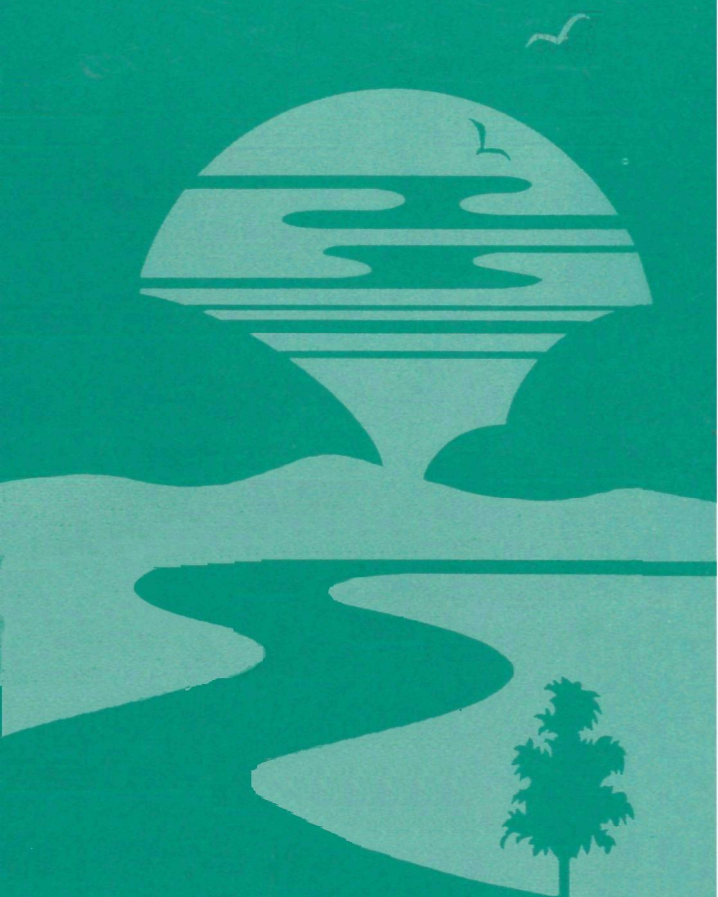

Office Of The Administrator (A-107)



Aiming Before We Shoot

The Quiet Revolution In Environmental Policy



A Speech by William K. Reilly
Administrator, U.S. EPA



This address by EPA Administrator Reilly was made at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on September 26, 1990.

The National Press Club consists of approximately 4,500 journalists, members of federal agencies and organizations, and members of private groups interested in government activities.

The Bush Administration is now 20 months old. In two months the Environmental Protection Agency will be 20 years old. My message today is relevant to both milestones.

A year ago I spoke here at the National Press Club. Now, almost midway through President Bush's first term, I propose to take stock of where we are.

How can our society, or any similarly developed country, most effectively use its resources to achieve the greatest possible benefits to human health and to the planet that sustains us?

I am also here today to share a proposal for a way to begin charting a new course for environmental policy. This new course is suggested by a report that I am releasing today, a report by EPA's Science Advisory Board. In drawing attention to this report I want to stimulate a broad national debate on a fundamentally important question: How can our society, or any similarly developed country, most effectively use its resources to achieve the greatest possible benefits to human health and to the planet that sustains us? The answers to the environmental policy questions we pose today will determine just how green the next decade will be.

Keeping Our Promises: A Report Card

First, I want to ask you to go back in time a year and a half or so ago. You remember where environmental policy was then.

Clean-air legislation had been stalemated in Congress for ten years. Now it is on the point of passage, and I sincerely hope the Congress will soon send the President a cost-effective clean-air bill he can sign.

Acid rain was on the research agenda, but no President had ever proposed to do anything about it. Now Congress is close to approving a ten-million-ton reduction of sulfur dioxide, reducing by half the acid rain precursors, and doing so through a highly innovative and cost-effective new emissions trading system that will allow government to set the goals, and leave utility companies and their plant managers to choose the cheapest ways to achieve the goals.

Toxic air emissions would come down 70 to 90 percent if the Congress passes the President's air toxics initiative.

These proposals came from President Bush. He broke the stalemate.

