 it does. In the sense, I think EPA made clear in its
- 2 decisional document that it considered as an alternative
- 3 matter, that if it, even assuming it did have the
- 4 authority, that it wouldn't be appropriate to exercise
- 5 it at this time.
- And importantly, too, I mean, just to be
- 7 clear on this, EPA has never made an endangerment
- 8 finding with respect to global climate change. That was
- 9 true in 1998 and 1999 when the agency had a different
- 10 position on authority to regulate. Even then the
- 11 agency's position was clear. Even assuming we have the
- 12 authority, now is not the time to exercise it. So I
- 13 don't think --
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- I take it that on that
- 15 question, is there authority, the EPA has come out one
- 16 way, but at least it is debatable because as you just
- 17 said, the predecessors of the current people said we do
- 18 have the authority.
- 19 MR. GARRE: Well, to that degree, Your
- 20 Honor, this Court has made clear, for example, in the
- 21 Brand X case that even where agencies change positions,
- 22 where they've provided reasonable grounds for a new
- 23 interpretation, that interpretation is entitled to
- 24 Chevron deference. We think that that is true in this
- 25 case.

1 JUSTICE BREYER: On this particular issue, 2 the opinion as I read it, of the EPA, consists of 32 3 pages. Twenty of those pages, 22 in fact, deal with 4 whether they have statutory authority. And of the 10 5 that deal with the issue we're talking about now, five 6 of them give as their reason that they think that the 7 President has a different policy. Of the remaining five, two more consider international aspects of the 8 problem and how you have to get other countries to 9 10 cooperate; and then the conclusion of that part says in light of these considerations, we decide not to exercise 11 12 our power. 13 Now their claim with respect to that, is 14 that at least three of the four considerations are not 15 proper things for the agency to take into account: 16 namely whether the President wants to do something 17 different, whether we're running foreign policy 18 properly, whether cooperation with other countries are 19 relevant to this particular issue. 20 So what they've asked us to do is send it back so they can get the right reasons. Now -- if they 21 want not to do it. What's your response to that? 22 23 MR. GARRE: Justice Breyer, I don't think 24 that it depends on how many pages that the agency 25 devoted to the --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: The reason it depended on 2 that is whether or not these other, improper 3 considerations might have influenced the ultimate 4 decision not to go ahead. 5 MR. GARRE: I think it depends on the 6 reasons that the agency gave. And one of the reasons 7 that the agency gave was the substantial scientific 8 uncertainty surrounding the issue of global climate change. Petitioners acknowledge that that was an 9 10 appropriate consideration for the agency. So even if 11 you think the other considerations were inappropriate, and we certainly do not, but even if you think they are, 12 13 the agency gave an appropriate reason. And that reasons 14 15 JUSTICE BREYER: When I write an opinion --16 when I write an opinion, sometimes I write the words: 17 "We decide this matter in light of the following three 18 factors taken together." And I guess a lawyer who said, 19 "one of those factors alone the Court has held justified 20 the result all by itself" -- in saying the Court has 21 held that, I guess that wouldn't be so. That would be a 22 bad lawyer, wouldn't it? 23 MR. GARRE: But Your Honor --24 JUSTICE BREYER: If they write that all of 25 these considerations justify our result, again, one of

- 1 them by themselves, it sounds, they think would not have
- 2 been sufficient.
- 3 MR. GARRE: I -- I don't think that is
- 4 a fair reading of the EPA decisional document, Your
- 5 Honor. Certainly, the agency didn't go out of its way
- 6 to say, "and reading these considerations together and
- 7 not any of them individually." And with respect to the
- 8 scientific uncertainty, Your Honor, you also have to
- 9 take into account that the EPA had before it and pointed
- 10 to the report of the National Research Council on global
- 11 climate change.
- 12 JUSTICE STEVENS: I find it interesting that
- 13 the scientists whose worked on that report said there
- 14 were a good many omissions that would have indicated
- 15 that there wasn't nearly the uncertainty that the agency
- 16 described.
- MR. GARRE: Your Honor, if you are referring
- 18 to the amicus brief, Your Honor, there are -- assuming
- 19 there are amicus briefs on the other side. The Ballunas
- 20 amicus brief -- I think it is fair for the Court to look
- 21 at, to look at the document that the agency had before
- 22 it. That -- that document produced by the National
- 23 Research -- Research Council, that's the research arm of
- 24 the National Academy of Sciences. And it's one of the
- 25 gold standards of research.

1 JUSTICE STEVENS: But in their selective 2 quotations, they left out parts that indicated there was far less uncertainty than the agency purported to find. 3 MR. GARRE: Well, Your Honor, I think one 4 5 thing that we ought to be able to agree on is there is 6 that there is uncertainty surrounding the phenomenon of 7 global climate change. I think the debate is on which areas are more uncertain than the others. But certainly 8 I think the agency was entitled to conclude, 9 10 particularly if you take into account the deference this 11 Court should give to that kind of determination, that the scientific uncertainty surrounding the issue of 12 13 global climate change, surrounding issues of the extent of natural variability in climate, surrounding the 14 15 issues of impact of climate feedbacks like ocean 16 circulation, and low cloud cover, are permissible considerations for the agency to take into -- -17 18 JUSTICE STEVENS: Is there uncertainty on 19 the basic proposition that these greenhouse gases 20 contribute to global warming. MR. GARRE: Your Honor, the report says that 21 it is likely that there is a -- a connection, but that 22 it cannot unequivocally be established. I think that --23 24 if I could use that to go back to the standing question, 25 Your Honor, which is the fundamental question of whether

- 1 they've showed not just a connection between greenhouse
- 2 gas emissions in toto and the phenomenon of global
- 3 climate change, but the particular class of greenhouse
- 4 gas emissions at issue in this case. Six percent of
- 5 global greenhouse gas emissions, at most. That assumes
- 6 you put all U.S. vehicles off the road or that they are
- 7 all zero emission cars. So you're talking about
- 8 emissions --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- it is not a
- 10 mathematical question, right? I mean, you would -- it's
- 11 that you would -- what is the number? What's enough?
- 12 10 percent? 15 percent? Presumably, there's more to it
- 13 than the percentage of emissions attributable to be this
- 14 particular --
- 15 MR. GARRE: I think that's true, Your Honor.
- 16 But what petitioners here to show, they bear the burden
- in order to establish standing under this case, is that
- 18 regulation of the class of greenhouse gases at issue in
- 19 this case will make a difference to them.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose it is not
- 21 greenhouse gas. Suppose it was Agent Orange. Suppose
- 22 there a car is coming down the street and it sprays out
- 23 Agent Orange. And I come into the Court and I say, you
- 24 know, I think that Agent Orange is going to kill me with
- 25 cancer. And the reply is, well, we have some scientists

- 1 here who say your chance of dying of cancer from Agent
- 2 Orange is only 1 in 30. Maybe 1 in 50. Maybe 1 in a
- 3 thousand. Maybe 1 in 10,000. And therefore, you have
- 4 no standing to require the EPA to regulate this
- 5 pollutant, Agent Orange, which is in a green cloud all
- 6 over the city.
- Now, would you say that the person who's
- 8 made that claim has no standing?
- 9 MR. GARRE: Your Honor, I think that that is
- 10 a fundamentally different case, for the simple reason
- 11 that global climate change is a global phenomenon. I
- 12 mean one --
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: I was only addressing,
- 14 using that to -- to address your problem that the
- 15 chances are too small that, in fact, any one individual
- 16 will be affected by the 7 percent or 6 percent of the
- 17 material that comes out of the truck -- the CO2.
- 18 MR. GARRE: The -- the individual in that
- 19 case, Your Honor, like the plaintiffs here, would have
- 20 to show specific facts demonstrating injury,
- 21 redressibility and traceability. Now in this case --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Your problem, I think, you
- 23 take the position, the proposition that the greater the
- 24 harm the greater the risk, the smaller the probability
- 25 has to be before it is reasonable to act, and necessary

- 1 to act.
- 2 MR. GARRE: Your Honor, this Court's
- 3 standing cases make clear that you have to show that
- 4 granting the relief requested is likely to redress the
- 5 alleged harms. And again, looking at the --
- 6 JUSTICE SOUTER: They are saying it is
- 7 likely to do so, even though we cannot give you a point
- 8 for point percentage correlation between reduction of
- 9 gas and coastline loss. You're saying, it seems to me,
- 10 that they have somehow got to pinpoint this
- 11 mathematically --
- 12 MR. GARRE: I don't -- we're not saying
- 13 that.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: -- before, before there is
- 15 redressibility.
- 16 MR. GARRE: We're not saying that, Your
- 17 Honor. We're saying that they have, they certainly have
- 18 to do more than they have done here. And they're
- 19 granted their standing --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Tell me what it is that
- 21 they need, be more specific about what they need to do.
- MR. GARRE: Well, I will be more specific.
- 23 And if I could also just point to what they grounded
- 24 their case on here. They grounded their case on here,
- 25 in the declarations, on the notion if the United States

- 1 regulates greenhouse gas emissions of vehicles, then
- 2 other countries will follow suit with respect to the
- 3 emissions of vehicles and other greenhouse gas
- 4 emissions. That's clear from the McCracken declaration
- 5 on page 239, paragraph 32 of the JA, as well as the
- 6 Walsh declaration.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: I think it can be argued
- 8 that the Assistant Attorney General hasn't argued that
- 9 here.
- 10 MR. GARRE: Well --
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: He has said that 6 percent
- 12 is enough.
- MR. GARRE: That, that's true, Your Honor,
- 14 but I still think you have to look at the basis that
- 15 they've relied upon on standing. And they haven't shown
- 16 specific facts which should provide any comfort to this
- 17 Court that regulation of less than 6 percent or fewer
- 18 greenhouse emissions worldwide will have any effect on
- 19 their alleged injuries.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Why is there -- why is
- 21 there reason to assume that it will have no effect?
- MR. GARRE: Well --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: That seems to be the
- 24 assumption you're making. You are saying unless they
- 25 can pinpoint the correlation between reduction of gas

- 1 and effect, let's say in coastline loss, they have not
- 2 shown either causation or a sufficient likelihood of
- 3 redressibility.
- 4 MR. GARRE: Your Honor --
- 5 JUSTICE SOUTER: But why do they have to
- 6 show a precise correlation as opposed simply to
- 7 establishing what I think is not really contested, that
- 8 there is a correlation between greenhouse gases and the
- 9 kind of loss that they're talking about; and it is
- 10 reasonable to suppose that some reduction in the gases
- 11 will result in some reduction in future loss.
- 12 Why is that insufficient?
- 13 MR. GARRE: Justice Souter, one fundamental
- 14 reason is that we don't know what the rest of the world
- 15 is going to do, whether or not --
- 16 JUSTICE SOUTER: Let's assume the rest --
- 17 let's assume that the rest of the world does nothing. I
- 18 don't think that's a very reasonable assumption, but
- 19 let's make that assumption. So that the only thing
- 20 we're talking is the 6 percent. If the 6 percent can be
- 21 reduced -- I think the suggestion was over a reasonable
- 22 period of time, by two and a half percent of the 6,
- 23 there is, I suppose, reason to expect that there will
- 24 be, maybe not two and a half percent less coastline
- 25 lost, but some degree of less coastline lost because

