

## Building on Consensus

### A PROGRESS REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE AMERICA

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# A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

January 10, 1997

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On March 7, 1996, we presented you with the report of the President's Council on Sustainable Development entitled *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment*. This report represented almost three years of work by a cross-section of representatives from government; industry; and environmental, labor, and civil rights organizations, and it marked the beginning of a new consensus on how the people of this Nation could work together to realize economic prosperity, social well-being and equity, and environmental quality, now and in the future. As the Council's work proceeded, it became increasingly clear that sustainable development is both urgent and important; it will be a foundation for both domestic and foreign policy.

From the beginning of your Presidency, you have emphasized that the changes we will experience as we enter the 21st century will be as great as any this Nation has faced in the past. We believe that challenges ahead are as great as those we faced in the 1930s with the depression and the coming world war. The world of the 21st century will be as different from today's world as the 1950s were from the 1930s. Just as President Roosevelt recognized the need for the nation to mobilize all available resources to recover from economic depressions and to prepare for global war, you can mobilize the nation to prepare for the 21st century by integrating sustainable development into your second term agenda.

The United States emerged from World War II dramatically different than it had been going into the war, with an economy and democracy that were stronger than ever before. The strength of the U.S. economy and democratic form of government ultimately contributed to the fall of communism around the world. Now it is time for our domestic policy and our foreign policy to respond to the new challenges of sustainable development. The challenges and changes we face are just as serious and real as the threats we faced in the past. Yet much of the public is not yet aware of the issues. By establishing the President's Council on Sustainable Development in 1993, you wisely focused our attention on the need for our country to prepare for a world of changing economic, environmental, and social realities.

As you requested last March, the Council has been working to implement its initial recommendations. The enclosed report presents the progress we have made to date on what can be done and how it should be accomplished as the United States moves toward realizing sustainable development. We have taken the message of AA New Consensus@ to scores of audiences both here and abroad. We have found that business people, citizens, environmentalists,

religious leaders, local officials, and many others received the report with encouraging, and often inspiring enthusiasm. That has made our work over the last nine months easy.

During the course of its work, the Council has observed a broad array of sustainable development activities across the country. The vast majority of these efforts have originated in the hearts and minds of citizens from all walks of life who are dedicated to creating a brighter future for their families and communities. These activities have demonstrated an understanding of the value of partnerships and of the powerful links among economic, social, and environmental goals. For example:

- In St. Louis, the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, **the metropolitan planning organization for the Missouri and Illinois bi-state region** has been working to implement a new **20-year plan that provides a framework for linking transportation investments more closely with economic, environmental, and community benefits.**
- **A broad array of non-profit organizations has created the Sustainable Communities Network (SCN) to provide citizens across the nation with the information they need to restore and foster the economic, environmental, and social vitality of their communities.**
- In over 18 communities nationwide--including both rural towns and urban centers--developers, community groups, and local elected officials are fostering environmentally-sound development by implementing the concept of eco-industrial parks.

Despite the countless examples of locally-driven activities, there is still a great need for concerted action and leadership at the national level. As illustrated in our report, **the federal government has a unique role to play in fostering sustainable development across America and around the world.** We firmly believe that the Council itself can and should continue to play an important role in this effort.

Our report presents the work of the Council's three implementation task forces: 1) Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches; 2) New National Opportunities; and 3) International Leadership. We would like to highlight several major initiatives that the Council examined and believes the Administration should pursue. Others are included in the report. We would then like to offer three overarching recommendations on how this can all be accomplished.

1. In the area of Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches, one of the most fruitful areas for further work concerns metropolitan strategies. **If we are to become a nation of sustainable communities in the 21st century, we must develop new strategies that enable city leaders--in the public sector, the private sector, and community-based groups--to work together** with their counterparts in surrounding suburban and rural communities. Such partnerships are critical to pursuing patterns of development that create economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all citizens in a metropolitan region. **The Council has been working with the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National**



Association of Counties to create the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities which will contribute to this effort. In addition, Secretary Cisneros recently released a major report on metropolitan economic strategies, and the Department of Transportation has developed a proposal for the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act--a model of metropolitan-scale decisionmaking. Strong leadership from Federal and state governments is imperative in facilitating the development of metropolitan strategies.