President Bush, for nearly ten years, has been a prophetic and pioneering voice for clean fuels. After years in which we ignored the contribution of fuels to air pollution, the President proposed a new thrust, of requiring clean fuels in our most polluted cities. The debate has been fierce—clean fuels do represent a departure from past policies—but his proposal would significantly reduce air pollution in our cities, and also reduce this nation's dependence on foreign oil imports.

We learned from the great Alar/apple controversy, and proposed sweeping new food safety reforms, including measures to reduce by half the time it takes to cancel a bad pesticide. I've said before that this nation suspends trading in a bad stock far faster than it stops sales of a bad chemical. The President proposed legislation to address this defect in our food safety laws, and this Congress should act to achieve this long-overdue reform of our pesticide laws.

We proposed to make it unlawful to ship hazardous waste to any nation with which we do not have an agreement that assures us the waste will be safely disposed of. And we signed the Basel Convention committing the United States to that policy.

We've proposed a 12-percent increase in the crucial operating fund for EPA, added almost 2,000 more personnel, bringing us close to 17,000, and begun to increase by 500 the number of staff working on Superfund enforcement.

I've set a new "enforcement first" priority for Superfund, and it's no coincidence that last year we issued more administrative cleanup orders and entered into more settlements for responsible-party action than in any previous year. And that pace only quickened further in 1990.

Through the third quarter of this fiscal year, we issued 47 percent more emergency administrative clean-up orders than in the same period two years ago, and 16 percent more than in 1989.

Civil referrals to the Department of Justice for court action for the same period were also up sharply—71 percent higher than two years ago, and 10 percent higher than last year.

We've made a record of steady, far-reaching regulatory decisions, some of which had been pending for ten years: We moved to phase out asbestos use, significantly reduced exposure to benzene, proposed canceling most food crop uses of the pesticide EBDC, set regulations to reduce the volatility of gasoline, required removal of sulfur from diesel fuel, proposed a rule to recapture evaporation from car engines, and proposed another regulation to make recycling and source separation a condition of approving new incinerators.

Those are a few of our domestic initiatives. Add to them the President's proposal to plant a billion trees a year for the next ten years and to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, zero-budgeted in Administration proposals for years, at \$250 million. Then there's the delay in

drilling at sensitive offshore oil leases in California and Florida, foregoing a half billion dollars in revenues, in order to ensure a full measure of protection for the environment.

A major thrust of our foreign policy has been to give full expression to the nation's environmental priority. We have accordingly established a new Assistant Administrator for International Activities at EPA. At Secretary of State Baker's invitation, EPA is now part of the annual binational meeting with Mexico, and we are working on border issues, proposing to fund construction of a new treatment plant for Tijuana, and advising on Mexico City's air pollution.

A major thrust of our foreign policy has been to give full expression to the nation's environmental priority.

In July in Ottawa, I began on the President's behalf the process which will culminate in a new accord with Canada on acid rain and other air pollutants. With this accord we will achieve a long-sought objective, removing the one serious issue in contention from an otherwise congenial relationship. Such an accord, as Prime Minister Mulroney reminded me, has been a priority of Canadian foreign policy for 15 years. And we will next move with Canada to give a higher priority to getting the toxics, the pesticides, and the fertilizers out of the Great Lakes.

The President proposed a new Center on the Regional Environment of Central and Eastern Europe, and last month I represented him at the opening of this center. Known throughout the region as the Bush Center, this initiative represents a new venture in institution-building for the new East European democracies, and it promises to greatly strengthen the environmental policies of the region's countries—all of which seem to feel they are not totally responsible for their environmental problems, since half their pollution comes from their neighbors.

Incidentally, let anyone who doubts the wisdom of pollution control—or who believes there is a conflict between economic growth and environmental protection—let them go to Eastern Europe. Let them see as I have seen, rivers like the Vistula in Poland, so corrosive it is useless over 80 percent of its length even for cooling machinery; let them experience sulfur dioxide levels in Cracow, where 500-year-old statues and monuments have crumbled in just 40 years; let them see the high rates of infant mortality, lung disorders, worker absenteeism, premature deaths; and let them see the vast land areas contaminated by heavy metal pollution. Poland's Environment Minister Kaminsky estimates that environmental contamination represents a drag on Poland's gross national product of 15 percent. Policies in Communist Europe designed to stimulate economic development by foregoing pollution controls ended by wrecking the economy and also ravaging the environment.