- 1 there is a correlation between the gas and the loss of
- 2 the coastline. Why is that an unreasonable assumption
- 3 to make in order to show causation and redressibility,
- 4 bearing in mind that redressibility is a question of
- 5 more or less, not a question of either/or.
- They don't have to show that it will stop
- 7 global warming. Their point is that will reduce the
- 8 degree of global warming and likely reduce the degree of
- 9 loss, if it is only by two and a half percent. What's
- 10 wrong with that?
- 11 MR. GARRE: Justice Souter, their burden is
- 12 to show that if the Court grants their requested relief
- 13 it will redress their injuries. I'm not aware --
- 14 JUSTICE SOUTER: Not redress their injury in
- 15 the sense that it will prevent any global warming or
- 16 stop global warming and stop coastal erosion; their
- 17 argument is a different one. It will reduce the degree
- 18 of global warming and reduce the degree of coastal loss.
- 19 MR. GARRE: I think --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: That's their argument. Not
- 21 all or nothing. But a part. That's what they're trying
- 22 to show.
- MR. GARRE: And that's fine, Justice Souter,
- 24 I grant you that. But they still have to show that
- 25 there is reason that it is likely to believe, that the

- 1 reduction in that tiny fraction of United States
- 2 emissions, putting aside the 99 percent or the 95
- 3 percent in the rest of the world and what they do, and
- 4 the evidence that shows that greenhouse gas emissions in
- 5 those countries are increasing, they have to show the
- 6 regulation of that tiny fraction would have an affect on
- 7 their alleged injuries, not to completely redress them,
- 8 Your Honor. We don't say that --
- 9 JUSTICE SOUTER: Don't they have to show
- 10 that it is reasonable to suppose it will have an effect?
- 11 MR. GARRE: They have to show that it is
- 12 likely, Your Honor. And they haven't even tried to make
- 13 that showing. The one thing that they've --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Why is that showing -- and
- 15 I agree with, by the way, with the Chief's suggestion a
- 16 moment ago, life is not, or physics are not so simple as
- 17 to assume that there's going to be a be a direct two and
- 18 a half percent reduction of coastline for a two and a
- 19 half percent reduction from the 6 percent.
- But isn't it intuitively reasonable to
- 21 suppose that with some reduction of the greenhouse
- 22 gases, there will be some reduction of the ensuing
- 23 damage or the ensuing climate change which causes the
- 24 damage? Isn't that fair?
- 25 MR. GARRE: I don't think that it is fair,

- 1 Your Honor. I don't want to pretend to be an expert on
- 2 global climate change. But the one thing I can say is
- 3 from the materials I looked at is that this an
- 4 extraordinarily complex area of science. I'm not aware
- 5 of any studies available that would suggest that the
- 6 regulation of that minuscule fraction of greenhouse gas
- 7 emissions would have any effect whatsoever on the
- 8 global -- -
- 9 JUSTICE SOUTER: But do you have any --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose others cooperate?
- 11 Suppose, for example, they regulate this and before you
- 12 know it, they start to sequester carbon with the power
- 13 plants, and before you know it, they decide ethanol
- 14 might be a good idea, and before you know it, they
- decide any one of 15 things, each of which has an
- 16 impact, and lo and behold, Cape Cod is saved. Now why
- 17 is it unreasonable? Why is it unreasonable to go to an
- 18 agency and say now you do your part, which is 6 percent,
- 19 and now we're going to go to a different agency like
- 20 NHTSA and we're going to ask them too, and we're going
- 21 to go to your electricity regulation program, and coal.
- 22 And there are like not a million things that have to be
- 23 done, maybe there are only seven. But by the time we
- 24 get those seven things done, we'll make a big
- 25 difference. Now what is it in the law that says that

- 1 somehow a person cannot go to an agency and say we want
- 2 you to do your part? Would you be up here saying the
- 3 same thing if we're trying to regulate child
- 4 pornography, and it turns out that anyone with a
- 5 computer can get pornography elsewhere? I don't think
- 6 so.
- 7 MR. GARRE: Your Honor, what I would point
- 8 you to is your decision in Lujan versus Defenders of
- 9 Wildlife, Justice Kennedy's opinion in ASARCO versus
- 10 Kadish, where the Court made clear that you cannot
- 11 establish standing based on predictions of the actions
- 12 of independent actors not before it. That's true about
- 13 other agencies that aren't here today. That's true
- 14 about other countries whom this Court does not have
- 15 jurisdiction over.
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: So they couldn't have gone
- in and asked for ozone regulations, because that
- 18 requires other countries? Or what about dumping heavy
- 19 metals in the sea, and as the sea gets polluted because
- 20 of what other countries do, but EPA tried to regulate
- 21 that. Acid rain they tried to regulate. You're
- 22 saying there is no standing to ask for any of that.
- MR. GARRE: Well, first of all, Congress has
- 24 specifically addressed two of the areas that you
- 25 mentioned, Your Honor, and we're not saying that

- 1 categorically --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Just because there's
- 3 no standing to challenge an agency's decision doesn't
- 4 mean the agency can't regulate that particular area,
- 5 right?
- 6 MR. GARRE: That's exactly right, Your
- 7 Honor. That's exactly right.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: But you are saying if
- 9 Congress passes a statute and they put the words CO2
- 10 right in this statute under ambient air, and they say
- 11 anybody can go and sue if the EPA doesn't do it, you're
- 12 saying Congress lacks the constitutional authority to do
- 13 that, because it's Article III we're talking about?
- MR. GARRE: Well, Your Honor, we're saying
- 15 two things. First, every plaintiff has the obligation
- 16 to establish that he has Article III standing under this
- 17 Constitution. And secondly, there are members of this
- 18 Court, for example, Justice Kennedy in his concurring
- 19 opinion in Defenders of Wildlife, who did suggest that
- 20 perhaps if Congress specifically addresses an issue,
- 21 that could inform the standing analysis. For example --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: They can't
- 23 compromise the requirements of Article III.
- MR. GARRE: It cannot, Your Honor. Congress
- 25 could make findings with respect to causation or other

- 1 issues that this Court would have to give deference to
- 2 and seriously consider, but you're right. It would not
- 3 override the requirements of Article III. And there may
- 4 be some global phenomenon that create more difficult
- 5 challenges to establish standing but --
- 6 JUSTICE STEVENS: As I understand the
- 7 government's position, you're not merely questioning
- 8 standing but you also take the position you do not have
- 9 the authority to do what the plaintiff asks you to do;
- 10 is that correct?
- 11 MR. GARRE: That's true, Your Honor, moving
- 12 to the merits, that's true. And with respect to that,
- 13 the agency engaged in the same type of analysis that
- 14 this Court laid out in the Brown and Williamson case.
- 15 JUSTICE STEVENS: May I ask you on that
- 16 question, if we turn to the statute, to Section 201,
- 17 there's reference to "shall regulate" if in the judgment
- 18 of the administrator there is a for real danger and so
- 19 forth. In your view, is there a duty to make a
- 20 judgment?
- 21 MR. GARRE: Your Honor, our view is that
- 22 agencies have inherent discretion to determine when to
- 23 make that judgment.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: Could they have a
- 25 discretion never to make the judgment?

1 MR. GARRE: I think that gets to the 2 question of whether there is, what judicial review is available. We have assumed in this case that there's 3 4 some measure of judicial review. So I think at some 5 point you got to the point where the agency either has provided no reasons whatsoever, or there is no sound 6 7 basis for the agency not to take that step. Then assuming that there is a role for the courts here, a 8 court could come in and say that that was inappropriate. 9 10 JUSTICE STEVENS: But as I read your brief, 11 you didn't really confront the question, s I understand it, of whether or not there was a duty to make a 12 13 judgment at all. And I'm interested in what your 14 position on that is. MR. GARRE: Well, again, I think it goes to 15 16 the question -- we think the statute does not put a 17 deadline on when the agency has to have, and that 18 therefore --JUSTICE STEVENS: To me, just reading the 19 20 text of the statute is a little ambiguous. I'm not 21 entirely clear, but it seems to me that just reading 22 that statute, I got the impression that Congress thought 23 that the administrator had a duty to make a judgment 24 when there was enough evidence out there that people 25 were concerned about it and so forth, that there would

- 1 be a duty there, but you think not?
- MR. GARRE: That's not the agency's
- 3 interpretation. In fact in its decisional document
- 4 under the section no mandatory duty, the agency explains
- 5 why that's not its interpretation and we think that
- 6 that's a reasonable interpretation. Congress knows how
- 7 to constrain the exercise of discretion. We point in
- 8 footnotes 18 and 19 of our brief of many examples where
- 9 Congress has laid out deadlines or other constraints on
- 10 the exercise of discretion, and those aren't present in
- 11 Section 203.
- 12 JUSTICE STEVENS: But you would agree that
- 13 if they did make a judgment, then you would have
- 14 authority to regulate?
- 15 MR. GARRE: That's right. And then I think
- 16 it's a point the D.C. Circuit made in the Ethyl
- 17 Corporation case at footnote 37, that precisely because
- 18 the statute imposes a duty to act once that endangerment
- 19 finding is made, the agency has discretion to determine
- 20 when to make the endangerment finding.
- 21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: In Norton versus Utah
- 22 Wilderness Alliance, having to do with the regulation of
- 23 off-road vehicles, we indicated that one measure was
- 24 whether or not the agency has unreasonably delayed its
- 25 action.

- 1 MR. GARRE: That's a separate sort of
- 2 action, Your Honor. There are cases where people have
- 3 said that this is unreasonable delay. That's not the
- 4 claim that the petitioners in this case brought.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Let me understand
- 6 your answer to Justice Stevens' question. If EPA made
- 7 the judgment under the statute, you think they would
- 8 have had the authority?
- 9 MR. GARRE: Under the statute --
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought you had a
- 11 Brown and Williamson argument that EPA was precluded.
- MR. GARRE: No, I was assuming -- in
- 13 answering Justice Stevens' questions, that we were down
- 14 in the exercise of discretion part. But you're right,
- 15 Your Honor, the threshold position of the agency on this
- 16 is that it lacks the authority to --
- 17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Can I ask about that? I
- 18 found persuasive Solicitor General Garre's point that in
- 19 the acid rain context, it isn't air pollution that harms
- 20 health, but rather it is the effect of the pollutant
- 21 after it leaves the air and produces the acid rain. Is
- 22 there anything wrong with that response? It seems to
- 23 me --
- 24 MR. GARRE: I think there is, Your Honor.
- 25 The way that the agency looked at this is to look at the

- 1 question of whether Congress intended it to regulate
- 2 greenhouse gas emissions to address global climate
- 3 change, and it looked to the factors that this Court
- 4 laid out in Brown and Williamson. The statute as a
- 5 whole is specific legislation addressing global climate
- 6 change, and it concluded that the agency had not
- 7 authorized it to embark on that regulatory --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: You concede that it's an
- 9 air pollutant that affects health?
- 10 MR. GARRE: No. The agency -- what the
- 11 agency found, Your Honor, was that because global
- 12 climate change is not air pollution within the meaning
- 13 of the statute -- which is to say that Congress did not
- 14 authorize it to regulate it as air pollution.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Then why isn't it air
- 16 pollution within the meaning of the statute, although
- 17 whatever it is that causes acid rain is?
- 18 MR. GARRE: I think, Your Honor, that the
- 19 key to the agency was that Congress did not give it
- 20 regulatory authority over this. And I think on the
- 21 question of whether or not greenhouse gas emissions
- 22 qualify --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: But you can't give me any
- 24 text in this statute itself. It isn't the phrase "air
- 25 pollution" or any other phrase?

