



May 15, 2001

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman  
United States Senate  
SH-706 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-0703

Dear Senator Lieberman:

I am writing on behalf of the National Environmental Trust (NET) to urge your opposition to the nomination of John Graham to head OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. As Ranking Member on the Senate Government Affairs Committee, Mr. Graham's scheduled to come before you at a confirmation hearing on May 16, 2001.

Mr. Graham's approach to regulation includes heavy reliance on business friendly "risk analysis" and "cost-benefit analysis" creating a higher barrier for agencies to overcome in order to issue a rule other than the one which is most "cost effective". Furthermore, Mr. Graham is hostile to the very idea of environmental regulation. In 1996, Graham told political strategists at the Heritage Foundation that "environmental regulation should be depicted as an incredible intervention in the operation of society." He has also stated that support for the regulation of chemicals in our water supply shows the public's affliction with "a syndrome of paranoia and neglect." ("Excessive Reports of Health Risks Examined," *The Patriot Ledger*, Nov. 28, 1996, at 12.)

We are also greatly concerned that Mr. Graham is being considered for this position given the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis' record of producing reports that strongly match the interests of those businesses and trade groups that fund them. For instance a 1999 Risk Analysis Center report found that banning older, highly toxic pesticides would lower agricultural yields and result in an increase in premature childhood deaths, because food production would be hampered. This widely criticized report was funded by the American Farm Bureau Federation, which opposes restrictions on pesticides.

In 1999, Mr. Graham supported the Regulatory Improvement Act of 1999 (S. 746). The late Senator John Chafee, then chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee promised to vehemently oppose this bill due to its omnibus approach to "regulatory reform". Under S. 746, regulations would have been subject to just the type of cost-benefit analysis and risk assessments that Mr. Graham advocates, *across the board*, regardless of the intent of the proposed regulation. This bill was strongly opposed by environmental, consumer, and labor groups.