More than a year ago the President proposed that the United States fully phase out production and use of chemicals that destroy the world's stratospheric ozone, which functions as a shield against skin cancers and cataracts. In June the United States led the way to an agreement to commit the world community to that policy, and agreed to contribute funds to help the developing countries make the transition to substitutes for CFCs.

In June of 1989 the President announced a ban on imports of elephant ivory. The European Community and Japan later acted also, and as a result, the price of ivory has plummeted and the incentive to kill African elephants is diminished. Some 80 percent of East Africa's elephants fell to the poachers' machine guns in the 1980s; now, there is new hope for the elephants, thanks to a President and Secretary of State who believe in animal conservation.

And this past June the President proposed his Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, including a new readiness to renegotiate public debt owed to the U.S. government by Latin American countries and to apply the interest on the new debt

to environmental protection and conservation. Altogether, Latin American nations owe the United States some \$12 billion in public debt. They owe governments in Europe and Japan another \$38 billion. This proposal, which has been very warmly received in Latin America, has gone almost unnoticed here at home. And yet the prospects are that the budgets of parks and pollution-control and forestry agencies can be substantially enhanced as a result of this decision. Should other creditor countries follow our example, this major new debt-for-nature commitment could serve to refocus the priorities of countries so rich in forests and species of plants and wildlife, and so burdened by debt.

Concern for the rapid loss of forests worldwide—new data suggest they are being lost twice as fast as had been believed—led the President to propose an agreement on forestry at the G-7 Economic Summit last July. We hope that agreement will be signed no later than 1992, and will help arrest the destruction of the great forest systems, so many of which will be gone, at present rates of destruction, within 10 to 15 years.

Ah, but what about global climate change? "When will you get serious about this issue?" I often am asked.

In the first place, there is no question that this President clearly places a very high priority on the importance of the global-change issue. Early on, he set up a special group under the Domestic Policy Council to address the issue of global change, directing it to use "the best scientific and economic information available." He asked his Science Advisor, Dr. D. Allan Bromley, to chair that effort to help ensure that we develop our global change policy and actions using the best expertise available. I can tell you from my own participation on that group that some of the most senior Cabinet officers in our government are working hard to find the best approaches for our country to the challenge of the global-change issue.

A number of nations have made ambitious commitments to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions, or to arrest their increase by the year 2000. I would encourage the press to ask their leaders how they propose to achieve these reductions. I don't doubt for a moment the seriousness of some of these commitments. But I can tell you that answers to questions about specifics are difficult to come by.

Why? Because large reductions are hard to get without substantial new carbon or energy taxes, and without expansion of nuclear energy. The policies of several European nations will no doubt rely on one or both of these measures, with the French nuclear program filling a critical supply requirement.

The United States spends hundreds of millions of dollars a year to learn more about climate change.

And while others talk about ambitious—and perhaps unattainable—carbon dioxide emissions reductions in the future, the United States spends hundreds of millions of dollars a year to learn more about climate change.

Nor are we sitting on our hands waiting for the science to jell. We already are committed to a series of actions that make sense in their own right *and* will yield benefits should climate change prove to be, as some have suggested, a problem of serious consequence. (It is also possible, as Dr. Bromley points out in a soon-to-be-published article, that other global issues such as ozone depletion, deforestation and loss of genetic diversity "may...turn out to be more serious in terms of human impact than global *climate* change.")

As a result of proposals we already have made—several pending in the Congress, others likely to be implemented—the United States should be generating no more greenhouse gas emissions in the year 2000 than we did in 1987. By passing a new Clean Air Act, phasing out CFCs, carrying out the President's "America the

Beautiful" reforestation initiative—if all of these steps are taken effectively—we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 25 percent from their projected levels in the year 2000.

Finally, as you know, the President has offered to host the opening session of international negotiations next February on a climate change framework convention.

So the next time you feel the urge to write about climate change, you might consider these questions: How many other countries can point to real action on this issue—and back it up? How many others have laid before the public the details—if these even exist—of how they plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining economic growth?