- 1 MR. GARRE: The agency pointed to the term
- 2 "air pollution agent" in the statute, and concluded that
- 3 because global climate change was not air pollution that
- 4 Congress intended to address --
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: And that gets us back to
- 6 acid rain.
- 7 MR. GARRE: And with respect to acid rain,
- 8 it's a good example insofar as Congress has enacted a
- 9 whole separate title of the Clean Air Act to address
- 10 acid rain.
- 11 The other thing I want to mention on the
- 12 interpretive question is, in the Brown and Williamson
- 13 case, this Court assumed at the outset of its analysis
- 14 that nicotine would be within the general terms of the
- 15 definition of drug in the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act,
- 16 and that cigarettes would fall within the general term
- 17 of drug --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: So that's the position
- 19 you're taking, that it is within the general term?
- MR. GARRE: I think it's largely the
- 21 position that the agency took, Your Honor, insofar as it
- reasoned that, look, we've looked at everything. We
- 23 conclude that Congress doesn't intend us to regulate
- 24 global climate change as air pollution. And so
- 25 therefore, we're not going to say that greenhouse gases

- 1 are air pollution agents.
- 2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Which is why there's a
- 3 significant difference between the agency saying that
- 4 for 60 years, and I think this Court stressed that in
- 5 its opinion, and Congress reacting to that, what the
- 6 agency's position was. And here where it's a newly
- 7 minted position, because the agency's position not too
- 8 long ago was that they did have the authority.
- 9 MR. GARRE: Well, Justice Ginsburg, it was
- 10 30 years before the agency reached the conclusion in
- 11 1998 that carbon dioxide was an air pollutant. And
- 12 again, even when it reached that conclusion, it made
- 13 clear that it didn't think that the agency would
- 14 exercise its authority to regulate it.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: That's a different
- 16 question. I'm just focusing on, did it have authority
- 17 to deal with this issue?
- 18 MR. GARRE: And I think -- I mean, I grant
- 19 you that there are differences between Brown and
- 20 Williamson and this case, but the fundamental conclusion
- 21 that the agency reached is the same. Which was, to
- 22 borrow the phrase from the Whitman case, Congress did
- 23 not intend to hide elephants in mouse holes. Here we
- 24 are talking about an issue of the magnitude of
- 25 regulating global climate change and greenhouse gas

- 1 emissions, which are fundamentally an important part of
- 2 the nation's economy. Nearly 85 percent of the economy
- 3 is a direct or indirect source of greenhouse gas
- 4 emissions.
- 5 And when we look at when Congress did
- 6 mention carbon dioxide in the statute, which is in the
- 7 1990 amendments, Section 103(g), that was the first time
- 8 that Congress mentioned CO2. And when it did that, it
- 9 went out of its way to say that it was giving
- 10 non-regulatory authority to the agency, and moreover,
- 11 that nothing in this section shall provide any basis for
- 12 any air pollution control requirements. That's a
- 13 strange thing for Congress to say if it believed that
- 14 the agency already had this far-reaching authority to
- 15 regulate greenhouse gas emissions.
- 16 There are other aspects of the statute that
- 17 we think lead to the same conclusion in Brown &
- 18 Williamson. There's a fundamental inconsistency, the
- 19 agency concluded, between attempting to regulate
- 20 greenhouse gas emissions under the national air ambient
- 21 quality system, and that inconsistency is similar to the
- inconsistency that the Court pointed out in the Brown
- 23 and Williamson case.
- 24 JUSTICE BREYER: I'd like you to address
- 25 that. You said there was a lot of legislation in

- 1 Congress that would have been pretty inconsistent with
- 2 serious regulation by the FDA. And in this case, I
- 3 don't think Congress is opposing the notion. I don't
- 4 know anybody there who's in favor of global warming.
- 5 And it seems to me they haven't passed laws that is
- 6 actually, that would be significantly interfered with by
- 7 the EPA trying to do its best to deal with this problem.
- 8 Or am I wrong?
- 9 MR. GARRE: I think you're wrong in the
- 10 following respect, Your Honor.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: What articles would be --
- MR. GARRE: Congress has passed at least six
- 13 separate statutes to specifically address the issue of
- 14 global warming, and all of them share two common
- 15 features. One, we want you to research this issue and
- 16 learn more about it. And two, we want you to work on an
- 17 international framework for addressing global climate
- 18 change. The agency reasonably concluded that unilateral
- 19 U.S. regulation of greenhouse gases --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is there anything in the
- 21 statute that prevents them from consulting with other
- 22 nations or prevents the government from doing that when
- 23 they determine how best to work out whatever standards
- or other forms of regulation they want?
- 25 MR. GARRE: There's nothing in the Clean Air

- 1 Act, if that's the stature you're referring to, but I --
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: I presume the problem that
- 3 they have in mind is that we have nothing to give in
- 4 international negotiations. If we have done everything
- 5 we can to reduce CO2, you know, what deal do we make
- 6 with foreign nations? What incentive do they have to go
- 7 along with us?
- 8 MR. GARRE: That's right, Your Honor. We've
- 9 got a unique collective action problem, and yet, the
- 10 reaction experience of the agency in dealing with the
- 11 issue of stratospheric ozone depletion rate had
- 12 precisely that situation, where the U.S. initially took
- 13 steps. The stratospheric ozone depletion worsened, and
- 14 it was only after international agreement was reached in
- 15 the Montreal Protocol that a global solution to the
- 16 problem was reached.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Do you think they have a
- 18 good reason, yes or no? Because I'm not an expert in
- 19 foreign affairs. The EPA probably is more than I am.
- 20 But do you think that if they do rest their decision on
- 21 their analysis of foreign affairs, that that is a proper
- 22 basis for an agency like the EPA to refuse to regulate?
- MR. GARRE: I think it's a proper basis
- 24 within its inherent discretion, Your Honor, for at least
- 25 two reasons. One, the agency is a part of the executive

- 1 branch and it had unique experience with the issue of
- 2 stratospheric ozone depletion. And two, Congress has
- 3 made clear, for example in the Global Climate Protection
- 4 Act of 1987, that the EPA has a role in at least
- 5 reporting to Congress on international cooperation and
- 6 efforts in that realm.
- 7 JUSTICE SOUTER: But Congress has not
- 8 directed, don't regulate domestically for purposes of
- 9 global warming.
- 10 MR. GARRE: That's true, Your Honor, but --
- 11 JUSTICE SOUTER: The problem that I have
- 12 with your reference to this very -- these various pieces
- 13 of legislation that suggest that Congress has a
- 14 different modus operandi in mind is that Congress
- 15 certainly is aware that EPA has authority over
- 16 pollutants, and it has never interfered with it.
- MR. GARRE: Well, Your Honor, again, I think
- in looking at all the sources the agency looked to, the
- 19 conclusion is, that the agency responsibly and prudently
- 20 reached, is that Congress has not authorized it to
- 21 embark on this regulatory endeavor. And I think the
- 22 closest statute that comes to --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: But isn't that a
- 24 misstatement? Isn't the conclusion that they're trying
- 25 to draw that Congress doesn't want them to exercise the

- 1 authority they have for this purpose? And isn't that
- 2 something quite different? And doesn't that raise the
- 3 question whether that is a legitimate concern for them
- 4 under the statute that does give them the authority?
- 5 MR. GARRE: May I answer the question? No,
- 6 Your Honor. I think the agency's conclusion was
- 7 Congress had not authorized it to undertake the
- 8 regulation of greenhouse gas emissions to address global
- 9 climate change and that, even if it had, that authority
- 10 should not be exercised.
- 11 Thank you very much.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 13 Mr. Garre.
- Mr. Milkey, you have 3 minutes remaining.
- 15 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF JAMES R. MILKEY
- ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Milkey, do you want us
- 18 to send this case back to the EPA to ask them whether if
- 19 only the last two pages of their opinion were given as a
- 20 reason that would suffice? Would that make you happy?
- 21 MR. MILKEY: It would not make us happy,
- 22 Your Honor.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I didn't think so.
- 24 (Laughter.)
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, if I can address

- 1 the global aspect of the problem, the fact that the
- 2 solution to the whole problem --
- JUSTICE BREYER: What is your answer to
- 4 Justice Scalia? Because I thought you said before that
- 5 you thought it was appropriate for us to send this case
- 6 back so that they could redetermine in light of proper
- 7 considerations whether they wanted to exercise their
- 8 authority.
- 9 MR. MILKEY: That is exactly --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Am I wrong about that?
- 11 MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, that is exactly
- 12 what we want. I understood Justice Scalia to be saying
- 13 --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: That's what I was asking,
- 15 yes. And you think it will go back to them and they
- 16 will say, oh my goodness, the scientific uncertainty is
- 17 not enough by itself? You really expect that to happen?
- 18 MR. MILKEY: Respectfully, Your Honor, I
- 19 think EPA will have a hard time saying that there is
- 20 insufficient -- I mean, too much scientific uncertainty.
- 21 The very sentence --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: They said it already.
- MR. MILKEY: No, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: The only question is
- 25 whether that alone is enough.

