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YOUNG RUSSIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS TO VISIT BERKELEY

Exchange Brings Russian Delegation to Meet with NGOs, Government Officials

Berkeley – Eight Russian environmental leaders will visit Berkeley September 4 -11, 2004, to examine the role of American environmental organizations in molding public policy via government and the media. The delegates are leaders in environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across Russia who are participating in the **Open World Program** at the **Library of Congress**. Open World enables emerging Russian political and civic leaders to work with their U.S. counterparts and experience American-style democracy at the local level.

The delegation coming to Berkeley is in the vanguard of a healthy, young environmental movement that is burgeoning in Russia, thanks in part to the growing strength of NGOs beginning to exert influence over government policy decisions. **The Center for Safe Energy (CSE)**, a Berkeley NGO that focuses on strengthening environmental movements in the countries of the former Soviet Union, is hosting the delegation for Open World.

While in the Bay Area, the Russian delegates will visit a variety of local and national environmental groups, such as Berkeley's **Ecology Center**, the **Sierra Club** and **Earth Island Institute**, to learn how these groups have come to their successes. They will meet with local government representatives, such as **Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates** and **City of Berkeley Energy Officer Neil DeSnoo**, to learn about government environmental programs and collaboration with environmental groups.

They will also visit school projects such as **Martin Luther King Junior Middle School's Edible Schoolyard**, which provides urban public school students with a one-acre organic garden and a kitchen classroom. The delegation will also take part in tours and forums at **UC Berkeley** and **Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory** to learn about

environmental science and education. Homestays with local residents will allow the Russian delegates to experience American family life.

The group features **Yevgeniy Doroshenki**, 22, who serves as chairperson of a prominent environmental NGO in his native city of Tomsk and who recently won the prestigious national award, "Ecologist of the 21st Century."

A summary describing each delegate is attached.

The Center for Safe Energy addresses the most urgent needs of citizens' organizations in the former Soviet Union. Since 1989, the Center has actively formed partnerships with citizen groups from across Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It encourages citizen groups to collaborate and supports the growth of independent NGOs in the former Soviet Union focused on energy issues, linking them for joint projects with like-minded organizations in the U.S. and other countries.

The **Open World Program** is a unique, nonpartisan initiative of the U.S. Congress designed to build mutual understanding between the United States and Russia. Nearly 8,000 Open World participants from all 89 Russian regions have been hosted in all 50 U.S. states since the program's inception in 1999. Delegates range from members of the Russian parliament to mayors, from innovative nonprofit directors to experienced journalists, and from political party activists to regional administrators. Open World has also recently launched pilot programs with Lithuania, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

For more information, please contact **Tamara Kowalski** at CSE at 510-883-1177, or George Felcyn at 202-466-6210. For more information on the Center for Safe Energy, please visit <http://www.centerforsafeenergy.org>, or for information on Open World, please visit <http://www.openworld.gov>.

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