In total, by any objective measure, this Administration is serious, determined, and dedicated to the pursuit of an aggressive, innovative environmental agenda. Public expectations are high, and we have probably raised them further. President Bush has moved the environment from the margins to the mainstream. As a result, the opportunities for genuine environmental progress have never been greater than they are today.

The Cost of a Clean Environment

At the same time, we in this Administration are profoundly conscious of the need to achieve continued environmental progress in harmony with the nation's economic aspirations. The Administration's policies are firmly grounded in the recognition that we do not have to choose between a healthy environment and a healthy economy. We can, and must, have *both*.

Our country's environmental gains over the past two decades—in cleaner air and water, in strict controls on hazardous waste, in protection of wildlife and valuable ecosystems—have not come cheaply. Our economists are now working on a report entitled, *The Cost of a Clean Environment*, showing that total annual costs for pollution control in the United States, in 1986 dollars, went from \$27 billion in 1972 to \$85 billion in

1987. This is slightly more than any other Western industrialized nation for which we have data. For this year, we estimate that the public and private sectors are spending more than \$90 billion, also in 1986 dollars, for pollution control.

This increase in spending has been accompanied by, has in fact been made possible by, the nation's robust economic growth over much of the same period—a growth of 70 percent in real GNP. This is compelling evidence that environmental quality and economic expansion, far from being mutually exclusive, can go hand in hand. Economic growth financed higher standards of environmental protection. Higher environmental expectations made the growth we achieved *good* growth.

We also estimate that by the year 2000, pollution control costs from programs now in place will grow to about \$155 billion a year, again in 1986 dollars, or about 2.7 percent of GNP. These figures represent only the "*cost of clean*," without taking into account any of the *benefits* from this investment; those benefits are, of course, substantial. Our economists are now looking at ways to add up the benefits of pollution control as well.

Most of the growth in costs over the next ten years will not be in the traditional areas of air and water pollution control, but instead will be in expenditures for cleaning up pollution on land—primarily from hazardous waste sites, federal facilities, and leaking underground storage tanks. (Incidentally, speaking of federal facilities, we now have in place about 70 new interagency agreements to clean up more than 80 federal facility sites on the Superfund list, and within the next six months we expect to have all 115 federal facilities on that list covered by cleanup agreements. These agreements include cleanup targets, deadlines, enforceable penalties and fines. We are carrying out the President's policy of applying the same requirements to Energy Department and Defense Department facilities as we apply to the private sector. Only one interagency cleanup agreement was achieved prior to 1989.)

Piecemeal Policy Making

Given these substantial and growing costs, it seems only prudent to ask ourselves: Are we spending all this money on the right things? Are we spending it in the most effective possible way? Are society's resources being used in ways that will contribute most directly to the health and well-being of our citizens and our environment? Not long after my EPA appointment was announced, I made the customary rounds of the members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, to whom it would fall to consider my confirmation.

One of my most memorable visits was with Senator Pat Moynihan; as I expect many of you know, conversations with Senator Moynihan are *always* memorable.

He sat me in a very nice Windsor chair, about which he said, "This is a Republican chair...this is appropriate, I think, for the new EPA Administrator to sit in."

Then he perched his little half-reading glasses down on his nose, and he fixed these two fingers, picador-like, on me. And looking over his glasses, he said, "Above all...above all...do not allow your agency to become transported by middle-class enthusiasms!"

What he meant was, "Respect sound science; don't be swayed by the passions of the moment."

All too often in the past, I think, the guiding principle for making environmental policy has been what has been referred to as the "ready-fire-aim" principle. Budget Director Dick Darman has described the federal budget as a great "PacMan," gobbling up resources. Well, I have looked for a video game analogy for how the nation has made environmental policy.

Perhaps some of you have played a somewhat primitive, pre-Nintendo video game called "Space Invaders." In that game, whenever you

see an enemy ship on the screen, you blast at it with both barrels—typically missing the target at least as often as you hit it. You never run out of ammunition, so even though you miss a lot you stay committed to the game.

The last two decades of environmental policy in this country have been similar in some ways to that video game: Every time we saw a blip on the radar screen, we unleashed an arsenal of control measures to eliminate it. In the late 1960s we saw that we had an air pollution problem, so we enacted ambitious clean air laws. At about the same time, we became aware of serious water pollution and passed an equally ambitious clean water act. We saw that exposure to toxic chemicals was causing human health problems and passed a sweeping law to control toxic substances. And so it went through the 1970s and 1980s: drinking water, radiation, pesticides, hazardous waste, medical wastes—each problem dealt with essentially in isolation, without reference to all the others.