- 1 MR. MILKEY: Respectfully, Your Honor, they
- 2 did not say that. They did not anywhere say why the
- 3 existing uncertainty mattered. To the contrary, they
- 4 emphasized the need to act in the face of current
- 5 uncertainty, but never explained why that principle
- 6 applies to a nonregulatory approach but not to a
- 7 regulatory one.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What they said was
- 9 until more is understood about causes, extent and
- 10 significance of climate change and the potential options
- 11 for addressing it, we believe it's inappropriate to
- 12 regulate these emissions.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That strikes me as
- 15 saying they think there is too much uncertainty for them
- 16 to act.
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, they did not say
- 18 there is too much uncertainty for them to form a
- 19 judgment, which is the key issue. They said they
- 20 preferred more certainty, but because of the nature of
- 21 the endangerment standard, which emphasizes the
- 22 important of regulating in the face of uncertainty, they
- 23 have to at least explain why the uncertainty matters.
- 24 And that is -- what they did here is particularly
- 25 troubling in the fact that they ignored all of the

- 1 indications pointing toward endangerment. They looked
- 2 at what we don't know without ever looking at what we do
- 3 know.
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: If the EPA concludes that
- 5 regulating an air pollutant would endanger public health
- 6 and welfare, can it decline to regulate?
- 7 MR. MILKEY: Not under section 202, Your
- 8 Honor.
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: It has to regulate even if
- 10 it concludes that regulation would make things worse?
- 11 MR. MILKEY: Would make things worse?
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: Yes.
- 13 MR. MILKEY: I'm sorry, I didn't understand
- 14 that.
- 15 No.
- 16 MR. MILKEY: No, Your Honor. If they
- 17 thought there would be more endangerment that way they
- 18 would not have to regulate.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Then why can't they -- what
- 20 is wrong with their view that for the United States to
- 21 proceed unilaterally would make things worse and
- 22 therefore they're going to decline to regular for that
- 23 reason?
- MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, first of all, I
- 25 don't believe they actually said that, and there is

Τ	nothing in the statute that even hints that they can
2	take foreign policy considerations into account. To the
3	contrary, the statute is very specific in other sections
4	about when they're supposed to look at foreign emissions
5	
6	JUSTICE ALITO: Isn't the definition of
7	public welfare extremely broad?
8	MR. MILKEY: Your Honor, it is certainly
9	extremely broad, and it does include climate.
LO	Thank you, Your Honor.
L1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
L2	The case is submitted.
L3	(Whereupon, at 11:02 a.m., the case in the
L 4	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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22	
23	
24	
25	

	41:18 42:23	6:18 7:19 8:9	21:25	arm 29:23
A	adopt 9:17	10:6 11:4 15:2	analysis 40:21	Article 40:13,16
able 11:24 30:5	affairs 50:19,21	16:11 17:20,21	41:13 46:13	40:23 41:3
above-entitled	affect 37:6	17:22,23,25	50:21	articles 49:11
1:12 56:14	affidavit 13:12	18:2,3,4,5,6,10	analytically	ASARCO 39:9
abuse 19:12	affidavits 4:13	18:23 19:2	14:2	aside 37:2
Academy 29:24	9:7,10,14	22:15,16,17,20	anomalies 24:22	asked 15:13
account 7:3	agencies 11:25	22:22 23:8,8	answer 19:15	27:20 39:17
27:15 29:9	21:13 26:21	23:11,12,13,14	44:6 52:5 53:3	asking 4:4 14:18
30:10 56:2	39:13 41:22	23:18,20,22,25	answering 44:13	53:14
accumulate 4:14	agency 1:7 3:5	24:1,5,5,6,12	anticipate 22:5	asks 41:9
achieve 11:16	18:19 22:6	24:17,23 40:10	anticipated anticipated	aspect 53:1
acid 24:3 39:21	25:10 26:9	44:19,21 45:9	18:11	aspects 27:8
44:19,21 45:17	27:15,24 28:6	45:12,14,15,24	anybody 40:11	48:16
46:6,7,10	28:7,10,13	46:2,3,9,24	49:4	assertion 22:21
acknowledge	29:5,15,21	47:1,11 48:12	appeal 7:20	Assistant 1:16
28:9	30:3,9,17	48:20 49:25	APPEARAN	34:8
acres 13:13		55:5	1:15	assume 34:21
act 3:25 6:18	38:18,19 39:1 40:4 41:13	al 1:3,7 17:15	application 7:14	35:16,17 37:17
7:19 8:10 10:6		al 1.3,7 17.13 albeit 17:16		
15:2 17:23	42:5,7,17 43:4 43:19,24 44:15	ALITO 10:18	applies 24:21 54:6	assumed 42:3 46:13
23:17 32:25	44:25 45:6,10	11:10,15 55:4		
33:1 43:18	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	apply 7:25	assumes 12:3,5 31:5
46:9,15 50:1	45:11,19 46:1	55:9,12,19	applying 4:1	
51:4 54:4,16	46:21 47:3,10	56:6	22:8	assuming 26:3
action 17:8,9	47:13,21 48:10	allegation 7:23 13:18 16:1	appreciated 24:15	26:11 29:18 42:8 44:12
43:25 44:2	48:14,19 49:18		· -	
50:9	50:10,22,25	allege 16:13	approach 3:23 8:2 18:20	assumption
actions 39:11	51:18,19	alleged 12:13		34:24 35:18,19 36:2
activity 5:16	agency's 26:11	33:5 34:19	19:23 20:1	
actors 39:12	40:3 43:2 47:6	37:7	21:10 54:6	asthma 24:1
add 9:11 10:4	47:7 52:6	alleges 21:12	appropriate	attempting
24:7	agent 18:5 24:17	alleging 17:10	22:5,6 26:4	48:19
added 16:2,5	31:21,23,24	Alliance 43:22	28:10,13 53:5	Attorney 1:16
address 19:22	32:1,5 46:2	allowed 24:14	arbitrary 20:25	34:8
25:12,17 32:14	agents 18:4 47:1	allows 10:19	area 3:12 5:10	attributable
45:2 46:4,9	ago 37:16 47:8	alternative 26:2	21:9 38:4 40:4	5:16,19 31:13
48:24 49:13	agree 7:5 14:15	ambient 16:11	areas 4:17 30:8	authority 3:17
52:8,25	18:20 23:10	23:8,18 24:6	39:24	5:25 6:9 8:18
addressed 39:24	30:5 37:15	40:10 48:20	argued 34:7,8	14:7,22 17:2
addresses 40:20	43:12	ambiguous	argument 1:13	18:8,8 20:7,10
addressing	Agreed 6:8	42:20	2:2,5,8 3:3,6	24:9 25:14,22
32:13 45:5	agreement	amendments	9:2 10:1,3,9	25:24 26:4,10
49:17 54:11	50:14	48:7	18:8 25:5	26:12,15,18
administrative	ahead 10:18,19	amicus 17:15	36:17,20 44:11	27:4 40:12
3:14 19:5,18	28:4	29:18,19,20	52:15	41:9 43:14
20:18 25:18	aimed 4:12	amount 11:3	arises 3:12	44:8,16 45:20
administrator	air 3:25 4:14 5:1	amounts 5:1	Arizona 17:15	47:8,14,16
	<u>l</u>	<u> </u>	<u>l</u>	<u> </u>

	1	1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
48:10,14 51:15	10:11 12:8	11:13 12:25	21:1 40:3	44:4
52:1,4,9 53:8	21:7	18:2,5 22:14	challenged 7:24	claimed 6:6
authorize 45:14	best 11:16 15:12	22:15 38:12	9:7	claiming 3:23
authorized 20:9	49:7,23	47:11 48:6	challenges 41:5	6:4 10:12
25:11 45:7	big 14:10 15:14	carefully 25:9	challenging 8:14	16:20
51:20 52:7	38:24	cars 6:14 7:2,7,7	chance 32:1	class 31:3,18
automobile 10:2	Blue 16:7	11:5 31:7	chances 32:15	clause 18:9
automobiles	bomb 16:16	case 3:12 6:13	change 4:5 9:13	Clean 3:25 6:18
5:19	borrow 47:22	7:21 8:17,18	9:16 25:13,16	7:19 10:6 15:2
available 38:5	Boston 1:17	9:1,7 13:17	26:8,21 28:9	46:9 49:25
42:3	branch 51:1	14:2,9,13 15:3	29:11 30:7,13	clear 26:1,7,11
aware 36:13	Brand 26:21	15:4,12 16:1	31:3 32:11	26:20 33:3
38:4 51:15	breadth 17:24	17:12 24:21	37:23 38:2	34:4 39:10
A-82 19:21	Breyer 27:1,23	26:21,25 31:4	45:3,6,12 46:3	42:21 47:13
A-85 21:5	28:1,15,24	31:17,19 32:10	46:24 47:25	51:3
a.m 1:14 3:2	31:20 32:13	32:19,21 33:24	49:18 52:9	climate 4:5 9:13
56:13	38:10 39:16	33:24 41:14	54:10	24:24 25:13,16
	40:8 48:24	42:3 43:17	changes 9:17	26:8 28:8
<u>B</u>	49:11,20 50:17	44:4 46:13	Chevron 26:24	29:11 30:7,13
back 19:21,21	53:3,10	47:20,22 48:23	Chief 3:3,8 7:22	30:14,15 31:3
20:5,14 21:24	brief 14:9 17:15	49:2 52:18	8:11 9:14 10:1	32:11 37:23
27:21 30:24	29:18,20 42:10	53:5 56:12,13	10:7 12:3,12	38:2 45:2,5,12
46:5 52:18	43:8	cases 10:8 15:6	13:16,23 14:1	46:3,24 47:25
53:6,15	briefs 29:19	15:25 16:10	14:8 18:7,22	49:17 51:3
background	broad 56:7,9	17:16 33:3	19:7 21:4,16	52:9 54:10
19:5,18 20:17	broader 7:23	44:2	25:2,7 31:9	56:9
bad 20:2 28:22	8:4	cataclysm 5:4,6	40:2,22 44:5	closest 51:22
Ballunas 29:19	brought 44:4	categorically	44:10 52:12	cloud 30:16 32:5
based 3:15 4:7	Brown 41:14	40:1	54:8,14 56:11	coal 8:2,3 38:21
16:24 18:17	44:11 45:4	causation 35:2	Chief's 37:15	coastal 36:16,18
19:4 39:11	46:12 47:19	36:3 40:25	child 39:3	coastline 10:16
basic 6:18 30:19	48:17,22	cause 13:6 17:22	China 12:7	12:13,17 13:2
basis 17:10	burden 31:16	18:10 24:6,11	choice 20:2	13:9 14:11
34:14 42:7	36:11	24:13	cigarettes 46:16	15:20 33:9
48:11 50:22,23	burial 16:4	caused 11:3	Circuit 7:20	35:1,24,25
bear 31:16	<u> </u>	causes 24:4	15:4 43:16	36:2 37:18
bearing 36:4		37:23 45:17	circulation	Cod 38:16
behalf 1:17,20	C 1:18 2:1,6 3:1	54:9	30:16	collective 50:9
2:4,7,10 3:7	call 22:20	causing 12:20	circumstances	come 18:21,24
25:6 52:16 behold 38:16	cancer 31:25 32:1	certain 17:21,22	11:17	26:15 31:23
believe 8:16		certainly 15:23	cite 17:14	42:9
9:21 13:4 14:3	capacity 14:6 Cape 38:16	28:12 29:5	cites 17:16	comes 20:7
36:25 54:11	capricious 21:1	30:8 33:17	citizen 13:24	23:11 32:17
55:25	capricious 21.1 car 8:1 31:22	51:15 56:8	city 32:6	51:22
believed 48:13	car 8.1 31.22 carbon 5:18 6:7	certainty 54:20	claim 16:24	comfort 34:16
benefit 7:23	6:10 7:1,9,15	challenge 5:24	22:19 24:23	coming 31:22
Denent 1.23	0.10 /.1,7,13	8:5,8 10:10	27:13 32:8	command 18:14

