

The following letter was written by the Presidents and Executive Directors of twelve environmental organizations to U.S. Senators, telling them of the need to thoroughly analyze the judicial nominations for the U.S. federal courts for the sake of the future of our environment.

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July 18, 2001

Dear Senator:

We are writing to urge you to carefully scrutinize the judicial nominations for the federal courts because the judges appointed to the federal bench over the next few years will dramatically affect the level of public health and environmental protection in this country.

Unfortunately, environmental protections long thought secure are now in jeopardy in the federal courts. A growing number of anti-environmental judges are all too willing to place their own personal policy preferences above the intent of Congress as expressed in our landmark environmental statutes like the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. A few more judges out of this mold will tip the balance in many courts and roll the clock back further on important national environmental protections.

The Senate's role in filling judicial vacancies is one of parity with the President. We believe that, in carrying out that role, the Senate must ensure that judicial nominees are subject to the highest standard of scrutiny and, at a minimum, should be required to demonstrate the qualities of integrity, wisdom, fairness, compassion and judicial temperament. Accordingly, we urge you to vote to confirm only those nominees who:

1. Demonstrate a respect for the policy decisions made by elected representatives to protect public health and our natural resources as reflected in our environmental laws;
2. Demonstrate superior qualifications for the position;
3. Bring an objective, balanced approach to decision-making; and
4. Demonstrate a commitment to protecting the rights of ordinary people and do not improperly elevate the interests of the powerful over those of individual citizens.

We urge you to ensure that each nominee affirmatively establish his or her qualifications for the critical and esteemed position of federal judge. No President has a mandate to appoint to the federal courts judges who are or may be hostile to laws protecting the environment and the public's health. The mere absence of disqualifying evidence in a nominee's record should not constitute sufficient grounds for confirmation.

We strongly urge you to reject any nominee who would place his or her own personal policy preferences above the explicit Congressional mandates for protection embodied in our environmental laws.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director

American Oceans Campaign

**Doug Kendall**

Executive Director  
Community Rights Counsel

**William Snape**

Vice President of Law and Litigation  
Defenders of Wildlife

**Vawter Parker**

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**Brock Evans**

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