We have set our goals over the last 20 years without adequately addressing our overall environmental quality objectives.

As I noted, many of those efforts have been successful—up to a point. But the upshot of this piecemeal approach to pollution control has been that we have set our goals over the last 20 years without adequately addressing our overall environmental quality objectives. Rarely did we evaluate the relative importance of individual chemicals or individual environmental media. We didn't assess the combined effects on ecosystems and human health from the total loadings of pollutants deposited through different media, through separate routes of exposure, and at various locations. We have never been directed by law to seek out the best opportunities to reduce environmental risks, *in toto*; nor to employ the most efficient, cost-effective ways of proceeding.

As a result of this fragmentation, today more than 80 congressional committees and subcommittees dip their spoons into the broth of environmental policy. EPA is pulled in many directions at once by Congress, other agencies of government, the public, constituency groups, the courts, and of course the news media. We answer to many taskmasters. Many problems, such as local land-use issues, are not in our jurisdiction, yet we tend to be held responsible for solving them. For its part, the press sometimes tends to focus on the "pollutant of the week," regardless of its importance relative to other environmental problems—or to other social problems, for that matter. This kind of crisis management is certainly not unique to the environment—but when we're dealing with critical issues of public health and safety everyday, at significant economic cost, I think it's imperative that we step back from time to time and take a broader view.

Setting Risk-Based Priorities

As we gear up to deal with the environmental problems of the 1990s and beyond, I think the time has come to start taking aim before we open fire. In short, we have to find a better way of setting environmental priorities. And this is where sound science comes in. Sound science can help us establish priorities and allocate resources based on risk, to the extent that statutory mandates allow. Obviously there are a number of other important factors that go into shaping our priorities—public values and perceptions, economic constraints—but sound science is our most reliable compass in a turbulent sea of siren songs. Science can lend much-needed coherence, order, and integrity to the often costly and controversial decisions that must be made.

Risk is a common metric that lets us distinguish the environmental heart attacks and broken bones from indigestion or bruises. Despite the inherent uncertainties in—and continuing controversies over—how to assess risk,

comparative risk assessment is still one of the best indicators of where we should be directing our resources. I am very pleased that EPA's own efforts to bring more uniformity to our risk assessments are to be reenforced by Allan Bromley's initiative to ensure greater government-wide coherence in risk assessment.

Four years ago my predecessor, Lee Thomas, recognized the need to do a better job of setting priorities across the range of EPA's programs. He instructed EPA's in-house scientists and environmental managers to look at the problems we deal with and to try to rank them based on risk. The result of this exercise was a brave and visionary report published in 1987 under the title, *Unfinished Business: A Comparative Assessment of Environmental Problems*.

One of my first actions as Administrator was to ask EPA's Science Advisory Board, a distinguished and objective panel of independent scientists, engineers, and other technical experts, to review *Unfinished Business*, assess its rankings applying the best technical and scientific knowledge available, and suggest ways to improve the comparative risk assessment process.

I also asked them to extend the original analysis and to identify risk-reduction strategies that could be particularly effective for specific problems, or that could help to mitigate many problems at the same time.

Comparative risk assessment is still one of the best indicators of where we should be directing our resources.

The science board has done its job with great patience and perseverance, and it has produced a thoughtful and significant contribution to the debate over the future of environmental protection in this country. Let me take a moment to express my special thanks to the co-chairmen of this study: Dr. Ray Loehr of the University of Texas, who is the chairman of the Science Advisory Board, and Jonathan Lash, until recently the

Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources for the State of Vermont and now director of the Environmental Law Center at Vermont Law School.

The new report, which I am releasing today, is called, *Reducing Risk: Setting Priorities and Strategies for Environmental Protection*. It builds on the pioneering work of the *Unfinished Business* report in comparing disparate environmental problems according to the degree of risk they pose. The new report spells out a set of fundamental principles for achieving broader, more integrated, and more carefully targeted environmental policies. Taken together, these principles provide a basic framework for addressing some of the daunting environmental problems of the 1990s and beyond.