	Ī		l	I
commentators	conjecture 5:14	contribution	12:18	defining 24:12
15:24	9:19,19	10:6,11 11:11	current 5:1	definition 18:3
common 24:8,16	connection	12:6	26:17 54:4	46:15 56:6
49:14	30:22 31:1	contributors	currently 7:2,7	degree 26:19
complain 17:8	consensus 5:15	10:2	7:19,20	35:25 36:8,8
completely 37:7	5:15	control 48:12		36:17,18
complex 38:4	consequence	cooperate 27:10	<u>D</u>	delay 44:3
comply 15:2	16:13	38:10	D 3:1	delayed 43:24
compounds	consider 3:22	cooperation	damage 16:9	demonstrate
24:19	27:8 41:2	27:18 51:5	37:23,24	14:13
comprehensive	consideration	Copper 15:10	danger 41:18	demonstrating
17:24	21:2 28:10	Corporation	day 18:23 19:2	32:20
comprehensiv	considerations	43:17	days 21:24	Department
24:12	4:8 27:11,14	correct 17:3	de 15:18	1:19
compromise	28:3,11,25	18:15 41:10	deadline 42:17	depended 28:1
40:23	29:6 30:17	correlation 33:8	deadlines 43:9	dependent 17:1
computer 39:5	53:7 56:2	34:25 35:6,8	deal 4:1 10:25	depends 12:14
concede 45:8	considered 26:2	36:1	19:8,9,10 23:5	27:24 28:5
concern 52:3	considering	Cosmetic 46:15	27:3,5 47:17	depletion 50:11
concerned 42:25	25:9	Council 29:10	49:7 50:5	50:13 51:2
conclude 9:12	consistent 10:8	29:23	dealing 50:10	Deputy 1:18
30:9 46:23	consists 27:2	counsel 56:11	debatable 26:16	described 29:16
concluded 25:11	constant 12:4	countries 27:9	debate 30:7	designed 25:16
45:6 46:2	constitute 3:15	27:18 34:2	decide 8:25 9:1 27:11 28:17	determination
48:19 49:18	6:1	37:5 39:14,18		30:11
concludes 55:4	Constitution	39:20	38:13,15 decided 25:24	determine 41:22
55:10	40:17	course 4:16	decision 3:15	43:19 49:23
conclusion 3:20	constitutional	court 1:1,13 3:9	8:7,12 20:9	determined 10:5
27:10 47:10,12	40:12	4:4 9:8 13:17	25:21,22 28:4	22:3,6
47:20 48:17	constrain 43:7	13:21 15:4,6,7	39:8 40:3	determines
51:19,24 52:6	constrained	17:16 21:24,24	50:20	24:11
concurring	20:15	25:8 26:20	decisional 26:2	developed 21:8
40:18	constraint 20:6 constraints 43:9	28:19,20 29:20 30:11 31:23	29:4 43:3	development 12:7
confront 42:11 Congress 17:1		34:17 36:12	decisions 8:14	devoted 27:25
	consulting 49:21 contest 19:20	39:10,14 40:18	declaration 34:4	difference 16:19
18:1,5 20:3,7,8 24:13 25:11	contest 19.20 contested 35:7	41:1,14 42:9	34:6	21:16 31:19
39:23 40:9,12	contested 33.7	45:3 46:13	declarations	38:25 47:3
40:20,24 42:22	contexts 10:4	47:4 48:22	33:25	differences
43:6,9 45:1,13	continuously	courts 42:8	decline 55:6,22	47:19
45:19 46:4,8	5:7	Court's 33:2	declined 3:21	different 10:13
46:23 47:5,22	contrary 9:11	cover 30:16	deductions 8:21	19:25 20:20
48:5,8,13 49:1	54:3 56:3	CO2 32:17 40:9	Defenders 39:8	21:9,21 22:18
49:3,12 51:2,5	contribute	48:8 50:5	40:19	26:9 27:7,17
51:7,13,14,20	18:10 30:20	create 13:9 41:4	deference 26:24	32:10 36:17
51:25 52:7	contributing	creates 24:18	30:10 41:1	38:19 47:15
conjectural 5:9	22:23	cumulative	define 17:23	51:14 52:2
Jong Country				J 1.11 . J 2.2
	l	l	l ————————————————————————————————————	I

		1	I	<u> </u>
difficult 18:18	E 2:1 3:1,1	3:22 22:20	establishing	explanation
41:4	easily 9:23	endangerment	7:23 21:5 35:7	18:18
dioxide 5:18 6:7	easy 11:2	4:2 19:4 22:5,9	et 1:3,7 17:15	express 23:6
7:1,9,15 11:13	economic 12:6	24:11,13 26:7	ethanol 38:13	expressly 18:1
12:25 18:2,5	economy 48:2,2	43:18,20 54:21	ethyl 21:24	extent 5:8 11:2
22:14,16 24:3	effect 16:12	55:1,17	43:16	30:13 54:9
47:11 48:6	34:18,21 35:1	endangers 22:16	evaluating 22:2	extraordinarily
direct 8:7 13:20	37:10 38:7	23:12	event 8:19	38:4
37:17 48:3	44:20	endeavor 51:21	evidence 9:11	extremely 56:7
directed 51:8	effects 24:2,24	engaged 41:13	17:25 37:4	56:9
disagree 19:23	efforts 51:6	ensuing 37:22	42:24	
21:9 23:17	either 35:2 42:5	37:23	exactly 40:6,7	F
disagreed 21:3	either/or 36:5	entered 23:9	53:9,11	face 12:11,19
disapproved	electricity 38:21	entirely 42:21	example 4:12	54:4,22
9:19	elephants 47:23	entitled 19:25	11:23 13:7,11	faces 10:22
disarmed 16:21	eliminate 12:19	26:23 30:9	13:21 14:24	fact 3:19 4:11
disavowed 5:25	embark 25:11	environmental	18:1 24:2	6:22 7:17 8:12
disclaimed 6:9	45:7 51:21	1:6 3:5 25:10	26:20 38:11	9:15 14:4
discrete 16:24	emission 4:6	EPA 3:14,21,25	40:18,21 46:8	19:20 23:18
discretion 4:1	11:14 31:7	4:5,6 5:24 7:14	51:3	24:22 27:3
19:12 22:1	emissions 3:18	7:17 9:12 10:4	examples 43:8	32:15 43:3
41:22,25 43:7	5:18 6:1,7 7:3	17:2,19 18:9	executive 50:25	53:1 54:25
43:10,19 44:14	8:21 10:2	18:25 19:3	exercise 18:8	factors 28:18,19
50:24	11:11 12:10,15	20:3,5,15,18	25:14,23 26:4	45:3
dispersed 10:12	12:18,20 19:1	20:19 21:6,23	26:12 27:11	facts 32:20
displace 12:8	21:6,18 25:12	22:1,3 24:8,11	43:7,10 44:14	34:16
distinct 14:2	31:2,4,5,8,13	26:1,7,15 27:2	47:14 51:25	fails 3:20 24:16
document 26:2	34:1,3,4,18	29:4,9 32:4	53:7	fair 29:4,20
29:4,21,22	37:2,4 38:7	39:20 40:11	exercised 52:10	37:24,25
43:3	45:2,21 48:1,4	44:6,11 49:7	exercising 16:23	fall 46:16
doing 49:22	48:15,20 52:8	50:19,22 51:4	19:13	fallback 3:21
dollars 11:25	54:12 56:4	51:15 52:18	existing 15:2	famous 16:1
domestic 12:10	emit 17:20 24:10	53:19 55:4	54:3	far 10:19 15:24
domestically	emitted 5:10	EPA's 3:17 7:24	expand 4:15,16	16:9 20:13
51:8	16:15 23:8	18:17 24:15	expect 35:23	30:3
draw 51:25	emphasize 13:6	25:21	53:17	far-reaching
drug 46:15,15	emphasized	erosion 36:16	expenditure	48:14
46:17	54:4	errors 3:16	10:10	favor 49:4
dumping 39:18	emphasizes	especially 9:6	experience	FDA 49:2
duty 41:19	54:21	ESQ 1:16,18 2:3	50:10 51:1	feasible 7:2
42:12,23 43:1	enacted 46:8	2:6,9	expert 25:10	features 49:15
43:4,18	encompassed	establish 4:13	38:1 50:18	Federal 16:22
dying 32:1	3:24	8:4 31:17	explain 24:21	16:23 17:7
D.C 1:9,19 7:20	endanger 3:19	39:11 40:16	54:23	feedbacks 30:15
15:4 43:16	18:11 23:13,14	41:5	explained 19:24	feet 13:10
	55:5	established 13:5	54:5	fewer 34:17
E	endangering	30:23	explains 43:4	figure 7:10
		-	F	_
	<u> </u>	I	I	l ————————————————————————————————————

fill 22:15	47:20 48:18	10:10 34:8	31:24 35:15	H
find 29:12 30:3	fundamentally	44:18 46:14,16	37:17 38:19,20	half 6:23 13:1
finding 26:8	32:10 48:1	46:19	38:20 46:25	
43:19,20	fuse 16:16	George 16:7	55:22	35:22,24 36:9 37:18,19
findings 40:25	future 5:9 13:15	Georgetown	gold 29:25	· · ·
fine 36:23	35:11	16:6	good 4:1 29:14	happen 13:15 20:14 53:17
first 3:4 7:4 11:1		Georgia 15:10	38:14 46:8	
14:14,23 18:22	G	Ginsburg 7:12	50:18	happens 12:14 happy 52:20,21
19:10 20:7	G 3:1 25:5	16:18 20:4	goodness 53:16	hard 4:18 53:19
23:25 25:21	Garre 1:18 2:6	25:20 26:14	government	harder 15:1
39:23 40:15	25:4,5,7,20,25	47:2,9,15	9:15 16:23,23	harm 4:21,22,23
48:7 55:24	26:19 27:23	give 27:6 30:11	49:22	5:6,6 6:4,6,21
five 6:23 27:5,8	28:5,23 29:3	33:7 41:1	governments	6:22 10:21
fleet 11:21	29:17 30:4,21	45:19,23 50:3	9:17,22	11:3 12:10,10
fleets 6:19	31:15 32:9,18	52:4	government's	12:12,19,20,21
focus 5:8	33:2,12,16,22	given 11:22	41:7	13:14,21 14:4
focused 11:4	34:10,13,22	16:22 52:19	grant 36:24	16:15,17 17:22
focusing 47:16	35:4,13 36:11	gives 17:1	47:18	21:17 23:18,19
follow 9:22	36:19,23 37:11	giving 48:9	granted 33:19	24:4,6 32:24
18:18 34:2	37:25 39:7,23	global 6:2 8:21	granting 33:4	harmed 4:21 6:6
following 8:2	40:6,14,24	8:25 9:3 11:13	grants 36:12	harmful 24:19
28:17 49:10	41:11,21 42:1	11:15 21:20	greater 12:5	harms 4:11 5:8
Food 46:15	42:15 43:2,15	22:23 23:5,23	32:23,24	9:10 11:8,22
foot 13:9	44:1,9,12,24	23:25 25:13,15	green 32:5	12:18 24:15
footnote 43:17	45:10,18 46:1	26:8 28:8	greenhouse 4:14	33:5 44:19
footnotes 43:8	46:7,20 47:9	29:10 30:7,13	5:1 7:25 8:8	health 3:19,23
foreign 27:17	47:18 49:9,12	30:20 31:2,5	12:6,15 14:25	,
50:6,19,21	49:25 50:8,23	32:11,11 36:7	25:12 30:19	18:12 22:17,20
56:2,4	51:10,17 52:5	36:8,15,16,18	31:1,3,5,18,21	23:12,13,14 44:20 45:9
Forest 16:7	52:13	38:2,8 41:4	34:1,3,18 35:8	
form 22:8 54:18	Garre's 44:18	45:2,5,11 46:3	37:4,21 38:6	55:5
forms 49:24	gas 25:12 31:2,4	46:24 47:25	45:2,21 46:25	hear 3:3
forth 41:19	31:5,21 33:9	49:4,14,17	47:25 48:3,15	heavy 39:18
42:25	34:1,3,25 36:1	50:15 51:3,9	48:20 49:19	held 17:13 28:19 28:21
found 13:22	37:4 38:6 45:2	52:8 53:1	52:8	
15:4 44:18	45:21 47:25	globe 12:14	GREGORY	help 8:15 hide 47:23
45:11	48:3,15,20	go 6:3 9:8 28:4	1:18 2:6 25:5	
four 3:18 17:24	52:8	29:5 30:24	grounded 33:23	high 16:4
27:14	gases 4:14 5:1	38:17,19,21	33:24	hiking 16:6
fraction 11:24	5:10 8:8 11:3	39:1 40:11	grounds 3:15,17	hint 24:20 hints 56:1
37:1,6 38:6	12:6 14:25	50:6 53:15	4:3 18:17	
frame 3:10	30:19 31:18	goes 6:20 20:14	19:16 22:11,13	hit 4:18
framework	35:8,10 37:22	22:22 42:15	26:22	hold 7:13
49:17	46:25 49:19	going 4:15 5:2	group 16:19	holds 7:13
fueled 8:3	gasoline 21:19	9:16 12:4,5,7	guess 19:12	holes 47:23
fundamental	gather 5:14,17	14:25 19:25	28:18,21	Honor 4:9,24
30:25 35:13	general 1:16,18	20:14,16,21	20.10,21	5:5,21 6:8,18
30.20 33.13		20.11,10,21		6:25 7:5,11,16
	<u> </u>	ı	ı	I

