Beyond Fairness: Towards a New Strategy of Climate Equity, Justice, and Governance

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Presentation Outline

- Equity and International Climate Change Policy
- Connecting and Communicating Climate Equity and Justice as Policy Priorities
- Climate Equity, Justice, and Governance in 2004 and Beyond
Equity and International Climate Change Policy

Equity considerations have played – and I would argue – are likely to remain central to the ongoing global climate change debate.

The most perverse consequence of climate change from the standpoint of equity is that countries that produce the smallest amounts of greenhouse gas emissions are likely to suffer the worst effects of global warming.
Connecting and Communicating Climate Equity and Justice

Framing Climate Change as a National and Homeland Security Concern

According to the recent threat assessment report commissioned by the Pentagon, climate change is “plausible and would challenge U.S. national security in ways that should be considered immediately” and that global Warming “should be elevated beyond a scientific debate to a U.S. national security concern”
Connecting and Communicating
Climate Equity and Justice

Balancing Private Interests and Public Responsibilities

There is growing consensus that multinational companies need to develop pro-active climate business strategies to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities to their shareholders.

Climate change was selected as the “greatest business challenge” at the 2000 annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.
Connecting and Communicating Climate Equity and Justice

Communicating Complex Environmental Change

We are only now realizing how difficult it is to develop effective strategies to “communicate” let alone “solve” complex environmental issues.

Traditional means of communicating climate science continues to be largely ineffective at reaching the broader public and stimulating personal/institutional change in the U.S.
Climate Equity, Justice, and Governance in 2004 and Beyond

While surveys show that the environment is a relatively low priority issue with the American public (with the possible exception of smart growth/sprawl), polls also show that the vast majority of people consider themselves as ‘environmentalists’ and that the environment is one of the few areas where American voters trust Democrats more than Republicans.
Climate Equity, Justice, and Governance in 2004 and Beyond

There is a battle brewing now – Democrats vs Republicans as well as within various Democratic and Republican camps – over how best to position environmental issues including climate change as political wedge issues. Whomever gets elected or re-elected to the White House in November 2004, the pressure on the U.S. to exhibit climate leadership is likely to remain heated and unabated.