Targeting Resources for Risk Reduction

The report's first and most basic recommendation reflects the point I made a moment ago: We must do a better job of setting environmental priorities. We—EPA and society at large—must locate and focus our attention on the most promising opportunities for reducing risk to the environment and to human health and welfare.

To help us move toward that goal, the Science Advisory Board carefully reviewed the risk comparisons in the *Unfinished Business* study. Within the constraints of the limited information and analytical methodology now available—and we clearly need to do a great deal of work to improve both—the Board identified several prob-

Spells out a set of fundamental principles for achieving broader, more integrated, and more carefully targeted environmental policy-making.

lems that continue to pose relatively high risks to human health or the environment despite the progress of the last two decades. The human health risks highlighted in the report, based primarily on overall degree of direct public

exposure to known toxic agents, are: ambient air pollution, worker exposure to chemicals in industry and agriculture, indoor air pollution, including radon and other pollutants, and drinking water contamination. Additional data, which EPA is now working to gather and analyze, may reveal that other areas also pose high risk.

The report also identifies specific high-risk ecological problems, based especially on their geographic scope and the amount of time it will take to reverse them: habitat alteration and destruction, species extinction and loss of genetic diversity, stratospheric ozone depletion, and global climate change.

Let me be clear: the Science Advisory Board is not suggesting, nor am I, that conventional approaches to environmental problems not cited as high risks, such as hazardous waste, should be abandoned. EPA is, in fact, firmly committed to continued, intensified enforcement of the environmental laws already on the books, as evidenced by our record enforcement figures last year. But we do need to think carefully about where our limited resources can most effectively be spent.

Toward Integrated Environmental Policy

That brings me to a second basic principle discussed in the *Reducing Risk* report: *How* we spend our resources is as important as *what* we spend them on. It's common sense to spend our money where we can do the most good, to best protect health and reduce risk. If we choose to do otherwise, we should at the least know why.

The traditional approach to environmental protection—prescriptive, command-and-control regulations—has brought us a long way. But by themselves, technology-based regulations are no longer sufficient to do the job before us. In some cases, they can actually be counterproductive, serving only to inhibit innovation and to discourage regulated industries from going beyond minimum legal requirements.

We need to take a broader, more integrated look at the range of environmental programs we administer, and the response tools available to us, with an eye toward finding the most efficient and effective ways—to reduce risk. Among the tools identified by the Science Advisory Board are research, public education and information, technical assistance, and market incentives. And above all, we need to mobilize a national effort

Among the tools available to us, are research, public education and information, technical assistance, and market incentives.

to *prevent* pollution before it's created in the first place. Based on the industry response so far, it is clear that one of the most effective instruments for reducing toxic air emissions has been the Community Right-To-Know law requiring industries to estimate and publicly announce toxic emissions, by plant and by chemical.

Rethinking the Environmental Agenda

I am today, therefore, calling for a broad, robust national dialogue on the Science Advisory Board's findings and recommendations—including hearings before the relevant Congressional committees, and wide-ranging discussions by environmental and industry groups, scientists, academicians, and citizens everywhere. Clearly any effort to set environmental priorities based on relative risk—to rethink the environmental agenda for the 1990s and the 21st Century—is going to be difficult and contentious. There are many uncertainties inherent in such a process. But this report takes an essential first step. Much more information is needed; but now at least we have a better idea

of what we *do* need, as well as some basic principles that can help us better target our resources.

Changing the nation's environmental agenda will not be easy, and it won't happen overnight—but many of the science board's principles and recommendations already are being adopted by EPA. What *Science Magazine* recently called a "quiet revolution" in the way EPA does business is in fact well under way.

To further that revolution in our culture, all EPA programs are conducting a broad strategic planning effort which is aimed at focusing our attention and resources on areas of greatest risk and greatest potential for risk reduction.

Pollution prevention has become the slogan for all EPA programs, from municipal wastewater treatment to toxic air pollution.

Our budget decisions already are being guided by the risk reduction principles of EPA's long-term strategic planning process. Pollution prevention has become the slogan for all EPA programs, from municipal wastewater treatment to toxic air pollution to stronger, carefully targeted multi-media enforcement strategies to integrated, ecosystem-wide programs, such as our new initiative to clean up the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes program also reflects the agency's stepped-up emphasis on ecology, in recognition of the fact that the health of natural systems is the foundation for economic health and the well-being of society at large.