			1	1
8:6,16 9:6,21	imminent 4:21	influenced 28:3	J	45:8,15,23
10:13,25 12:9	4:22,23 6:21	inform 40:21	$\overline{\mathbf{JA}}$ 34:5	46:5,18 47:2,9
12:16 13:4,19	6:22 10:22	information	JAMES 1:16 2:3	47:15 48:24
13:25 14:3,14	16:16,17	19:17 21:15	2:9 3:6 52:15	49:11,20 50:2
14:23 15:16	impact 21:20	inherent 41:22		50:17 51:7,11
16:14 17:3,11	30:15 38:16	50:24	judgment 4:4	51:23 52:12,17
17:14,18 18:15	impermissible	initially 50:12	18:10,12,17	52:23 53:3,4
19:3,15 20:17	4:3 18:17 21:2	injured 8:13	19:13 22:8	53:10,12,14,22
21:11,23 22:24	22:11,13	injuries 34:19	25:19 41:17,20	53:24 54:8,14
23:16,24 24:7	implementation	36:13 37:7	41:23,25 42:13	55:4,9,12,19
24:25 25:25	17:8	injury 4:10 8:4	42:23 43:13	56:6,11
26:20 28:23	important 3:12	8:12 9:2,5	44:7 54:19	justified 28:19
29:5,8,17,18	5:23 8:19	10:14,15 32:20	judgments 21:7	justify 28:25
30:4,21,25	11:22 20:19	36:14	judicial 42:2,4	Justify 26.23
31:15 32:9,19	24:18 48:1	insofar 46:8,21	jurisdiction	K
33:2,17 34:13	54:22	insufficient	17:19 39:15	Kadish 39:10
35:4 37:8,12		35:12 53:20	Justice 1:19 3:3	Kennedy 8:23
38:1 39:7,25	importantly 26:6	intend 46:23	3:8 4:20 5:3,13	14:7,18,21
40:7,14,24	imposes 43:18	47:23	5:22 6:3,11,20	15:9 32:22
	-	intended 45:1	7:4,6,12,22	40:18 43:21
41:11,21 44:2	impression 42:22		8:11,23 9:14	Kennedy's 39:9
44:15,24 45:11	-	46:4	10:1,7,18	key 45:19 54:19
45:18 46:21	improper 28:2	interest 21:14	11:10,15 12:3	kill 31:24
49:10 50:8,24	inability 16:25	interested 42:13	12:12,23 13:16	kind 16:8 30:11
51:10,17 52:6	inappropriate	interesting	13:23 14:1,7,8	35:9
52:22,25 53:11	28:11 42:9	29:12	14:17,18,21	kinds 4:11 17:22
53:18,23 54:1	54:11	interfered 16:5	15:9,22 16:18	know 6:5 7:8
54:13,17 55:8	incentive 50:6	49:6 51:16	17:6,12 18:7	10:19 11:6
55:16,24 56:8	incineration	international	18:22 19:7	
56:10	16:2	27:8 49:17	20:4 21:4,16	12:23 15:9,25
horizontal 13:7	include 56:9	50:4,14 51:5	22:12 23:1,4	17:12,24 18:4
13:10	inconsistency	interpretation	23:10,20 25:2	31:24 35:14
huge 21:25	48:18,21,22	3:14 24:8,16	25:7,20 26:14	38:12,13,14
human 5:16	inconsistent	26:23,23 43:3	27:1,23 28:1	49:4 50:5 55:2
hundreds 11:24	49:1	43:5,6	28:15,24 29:12	55:3
	increasing 37:5	interpretive	30:1,18 31:9	knowledge
	independent	46:12	31:20 32:13,22	21:20
ICC 16:4	15:5 17:4	intuitively 37:20	33:6,14,20	knows 43:6
idea 20:2 38:14	24:18 39:12	issue 3:18 6:5	34:7,11,20,23	-L
ignored 54:25	indicated 29:14	19:1,22 25:9	35:5,13,16	
III 40:13,16,23	30:2 43:23	27:1,5,19 28:8	36:11,14,20,23	lack 19:17
41:3	indications 55:1	30:12 31:4,18	37:9,14 38:9	lacked 3:17
illegal 10:10	indirect 48:3	40:20 47:17,24	38:10 39:9,16	lacks 40:12
immediate 16:8	individual 32:15	49:13,15 50:11	40:2,8,18,22	44:16
immediately	32:18	51:1 54:19	41:6,15,24	laid 41:14 43:9
3:11 18:25	individually	issues 30:13,15	42:10,19 43:12	45:4
imminence	29:7	41:1	43:21 44:5,6	Laidlaw 13:22
10:19	infect 25:22		44:10,13,17	13:23
				land 4:19 13:7
	•	•	•	•

	•	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
13:10	48:5 56:4	26:3 28:17	22:12,24 23:6	near 15:18
landowner	looked 38:3	56:14	23:16,24 25:3	nearly 29:15
14:10,15,17	44:25 45:3	mattered 54:3	52:14,15,17,21	48:2
15:13,14,15	46:22 51:18	matters 25:10	52:25 53:9,11	necessarily
large 13:7 14:15	55:1	54:23	53:18,23 54:1	12:13,21 13:5
largely 46:20	looking 10:20	McCracken	54:13,17 55:7	necessary 32:25
Laughter 23:3	14:9 21:5 33:5	34:4	55:11,13,16,24	need 8:25 24:6
52:24	51:18 55:2	mean 5:3 6:4 7:6	56:8	33:21,21 54:4
law 3:14,16,20	lose 12:1,16,17	12:23 18:24	million 38:22	needs 9:8
16:6,19 17:1,7	13:12	19:11 26:6	millions 11:25	negotiations
17:9 18:23	losing 10:16	31:10 32:12	mind 36:4 50:3	50:4
19:6,18 20:18	15:17,20	40:4 47:18	51:14	never 21:15 26:7
38:25	loss 12:13 13:7	53:20	minimis 15:19	41:25 51:16
laws 5:11 16:15	13:10 15:7	meaning 45:12	minted 47:7	54:5
49:5	33:9 35:1,9,11	45:16	minuscule 38:6	new 6:14 7:7,18
lawyer 28:18,22	36:1,9,18	means 5:2 24:20	minutes 52:14	13:11,12 26:22
lead 8:21 19:10	lost 35:25,25	measure 42:4	misstatement	newly 47:6
21:17,18,24	lot 5:13 15:15	43:23	51:24	NHTSA 38:20
48:17	18:23 19:3	measures 7:8	model 8:1	nicotine 46:14
learn 49:16	22:1 48:25	Mellon 15:11	modus 51:14	nonregulatory
leaves 22:22	lots 14:10	members 40:17	moment 37:16	54:6
24:4 44:21	low 30:16	mention 46:11	money 20:16	non-regulatory
left 20:3 30:2	Lujan 39:8	48:6	Montreal 50:15	48:10
legal 3:20 8:5		mentioned	motor 7:13	normally 22:20
legislation 45:5	M	39:25 48:8	11:11 17:20	Norton 43:21
48:25 51:13	magnitude	merely 41:7	18:24 20:1	note 19:20 21:25
legitimate 52:3	47:24	merits 3:10 6:13	24:9	notion 33:25
let's 10:20 18:22	making 18:16	9:9 17:18	mouse 47:23	49:3
35:1,16,17,19	34:24	41:12	move 19:4,12	November 1:10
level 7:25 22:3	mandatory 20:1	metals 39:19	20:19	number 16:20
levels 4:25 21:21	43:4	methane 24:22	moving 18:7	24:22 31:11
life 37:16	margin 15:25	miles 10:16	41:11	
light 25:14	16:10	15:20	municipal 16:2	0
27:11 28:17	marginal 12:8	Milkey 1:16 2:3	16:2	O 2:1 3:1
53:6	Mass 1:17	2:9 3:5,6,8		obligation 40:15
lighting 16:16	Massachusetts	4:24 5:5,20,23	N	obvious 20:6
likelihood 9:4	1:3 3:4 4:18	6:8,17,25 7:5	N 2:1,1 3:1	occasions 10:5
35:2	10:22 11:25	7:11,16 8:6,16	narrow 20:25	occur 5:9 9:10
limited 8:4	13:9	9:6,21 10:3,13	national 29:10	23:18,19
line 12:24 13:5	material 32:17	10:25 11:13,19	29:22,24 48:20	occurring 4:25
little 42:20	materials 38:3	12:9,16 13:4	nations 49:22	9:13 13:14
lo 38:16	mathematical	13:19,25 14:3	50:6	ocean 4:15
long 5:11 47:8	31:10	14:14,20,23	nation's 25:10	30:15
look 10:18,19	mathematically	15:16 16:14,18	48:2	off-road 43:23
20:23 24:24	33:11	17:3,11,14	natural 30:14	oh 53:16
29:20,21 34:14	matter 1:12 3:20	18:15 19:3,15	nature 11:22	omissions 29:14
44:25 46:22	4:13 10:10	20:17 21:11,23	54:20	once 5:10 16:14
		Ī	Ī	Ī

