

## OUR TURN

# Fight global warming at town meeting

## Presidential hopefuls will notice your vote

By **JOE KEEFE**  
and **EDWARD R. LEACH**  
For the Monitor

The 2007 New Hampshire presidential primary campaign promises to be like no other. For the first time since 1952, neither party is running a sitting president or vice president.

This offers New Hampshire voters a historic opportunity. In 1952, primary politics was not broadcast nationwide, let alone worldwide, as it is today. So, as we approach this primary and its vast field of candidates, we should ask ourselves: How can we best send a message that will be heard, read and seen around the globe? And what ought that message be?

In 1983, New Hampshire citizens, tired of seeing their maples, mountains and lakes poisoned by acid rain, came together in town meetings to pass resolutions calling on the federal government to regulate emissions of sulfur and nitrogen.

The result: Presidential candidates responded to New Hampshire's concerns during our 1984 primary. A market-based solution to reduce sulfur emissions was included in the Clean Air Act, which was later reauthorized by President George H.W. Bush.

This year, New Hampshire citizens are putting resolutions on town meeting warrants and ballots across the state to address another environmental crisis. This one is more monumental and more dire than the acid rain threat. Carbon dioxide pollution is causing significant climate change.

People, not natural influences, are the primary cause of global warming. That means we are the ones who can and must do something about it.

That's why the resolutions being introduced at town meetings across New Hampshire – or at deliberative sessions in some 52 so-called SB2 towns – will ask our citizens to send another clear message to the next president and all elected officials: that we need to do something locally, regionally and nationally about global warming. Fortunately, we already have

many examples of practical solutions. The city of Claremont, working with PSNH, changed its streetlights, dramatically reducing carbon pollution and saving the city and its citizens \$1 million over 10 years.

Keene combats global warming in many ways, saving significant tax dollars from lower energy bills and earning a national reputation in the process.

Portsmouth built a "green" library, ready to save 30 percent to 50 percent in operating costs from energy conservation and reducing CO2 emissions, as well.

All across New Hampshire, individual citizens and municipalities are acting to save money and help reduce the threat of global warming. The state, through programs like the Building Energy Conservation Initiative, is saving millions in tax dollars and reducing tons of CO2 emissions every year.

We have the means, through our town-meeting style of government and our first-in-the-nation primary, to tell the next president and the national media, and indeed the world, that we believe action is needed and progress is possible.

This is the greatest moral and political issue of our time, and right here in New Hampshire, it is going to be moved onto the political agenda.

Addressing climate change this way is not a political issue, except in the best, truest sense: It is the will of the people, without party affiliation. Properly expressed, the people's will can change the political climate to prevent too much change to New Hampshire's natural climate.

As co-chairmen of the nonpartisan Carbon Coalition, we hope that New Hampshire residents will support these resolutions on climate change and that once again we will help bring a nation to action.

(Edward R. "Ted" Leach is a former Republican state representative from Hancock. As a member of the Science, Technology & Energy Committee, he co-sponsored the main amendment that established the first four-pollutant bill in the nation. Joe Keefe is a former Democratic congressional candidate, a resident of Manchester and president and CEO of PAX World Funds in Portsmouth.)