Economic incentives, highlighted by the Science Advisory Board as an innovative option, have been central to the Administration's efforts to craft a cost-effective environmental policy—for example, in the groundbreaking emissions trading provisions of the President's Clean Air Act amendments.

A Commitment to Results

Now, let me suggest a far-reaching response to the Science Advisory Board's report. I propose an ambitious strategy of toxics reduction, not just in air or water or land but wherever toxic chemicals may be found. Recently we asked each EPA program to identify the 15 or so toxics of greatest concern to them—the really "bad actors" in terms of health risk. We are now selecting those chemicals associated with serious environmental and health problems. The list is likely to include a number of heavy metals such as lead and mercury, as well as certain volatile organic compounds of concern across several programs.

I want to achieve real and measurable reduction in toxics emissions—and the health risks they pose—over the next year.

Nationwide, releases of these 15 contaminants are in the range of one billion pounds a year. By coordinating our activities and targeting our efforts, I want to achieve real and measurable reductions in these emissions—and the health risks they pose—over the next year. I therefore propose the goals of reducing the total releases of these contaminants by one-third by the end of Fiscal Year 1992, and by more than half by 1995, through the most cost-effective methods possible.

These are ambitious goals, but they are within our reach. Our success with the phase-out of CFCs, and most recently our success in securing an industry commitment to reduce butadiene emissions by 80 percent through voluntary actions—accomplished through negotiations with nine chief executive officers of major chemical and petrochemical firms—demonstrates our ability to obtain results through cooperative

action with the regulated community. This is not to say that we will in any way abandon our regulation and enforcement responsibilities. To the contrary, these new efforts will only have meaning if there is a credible regulatory and enforcement presence at EPA. But let us not forget that the public is expecting *results*—and accordingly, when voluntary action can obtain results more expeditiously, it should be employed.

With respect to recycling, I also want results. We have advocated a 25-percent recycling goal by 1992, and our proposed rules on municipal-waste combustors and other initiatives should go a long way toward achieving that goal. But our commitment to recycling and solid waste reductions cannot be limited to command-and-control approaches. We need to stimulate demand and to fulfill our federal role by providing technical assistance to help create markets.

In that spirit, I propose to:

- One, ask the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs to undertake a cooperative effort to begin defining the terms "recyclable," "recycled content," "bio-degradable," and so on, so that the consumer can make intelligent choices;
- Two, establish a nationwide network and clearinghouse to find markets for recycled goods; and
- Three, work with other federal agencies to ensure that the federal government uses all of its current authority to procure recycled goods.

Environmental Stewardship For A Sustainable Future

Last year in this room I asserted that the Bush Administration has a clear, ambitious, and unambiguous environmental vision:

-
- A vision of a nation moving steadily to provide a greater measure of protection for human health and for natural systems;
 - A vision of a public informed and knowledgeable about its realistic choices in an industrialized, economically developed society;
 - A vision of a people infused with an ethic of environmental stewardship, working to secure the vital link between sound, sustainable economic growth and a healthy, productive environment.
-

How best to go about the task of environmental protection and risk reduction must be discussed and debated in the kitchens of American homes, in school classrooms, in the halls of Congress, the boardrooms of industry, the conference rooms of our vigorous environmental groups, in policy councils at all levels of government.

The broad review and re-evaluation of the nation's environmental agenda that I am calling for today can play a central role in turning that vision into reality. The decisions about how best to go about the task of environmental protection and risk reduction must be discussed and debated in the kitchens of American homes, in school classrooms, in the halls of Congress, the boardrooms of industry, the conference rooms of our vigorous environmental groups, in policy councils at all levels of government.

From those discussions and debates will emerge a new approach to environmental policy, and a new generation of environmental programs—programs that will carry the nation forward through the 1990s and into the 21st Century. The great and dramatic environmental battles are between "white hats" and "black hats," and there are still a good many around. But the significant new progress we need is with ourselves—our lifestyles, our energy use, the goods we buy and use, and the waste we generate.

The questions we raise today can lead us to the answers we will need to safeguard our environmental legacy to future generations. □