		<u> </u>		
43:18	36:21 38:18	19:22	24:3,12,17,23	preferred 54:20
ongoing 5:6	39:2 44:14	Petitioner 4:10	32:5 44:20	prejudged 24:13
13:15 25:16	48:1 50:25	petitioners 1:4	45:9 47:11	premise 6:18
operandi 51:14	particular 7:25	1:17 2:4,10 3:7	55:5	prescribe 18:9
opinion 20:20	8:1 10:15 11:8	28:9 31:16	pollutants 8:9	present 43:10
27:2 28:15,16	19:13 27:1,19	44:4 52:16	17:21,22,25	President 27:7
39:9 40:19	31:3,14 40:4	phenomenon	18:4,24 19:2	27:16
47:5 52:19	particularized	30:6 31:2	24:5,14 51:16	presumably
opinions 15:23	10:14,21 13:21	32:11 41:4	polluted 39:19	8:13 19:7
Oppenheimer	particularly	phrase 45:24,25	polluting 23:13	31:12
13:11	4:18 30:10	47:22	23:14	presume 50:2
opposed 35:6	54:24	physics 4:13	pollution 16:2,5	pretend 38:1
opposing 49:3	parts 30:2	5:11 16:15	18:4,6,6,11	pretty 49:1
options 54:10	pass 4:4	37:16	22:19 23:21,22	prevent 24:19
oral 1:12 2:2,5	pass 4.4	pieces 51:12	23:25 24:1	36:15
3:6 25:5	18:23 49:5,12	pinpoint 33:10	44:19 45:12,14	preventing 4:12
Orange 31:21	passes 40:9	34:25	45:16,25 46:2	preventing 4.12 prevents 49:21
31:23,24 32:2	pending 7:21	places 12:7	46:3,24 47:1	49:22
32:5	pending 7.21 people 8:13	plain 3:16	48:12	
order 4:5 9:1	26:17 42:24	-		pre-Massachu 15:11
31:17 36:3	44:2	plaintiff 40:15 41:9	pornography 39:4,5	
		* *		principle 3:17 17:17 19:8
ordinary 3:13	perceived 9:4	plaintiffs 25:17 32:19	portion 11:6,18	54:5
ought 30:5	percent 5:18,20		position 3:21	
outcome 7:21	5:22 6:1,15,22	plant 8:3	7:12 26:10,11	principles 3:13
outset 8:23	7:1,9 10:2,5	plants 7:14,15	32:23 41:7,8	19:5,18 20:18
46:13	11:4,5,7,10,20	38:13	42:14 44:15	probability
overall 11:3	12:25 13:1,8	plays 5:7	46:18,21 47:6	32:24
13:1	31:4,12,12	please 3:9 25:8	47:7,7	probably 50:19
overarching	32:16,16 34:11	plenary 24:9	positions 26:21	problem 8:20
18:18	34:17 35:20,20	point 5:23 6:9	possesses 4:1	11:6 15:17
override 25:18	35:22,24 36:9	6:14 8:19	possibly 20:8	19:20 20:22
41:3	37:2,3,18,19	18:19 21:1	potential 54:10	22:13 24:4
owned 14:10	37:19 38:18	22:10 24:2	power 7:13,15	27:9 32:14,22
15:15	48:2	33:7,8,23 36:7	8:3 27:12	49:7 50:2,9,16
ozone 15:1	percentage 8:20	39:7 42:5,5	38:12	51:11 53:1,2
39:17 50:11,13	31:13 33:8	43:7,16 44:18	powered 8:3	problems 15:1
51:2	perfectly 22:5	pointed 29:9	precise 35:6	proceed 55:21
P	performance	46:1 48:22	precisely 22:13	produce 10:24
	7:18	pointing 55:1	43:17 50:12	produced 29:22
P 3:1	period 35:22	policy 3:12,23	precluded 44:11	produces 44:21
page 2:2 19:21	permissible 4:7	20:1,2 21:3	predecessors	program 38:21
34:5	30:16	27:7,17 56:2	26:17	projected 12:1
pages 27:3,3,24	person 15:18	pollutant 17:20	predicted 5:4	projects 13:12
52:19	32:7 39:1	17:23 18:2	predictions	proper 27:15
paragraph 34:5	persuasive	19:14 22:14,15	39:11	50:21,23 53:6
parks 11:25	44:18	22:16,17,18,21	preempted 17:9	properly 27:18
part 11:1 27:10	petition 4:7 7:17	23:8,11,12	preempts 17:7	property 10:17

14:5 15:8,17 25:18 REBUTTAL 39:3,20,21 16:19 proposition 20:19 32:23 recognized 15:7 43:14 45:1,14 36:12 Protection 1:7 R 11:20 48:15,19 50:22 require 21:6 35:5 51:3 36:52:15 53:6 55:6,9,18 40:23 41:3
15:19 quite 52:2 2:8 52:15 40:4 41:17 requested 33:4 36:12 record 7:1 10:21 48:15,19 50:22 reduire 21:6 32:4 reduire ments 32:4 requirements 33:4 reduirements 34:14 7:15
proposition quotations 30:2 recognized 15:7 43:14 45:1,14 36:12 30:19 32:23 R record 7:1 10:21 46:23 47:14 require 21:6 R 1:16 2:3,9 3:1 redetermine 51:8 54:12 requirements
30:19 32:23 Rotection 1:7 3:5 51:3 Rotection 1:7 R
Protection 1:7 R 11:20 48:15,19 50:22 32:4 3:5 51:3 redetermine 51:8 54:12 requirements
3:5 51:3 R 1:16 2:3,9 3:1 redetermine 51:8 54:12 requirements
1 of the state of
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
provide 20:18 rail 16:4 redress 33:4 regulated 21:23 48:12
25:17 34:16
48:11 44:19,21 45:17 redressibility regulates 34:1 18:9 23:18
provided 15:5 46:6,7,10 12:22 32:21 regulating 16:21 39:18
26:22 42:6
provides 17:4,19 raising 8:5 36:3,4 55:5 29:23,23,23,
providing 24:20 rate 50:11 reduce 7:8 12:10 regulation 8:1 49:15
provision 8:9 rates 16:4 12:19,21 21:8 20:2 25:12 reserve 25:1
13:24 ratio 12:24 36:7,8,17,18 31:18 34:17 resources 20:6
prudently 51:19 reached 47:10 50:5 37:6 38:6,21 20:11,15,22
public 3:19,22 47:12,21 50:14 reduced 6:23 43:22 49:2,19 respect 7:15
18:11 55:5 50:16 51:20 35:21 49:24 52:8 12:14 19:13
56:7 reducing 12:9 55:10 21:20 26:8
purported 30:3 reaction 50:10 12:18 regulations 27:13 29:7
purpose 52:1 read 27:2 42:10 reduction 6:15 10:24 11:17 34:2 40:25
purposes 51:8 reading 29:4,6 7:1 11:16 12:1 19:1 39:17 41:12 46:7
put 9:11 18:16 42:19,21 12:24 33:8 regulatory 3:24 49:10
22:9 31:6 40:9 real 8:21 41:18 34:25 35:10,11 8:9 16:22 respectfully
42:16 really 15:24 37:1,18,19,21 18:20 19:23 22:24 23:16
putting 37:2 16:9 35:7 37:22 21:10 45:7,20 53:18 54:1
42:11 53:17 reductions 51:21 54:7 Respondents
Q realm 51:6 10:23 11:23 Rejecting 20:1 1:20 2:7 25:6
qualify 45:22 reason 20:6 reference 41:17 relatively 8:20 response 27:2
quality 48:21 23:13,14 25:18 51:12 relevant 27:19 44:22
question 8:18 27:6 28:1,13 referred 16:9 relied 21:2 responsibilities
11:1 14:8 32:10 34:21 18:2 22:11 34:15 15:2
15:14 26:15 35:14,23 36:25 referring 29:17 relief 33:4 36:12 responsibility
30:24,25 31:10 50:18 52:20 50:1 relies 9:12 16:22
36:4,5 41:16 55:23 refusal 7:25 rely 19:16,17,18 responsibly
42:2,11,16 reasonable 22:4 refuse 50:22 relying 9:23,24 51:19
44:6 45:1,21 26:22 32:25 regard 19:8 remain 12:4 rest 4:2 35:14,
46:12 47:16 35:10,18,21 regardless 12:11 remaining 27:7 35:17 37:3
52:3,5 53:24 37:10,20 43:6 18:20 52:14 50:20
questioning reasonably regular 20:21 remediable 6:21 restricted 17:2
41:7
questions 24:25 reasoned 46:22 regularly 6:19 report 29:10,13 35:11
44:13 reasons 27:21 regulate 7:18 30:21 results 8:22
quickly 3:11 28:6,6,13 42:6 9:16 16:25 reporting 51:5 review 42:2,4
17:19 50:25 19:25 26:10 reports 9:12 reviewable 3:1
quintessential reassuring 8:24 32:4 38:11 representing Ridge 16:7

