I've never been a huge fan of Greenpeace: although I like much of the work they do, it has always seemed to me that they are more interested in headlines than the slogging work it takes to promote sustainability.

But they had a great idea a few days ago: commission the respected private corporate consulting firm ICF, which no one would ever condemn as a bunch of tree-huggers, to analyze the stimulus proposals for greenhouse gas impacts. In particular, analyze the transportation provisions. What they found was frightening:

> Transportation FundingICF analyzed the potential impact of $30 billion slated for highway construction under the provision entitled Modernize Roads, Bridges, Transit and Waterways.
>
> Spending all the stimulus money on new highways would have roughly 10-50 times the annual carbon impact of the same money spent on public transportation (light rail) or the repair of existing roads.
>
> In the worse case scenario, new highways would generate over 250 million tons of net additional CO2 emissions over the lifetime of the road. In contrast, public transit projects of the same capacity would generate only 4 million tons of net carbon dioxide over its lifetime. After construction phase related emissions, public transit saves up to 15 million tons over its lifetime.

Maybe Summers sees no reason to protect transit: after all, transit operators did not defraud the United States government of millions of dollars and violate the basic ethical standards in managing Russia's transition to a "market economy."

Read Greenpeace's fact sheet here.

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