

This supplement to EPA InSight contains up-to-date policy information from the Administrator/Deputy Administrator to all EPA employees.

WHY EPA SHOULD BE A CABINET DEPARTMENT

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Below is a statement from Administrator Carol Browner to the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs (Senator John Glenn, D-OH, Chairman) - February 18, 1993:

I AM HONORED to testify before you today in support of creating a Cabinet Department on the environment, and to confirm this Administration's commitment to improving environmental quality. I commend the leadership this Committee has demonstrated in pursuing this matter. The Administration supports elevation of EPA to a Cabinet Department and will provide to the Committee suggested technical corrections to S.171 in the near future....

...WE ALL SHARE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT. However, without an adequate institutional framework, even principled commitment can be rendered abstract. The question is not whether to create a Department on the environment, but when. The answer is now, at the beginning of this Nation's third decade of Federal environmental protection. A decade in which we will move from command and control, media-specific regulation to alternative approaches oriented toward pollution prevention, ecosystem protection, and incentive-based policies. It is time for a Department on the environment to function as a permanent and equal partner in the President's Cabinet, integral to any equation of Federal decisionmaking.

1993 IS A PIVOTAL POINT IN TIME. We have the opportunity now to establish an environmental infrastructure ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We must move "upstream" and examine individual pollution sources as elements of larger systems. Preventing pollution by elimination or reduction of waste at the source is key to this Administration's commitment to providing a healthy economy that meets our needs today, while preserving the environment for our children and future generations to enjoy.

A CABINET DEPARTMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT will be well-positioned to accelerate efforts to integrate pollution prevention and multi-media decisionmaking into regulatory and compliance programs Governmentwide, to promote the use of incentive-based policies, to improve technical assistance to small business, and to encourage corporate commitment to clean manufacturing processes and green products through innovative programs. A Cabinet that includes an environment Department will ensure that the environment is fully engaged and integrated into the President's examination of and decisions on national issues.

LIKewise, EPA's INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS provide cooperation with and technical

expertise to developing and newly democratic countries and our industrialized partners. Cabinet status will be important in making the head of EPA a peer with Cabinet colleagues in foreign environment ministries and promoting international cooperation on the environment. It will also make EPA a more effective collaborator with other Cabinet Departments involved in international environmental activities, including UNCED followup, programs in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and environmental cooperation with Mexico.

IN THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, this country created most of our existing environmental infrastructure and body of law. To be sure, the national debate among Federal, State, Local, and Tribal governments, industry, and the public on environmental matters has not always been successful. Nevertheless, significant progress has been achieved. The air, water, and land are demonstrably cleaner as a result of our joint efforts. Our "command and control" approach has worked well but has tended to focus on a relatively small number of large point sources of pollution. In addition, its limited scope ignores creative opportunities in terms of pollution prevention and ecosystem approaches....

...IN 1993, CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT affects individual, corporate, and governmental behavior. The environmental ethic has evolved and is taken seriously across economic, cultural, geographic, and governmental sectors. Just as civil rights issues gripped our Nation in the 60's, and nuclear/cold war concerns dominated the 70's and 80's, integration of economic and environmental policy has seized the public's attention in the 90's....

...WE NOW UNDERSTAND THAT WE LIVE in an enormously complex global ecosystem: "solving" one environmental problem can create a new one. Cleanup of surface water has contaminated ground water and solutions to ground water pollution have polluted the air. Actions taken by one country can affect the health of the citizens of another, thousands of miles away, and for generations to come. We also know that assessment of environmental achievement is a relative measure: our "successes" are meaningful only in terms of reducing overall risk. We have learned that we must not limit ourselves to cleanup, but must also seek to prevent pollution at the source....We must force ourselves to address long-term and not just short-term consequences.

THE 80'S HAVE SHOWN US THAT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION OR INACTION has economic consequences, in turn affecting our environmental and business choices in a never-ending cycle of cause and effect. Environmental

opportunities can be economic opportunities. Money spent by companies to comply with environmental laws and regulations translates into revenues and jobs for other American businesses....

....THIS ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED to identifying the dynamic relationship between economic and environmental needs and to ensuring that environmental assets are reflected in our accounting of national well-being. **Environmental protection and economic growth are not incompatible....**

....EPA IS EVOLVING AS AN INSTITUTION grappling with today's challenges, but the EPA created by Reorganization Plan Number 3 in 1970 is positioned now to function as more than a regulatory agency....**An environment Department must work closely with both its Cabinet counterparts and with its State, Local, Tribal, and other government partners, and remain responsive to the individual citizen.** We must rely carefully on **sound science and research** to better understand environmental issues such as biodiversity, global climate change, environmental equity, risk, and persistent toxic chemicals, and to better develop policy and solutions. An environment Department must be a model environmental steward, both domestically and internationally. The Department must also serve as a model for responsible fiscal practices and responsive accountable management. Financial integrity and sound contract management are critical to fulfilling our environmental mission and to safeguarding the taxpayer's dollar.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS NOT A MERE FOOTNOTE, but encompasses all of the Earth's resources and human activity....It shapes our daily thinking, strategies, and budgets in every conceivable issue area. **We are moving beyond thinking of environmental protection as a luxury or as a hindrance to economic growth.** The growth of our economy depends on the availability of a clean, safe environment and the long-term availability of natural resources. We can best join the need for balancing growth and the environment by **unleashing American ingenuity and creativity** to revive our economy and create a new generation of environmental technology....

....BOTH OUR NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC AND THE NATURE OF THE ECOSYSTEM ITSELF tell us that the President's Cabinet currently is incomplete. In today's world a successful strategy for any public policy issue requires a holistic perspective that crosses traditional Department boundaries. There is virtually no such thing as a policy or problem that does not have environmental

aspects or that is simply "environmental." A sound approach to the environment is essential to the success and sustainability of our Nation's economic, social, and trade policies....It is not enough that environmental considerations be part of Cabinet discussions: **the environment must be there in its own right as an equal priority and member.**

OUR EXPERIENCE OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS in fashioning the President's economic plan is illustrative of the role that environmental considerations should play in our Federal decisionmaking process. As the numerous options for energy taxes were explored, environmental concerns and impacts were analyzed in a matrix alongside energy, economic, social, and trade considerations.

....CURRENTLY, EPA SITS IN THE CABINET ROOM AT THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION, but **President Clinton agrees that we should validate its presence as a statutory matter, regardless of who sits in the White House Oval Office.** It is time for a permanent chair at the table, institutionalizing the environment as a critical ingredient in the mix of any Federal decisionmaking.

....IN ADDITION TO OUR CHILDREN, students of democracy everywhere in the world should comprehend that **an environment Department is key to America's identity.** The United States should join the majority of our major partners who count an environment minister as an equal among the top government tier. Not to do so sends the wrong message about our government's priorities here at home; it also prevents us from asserting the kind of leadership that the rest of the world is looking to us to provide on environmental problems affecting the entire planet.

IN CONCLUSION, I ASSURE YOU that I believe the creation of an environment Cabinet Department means more than a new chair. Joining the Cabinet ensures direct access to the President, and, consequently, **a voice on behalf of citizens concerned about the environment** their children will inherit and industry seeking to mesh environmental and business concerns....

....FINALLY, CREATION OF AN ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT signals at home and abroad the highest commitment of the United States to environmental stewardship....**S.171 is consistent with President Clinton's three-part environmental framework: ELEVATION OF EPA TO A CABINET DEPARTMENT; ELIMINATION OF THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND REASSIGNMENT OF ITS FUNCTIONS; AND CREATION OF AN OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN THE WHITE HOUSE.**

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