right 6:5,7,14	30:21 38:25	sentences 19:21	situation 50:12	spitting 9:18
11:12 12:5	scale 8:20	separate 44:1	six 31:4 49:12	sprays 31:22
20:4 27:21	Scalia 4:20 5:3	46:9 49:13	sizeable 11:6	spring 5:7
31:10 40:5,6,7	5:13,22 6:3,11	sequester 38:12	slope 13:8	stand 17:17
40:10 41:2	6:20 7:4,6	serious 19:9	small 8:20 10:12	standard 3:16
43:15 44:14	12:23 14:17	49:2	11:17,22,24	7:18,24 19:4
50:8	15:22 17:6,12	seriously 41:2	13:6 14:17	54:21
rigid 13:3	22:12 23:1,4	seriousness	15:13,15 32:15	standards 4:6
rise 4:15,16,17	23:10,20 34:7	19:20	smaller 32:24	18:9 29:25
13:9	34:11 44:17	set 4:5	Solicitor 1:18	49:23
rises 13:6	45:8,15,23	seven 5:17 38:23	44:18	standing 3:11
rising 10:17	46:5,18 50:2	38:24	solution 50:15	4:10,20 6:5,12
risk 32:24	52:17,23 53:4	share 49:14	53:2	6:13 8:15 9:2,3
road 7:9 31:6	53:12,14,22,24	shines 18:19	somewhat 14:2	9:24 10:8,9
roads 7:7	scheme 3:24	short 17:11	sooner 19:9	13:17,20 14:11
ROBERTS 3:3	science 4:5 38:4	show 4:22 8:12	sorry 55:13	14:12,19,24
7:22 8:11 9:14	Sciences 29:24	9:3,5,23 10:21	sort 9:18,19	15:5,18,21,25
10:1,7 12:3,12	scientific 21:6	11:2 31:16	44:1	16:10 17:5,7
13:16,23 14:1	21:13,17,19	32:20 33:3	sound 42:6	17:10 30:24
18:7,22 19:7	25:15 28:7	35:6 36:3,6,12	sounds 29:1	31:17 32:4,8
21:4,16 25:2	29:8 30:12	36:22,24 37:5	source 7:18 15:5	33:3,19 34:15
31:9 40:2,22	53:16,20	37:9,11	17:5 48:3	39:11,22 40:3
44:5,10 52:12	scientist 13:3	showed 4:10 9:9	sources 5:25	40:16,21 41:5
54:8,14 56:11	23:2	31:1	6:10 11:5	41:8
role 42:8 51:4	scientists 29:13	showing 14:4	51:18	start 38:12
room 19:4 20:19	31:25	37:13,14	Souter 33:6,14	starts 9:15
22:15	scrap 16:1	shown 4:25 6:25	33:20 34:20,23	state 13:11
rulemaking 4:7	sea 4:25 39:19	9:22 10:15	35:5,13,16	14:12,21 15:7
7:17	39:19	11:9,19 15:19	36:11,14,20,23	17:8,9,15
ruling 4:2 5:24	seas 4:16,16	34:15 35:2	37:9,14 38:9	statement 8:24
running 27:17	10:17	shows 37:4	51:7,11,23	21:12
	secondly 40:17	side 29:19	sovereign 10:16	states 1:1,13
<u>S</u>	section 3:25	significance	13:13 14:6	5:19 10:16
s 2:1 3:1 42:11	7:19 17:19	54:10	15:7	11:12 14:4
satisfies 24:8	18:3 19:24	significant 10:6	sovereignty	16:20,25 33:25
satisfy 12:22	41:16 43:4,11	11:23 12:2	16:25	37:1 55:20
save 11:24 13:1	48:7,11 55:7	47:3	special 14:12,19	stature 50:1
saved 38:16	sections 56:3	significantly	14:24	status 21:17,19
saying 17:4 21:9	seeing 21:14	49:6	specific 8:5	21:19
23:24 24:1	selective 30:1	similar 48:21	13:24 32:20	statute 4:11
28:20 33:6,9	send 27:20	similarly 7:13	33:21,22 34:16	18:25 21:3
33:12,16,17	52:18 53:5	11:8	45:5 56:3	22:9 23:7 40:9
34:24 39:2,22	sense 3:24 8:7	simple 32:10	specifically	40:10 41:16
39:25 40:8,12	9:23 14:5	37:16	39:24 40:20	42:16,20,22
40:14 47:3	16:16 24:8,16	simply 4:6 9:4	49:13	43:18 44:7,9
53:12,19 54:15	26:1 36:15	10:11 20:2	spend 20:11,16	45:4,13,16,24
says 20:15 27:10	sentence 53:21	21:3 35:6	20:22	46:2 48:6,16
	l		<u> </u>	<u> </u>

	_	_	_	
49:21 51:22	suddenly 5:6	technical 21:7	51:17,21 52:6	41:11,12 51:10
52:4 56:1,3	sue 40:11	technology 9:16	52:23 53:15,19	truth 23:5
statutes 49:13	suffering 10:23	9:17	54:15	trying 36:21
statutory 3:13	suffice 52:20	tell 23:5 33:20	third 19:21	39:3 49:7
4:2 18:13 27:4	sufficient 13:22	temperatures	thought 4:20	51:24
stay 5:11	29:2 35:2	4:15	16:24 17:2	turn 3:11 4:9
stayed 7:20	suggest 38:5	Tennessee 15:10	22:17 42:22	6:19 11:21
step 42:7	40:19 51:13	term 24:12,17	44:10 53:4,5	17:18 41:16
steps 50:13	suggested 24:17	24:20 46:1,16	55:17	turned 7:17
Stevens 29:12	suggestion	46:19	thousand 32:3	turns 3:13 39:4
30:1,18 41:6	35:21 37:15	terms 8:18 11:8	thousands 13:13	Twenty 27:3
41:15,24 42:10	suit 9:22 13:24	15:5 46:14	threat 10:22	two 3:15 12:25
42:19 43:12	34:2	territory 10:17	threats 19:9	19:21 21:21
44:6,13	sulfur 24:3	13:13	three 27:14	27:8 35:22,24
stop 36:6,16,16	support 13:17	test 4:2 24:16,18	28:17	36:9 37:17,18
straight 12:24	suppose 14:10	text 42:20 45:24	threshold 15:19	39:24 40:15
13:5	15:14 20:12	Thank 5:22 25:2	44:15	49:14,16 50:25
straightforward	31:20,21,21	25:7 52:11,12	time 5:8,11	51:2 52:19
15:21	35:10,23 37:10	56:10,11	11:21 20:13	two-and-a-half
strange 48:13	37:21 38:10,11	thing 23:22 30:5	22:1,9 23:21	11:20 12:25
stratosphere	supposed 56:4	35:19 37:13	25:1,14 26:5	13:1
22:22,25	Supreme 1:1,13	38:2 39:3	26:12 35:22	type 41:13
stratospheric	15:6	46:11 48:13	38:23 48:7	types 17:21
16:12 22:18	sure 15:22 22:14	things 20:11	53:19	
50:11,13 51:2	surprised 13:3	27:15 38:15,22	tiny 37:1,6	U
street 31:22	surrounding	38:24 40:15	title 46:9	ultimate 28:3
stressed 47:4	25:15 28:8	55:10,11,21	today 3:4 21:21	ultimately 7:6
strikes 9:18	30:6,12,13,14	think 7:8 8:6 9:8	39:13	9:8
54:14	system 48:21	14:4,24 15:16	told 23:2	uncertain 30:8
strongest 13:17		15:20,22 20:10	total 5:18 11:10	uncertainties
14:9	T	20:19 23:12	11:11	25:17
students 16:5,6	T 2:1,1	25:25 26:1,13	toto 31:2	uncertainty
16:20	take 5:11 6:15	26:24 27:6,23	traceability 11:1	21:8,13,22,25
studies 21:7	6:17 16:15,17	28:5,11,12	11:2 32:21	22:2,4,7 25:15
25:16 38:5	26:14 27:15	29:1,3,20 30:4	traceable 10:23	28:8 29:8,15
stuff 19:11	29:9 30:10,17	30:7,9,23	traditional 15:8	30:3,6,12,18
subject 4:19	32:23 41:8	31:15,24 32:9	transported	53:16,20 54:3
submitted 56:12	42:7 56:2	32:22 34:7,14	16:3	54:5,15,18,22
56:14	taken 28:18	35:7,18,21	tried 37:12	54:23
subsequent	takes 11:21	36:19 37:25	39:20,21	uncontested
25:22	talked 9:15	39:5 42:1,4,15	troposphere	4:12 9:9 14:25
subsidence 4:19	talking 6:4	42:16 43:1,5	22:25 23:1,23	understand 6:11
substances 3:18	16:10 27:5	43:15 44:7,24	troubling 54:25	6:20 17:6 41:6
3:22 17:24	31:7 35:9,20	45:18,20 46:20	truck 32:17	42:11 44:5
24:9,10	40:13 47:24	47:4,13,18	true 13:8 21:12	55:13
substantial	talks 23:20	48:17 49:3,9	26:9,24 31:15	understandable
25:15 28:7	taxpayer 10:8,9	50:17,20,23	34:13 39:12,13	21:14

		l		l
understood 18:5	visit 4:6	we've 46:22 50:8	zero 31:7	4
53:12 54:9		whatsoever 38:7	0	40 7:1,9
undertake 52:7	Walsh 34:6	42:6	05-1120 1:5 3:4	
unequivocally	want 4:6 10:24	Whitman 47:22	03-1120 1.3 3.4	5
30:23	13:6 19:8,9,10	wide 4:10	1	5 10:20
unilateral 49:18	20:21,22,24	widely 10:12	1 10:2,5 32:2,2,2	50 13:10 32:2
unilaterally	23:4 27:22	Wilderness	32:3	52 2:10
55:21	38:1 39:1	43:22	10 10:20 27:4	6
unique 50:9	46:11 49:15,16	Wildlife 39:9	31:12	65:20,226:15
51:1	49:24 51:25	40:19 Williamson	10,000 32:3	6:22 11:5,6,10
United 1:1,13 5:19 11:12	52:17 53:12	41:14 44:11	10:02 1:14 3:2	32:16 34:11,17
33:25 37:1	wanted 53:7	45:4 46:12	103(g) 18:3 48:7	35:20,20,22
55:20	wants 27:16	47:20 48:18,23	11:02 56:13	37:19 38:18
unreasonable	warming 5:15	win 8:17,17	1202 3:25	60 47:4
36:2 38:17,17	8:25 9:3 21:20	words 7:24 23:6	15 31:12 38:15	
44:3	22:23 23:5,23	28:16 40:9	18 43:8	7
unreasonably	23:25 30:20	work 49:16,23	19 43:8	7 32:16
43:24	36:7,8,15,16	worked 29:13	1907 15:9	
use 30:24	36:18 49:4,14	works 13:2	1987 51:4	8
Utah 43:21	51:9	world 4:17 8:21	1990 48:7	85 48:2
U.S 5:25 11:5	washed 24:5	35:14,17 37:3	1998 26:9 47:11	9
12:18 31:6	Washington 1:9	worldwide	1999 26:9	
49:19 50:12	1:19 16:7	34:18	2	95 37:2
	wasn't 13:24	worse 5:2 15:1		99 37:2
V	29:15	55:10,11,21	2 13:8	
v 1:5	waste 16:3	worsened 50:13	20 6:1 11:4,7 200 10:16 15:6	
variability	waters 4:15	wouldn't 6:16	15:20	
30:14	way 26:16 29:5	25:23 26:4	2006 1:10	
variety 4:10	37:15 44:25	28:21,22	2000 1.10 201 41:16	
various 51:12	48:9 55:17	write 28:15,16	201 41.10 202 55:7	
vehicle 6:19	Wednesday	28:16,24	202 (a)(1) 17:19	
20:1	1:10	wrong 36:10	18:9	
vehicles 7:13	welfare 3:19,23	44:22 49:8,9	2020 13:14	
11:11 17:20	55:6 56:7	53:10 55:20	203 43:11	
18:24 21:18	went 20:5 48:9	X	2100 5:7	
24:10 31:6	weren't 19:25	·	22 27:3	
34:1,3 43:23 versus 3:4 15:10	West 15:3 we'll 3:3 38:24	x 1:2,8 26:21	239 34:5	
15:11 39:8,9	we're 4:19 6:4	Y	25 2:7	
43:21	10:20 11:23	year 5:7 7:4	29 1:10	
vertical 13:6	15:18,20 20:15	13:14		
view 41:19,21	24:1 27:5,17	years 6:15,17,24	3	
55:20	33:12,16,17	10:20,20 15:6	3 2:4 52:14	
violation 18:13	35:20 38:19,20	47:4,10	30 32:2 47:10	
18:25	38:20 39:3,25	York 13:11,12	302(g) 23:7	
Virginia 15:3	40:13,14 46:25		32 27:2 34:5	
	ĺ	Z	37 43:17	
	I		<u> </u>	I