

## SOUTHERN STRATEGY

**OBJECTIVE:** Strengthen, through various constituency groups whose primary source of income is directly or indirectly related to the tobacco industry, the consensus among Southeastern Members of Congress and Senators that raising tobacco taxes to fund health care would devastate the South economically.

**STRATEGY:** Use constituent visits and the print and electronic media to drive home the message that tobacco is too important to the economic vitality of the Southeast to be singled out as the sole means for funding health care reform.

### CONSTITUENT VISITS:

#### 3- PHASE STRATEGY

**1ST PHASE -** During the Congressional recess, which will extend from the end of November until the first of February, work aggressively with State Farm Bureaus to encourage county Farm Bureaus to meet with Members of Congress in their home Districts.

The County Farm Bureaus will then seek from the Member a pledge not to vote for health care reform if tobacco is included in the package.

**2ND PHASE -** Work with various agri-business entities in the Southeast - rural bankers, fertilizer dealers, farmer-cooperatives, farm implement dealers - to educate them as to the direct impact that a big FET increase would have on their business. We'd encourage them to contact their member of Congress during the second phase of the plan, between the first of February and the end of March.

**3RD PHASE -** Encourage the Leadership of various tobacco organizations in the Southeast to personally visit Members of Congress in Washington to discuss the tobacco tax. Timing of the visits would coincide with Committee mark-ups which are likely to occur in Late April or the first of May.

### MEDIA STRATEGY

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA -** Work with farm broadcasters from tobacco producing areas to insure that the tobacco tax fight receives intense scrutiny in the rural Southeast rural press. The aim of this strategy is to position a big

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tobacco tax in such a way, that Southeastern voters would prefer to have no health care reform if a big tobacco tax is the only way to pay for it.

**PRINT MEDIA** - Strategically purchase advertising in various farm publications in such a way as to emphasize the economic devastation which would be wrought from a big tobacco tax.

### **LABOR-RELATED ISSUES**

**1ST PHASE** - Develop a plan to mobilize BCT employees in Richmond, Louisville and Cabbarus on a moment's notice for FET activities. In addition, representatives of BCT locals would meet with Members of Congress from areas surrounding plant communities during the December-January Congressional recess.

**2ND PHASE** - Working with Kraft General Foods, create a strategy where PM-USA hourly employees can educate KGF hourly workers as to the economic consequences to the entire PM family if a huge tobacco tax is enacted. Such a strategy may include visits to KGF plant sites by PM-USA workers and be a part of a larger KGF mobilization activity.

**3RD PHASE** - During time of mark-up or any other time when appropriate, consider a bus trip from Plant communities to Washington, D.C.

**ON-GOING** - Letters from hourly employees will continue on an on-going basis. Currently, these letters say to Members "Thanks for all your help". In addition, through the use of Targetvision, periodic updates relating to the FET issue will be broadcast in order to position the workforce to respond quickly to a call-to-action request.

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