THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

GAYLORD NELSON
COUNSELOR

December 16, 1992

Letters To the Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

Dear Editor:

In commenting on the appointment of Carol Browner to direct the Environmental Protection Agency, your editorial (December 12) observed that, "Few officials face more difficult choices - choices between jobs and environmental protection...."

It is troubling that the Times would perpetuate the specious notion that environmental protection somehow threatens jobs. It is just the other way around - an unprotected environment -- a dirty, degraded environment -- threatens jobs.

All economic activity depends upon the resource base which defines our environment. That base includes air, water, soil, forests, minerals, wetlands, rivers, lakes, oceans, wildlife habitats, and scenic beauty. These are the accumulated capital resources of the nation. Take them away and what you have left is a wasteland.

To use the lingo of the business world, the economy is simply a wholly-owned subsidiary of the environment. When human activities so corrupt and degrade the environment that it collapses into ecological bankruptcy, the economy goes down with it.

The bottom line is that the economy is a subset of the environment. When that is understood, we can move more vigorously in protecting both the environment and jobs.

Sincerely,

Gaylord Nelson

Gaylord Nelson
Counselor to The Wilderness Society

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