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Press Relations Officer: Martin Ittershagen
PR-staff: Anke Döpke, Dieter Leutert,
Fotini Mavromati, Theresa Pfeifer, Martin Stallmann
Address: Postfach 1406, 06813 Dessau-Roßlau
Telephone: +49 340/21 03-2122, -2827, -2250, -2318, -3927, -2507
E-Mail: pressestelle@uba.de
Internet: www.umweltbundesamt.de



Joint press release with the Federal Ministry for the Environment

Environmental protection gains importance as economic factor

First environmental economic review issued

The Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Environment Agency issued their first environmental economic review today. The joint publication reveals a close correlation between ecology and the economy and the new role played by environmental politics. "The environmental economic review will help to make any debate about the environment and the economy more objective. In light of the great challenges posed by both the economic and climate crises, it is timely that we should now be able to take recourse to a solid and clear basis of decision making in our ecological industrial policy", said Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel.

Environmental protection is gaining importance as an economic factor, with more than 5 percent of German industrial goods production in 2007 accounted for by the environmental protection segment. Germany is a global leader in trade of environmental protection goods. Its effects are also felt on the labour market, a sector which is booming as nearly 1.8 million people earn their bread and butter in this industry-- and the trend is growth.

The report proves that environmental protection makes economic sense, especially with regard to long-term rising energy and materials prices and their impact on the energy and material costs incurred by the manufacturing industry. Meeting environmental requirements is making businesses more innovative and thereby fit for the future. At the same time, environmental protection is a worthwhile investment in terms of the national economy, for it reduces damage to the environment, which in turn must be suffered by society. The prevented environmental damage secured by the Renewable Energies Act, for example, is already on a scale comparable to the additional costs incurred to the national economy. This figure will double in about ten years.

Incredible opportunities will open up for innovative businesses on the markets of the future. For German companies to be a global success in the long term, they must reckon in their business strategy that ecology is the new economy of the 21st century. Environmental politics

today also means innovation policy, investment policy, employment policy, and provident industrial location policy. "The environment and the economy are no contradiction in terms: securing long-term economic success means adapting early on to the new challenges of climate protection and ever scarcer natural resources. It is the job of environmental politics to accelerate this process by promoting environmental innovations and eliminating competitive distortions that place green products and technologies at a disadvantage", commented the President of the Federal Environment Agency, Andreas Troge.

The 2009 environmental economic review is available online at www.bmu.de or www.uba.de.

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