2. In the area of New National Opportunities, an important concept is Extended Product Responsibility (EPR). As stated in its initial report, the Council firmly believes that "environmental progress will depend on individual, institutional, and corporate responsibility, commitment, and stewardship." EPR is an important tool in putting this belief into practice. As defined by the Council, EPR stresses the shared responsibility of many players--from suppliers to manufacturers to consumers--for reducing the environmental impacts of products, throughout the products' life cycles. The Council and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cosponsored a workshop on EPR to demonstrate various models of EPR and to determine how to encourage greater implementation of EPR across the country. Workshop participants agreed that a Federal focal point for the promotion of EPR will be important if we are to make the greatest possible progress in this important area.
3. In the area of International Leadership, events in the coming year provide a unique opportunity for action by the United States. It has now been almost five years since then-Senator Gore championed the cause of sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio. Since then, approximately 180 national or regional councils of sustainable development have been created around the world. Events associated with next year's fifth anniversary of the Earth Summit will provide an opportunity for the Council to share its experiences and multi-stakeholder approach with the rest of the world. At the same time, the United States will have an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other nations. The G-7 Summit in June 1997, which will be held in Denver, could also provide an opportunity to engage many of the world's key leaders in discussions of critical sustainable development issues. Next year's events will provide important fora for the United States to demonstrate continuing leadership in promoting sustainable development around the world.

In addition to the Council's activities, we would like to recognize your Administration's efforts to implement sustainable development. Last spring, Vice President Gore created an Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development, co-chaired by Katie McGinty, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and Laura Tyson, Chair of the National Economic Council. This working group conducted a survey of federal programs and activities that support the Council's recommendations. An extensive inventory has been prepared, demonstrating that

numerous sustainable development efforts are already underway across your Administration. These efforts will provide a foundation for continued progress in the years ahead.

The process for addressing the changes needed to become a sustainable society is crucial. In this report, the Council makes three overarching recommendations about the process needed to provide the necessary base for domestic and foreign policy.

1. ***Fully Integrate Sustainable Development into Your Second Term Agenda.*** With the Council's recommendations and the inventory of existing Administration programs and activities commissioned by the Vice President, you have the raw material needed to ensure that the goals and principles of sustainable development are integrated into your Administration's second term agenda. We encourage you to assign clear responsibility for sustainable development to an entity within the White House which would have the authority to coordinate and integrate economic, social, and environmental policy throughout the Executive Branch.
2. ***Fully Participate in International Sustainable Development Activities in 1997.*** Next year's observance of the fifth anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio will provide several opportunities for the United States to demonstrate continued international leadership on sustainable development. We encourage you to ensure that the U.S. government fully participates in these fora. **In addition, the United States could host a national meeting on sustainable development strategies in advance of the June 1997 G-7 Summit in Denver.**
3. ***Extend the Life of the President's Council on Sustainable Development.*** The Council serves many unique and important roles. We encourage you to extend the life of the Council to perform four important functions:
  - A) *Forging Consensus on Policy.* The Council is an open and inclusive process in which policy ideas are exchanged, debated, and ultimately forged into a consensus. **There are economic, environmental, and social policy issues that merit further consideration by the Council;**
  - B) *Demonstrating Implementation of Policy.* The Council provides a multi-stakeholder forum in which diverse interests can work together in a collaborative fashion on projects that demonstrate the implementation of sustainable development in the real world;
  - C) *Getting The Word Out.* **Sustainable development must be realized largely through many decentralized efforts;** nevertheless, the Council can serve a critical role in gathering and disseminating information that inspires the adoption of sustainable practices across America; and

D) *Evaluating and Reporting on Progress*. The Council is uniquely qualified to track, evaluate, and report on our nation's progress in building a sustainable America.

Mr. President, as we look to the future, the scope of changes needed for the United States to become a sustainable society can seem overwhelming. Yet the process of change has already begun and is continuing across the country. With your direction and leadership, the Council has accomplished a great deal thus far, but much remains to be done. As a nation, we must press on. **Our goal--a future in which economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity** are available to all--is far too important to do otherwise.

Respectfully,

David T. Buzzelli  
Co-Chair

Jonathan Lash  
Co-Chair

# INTRODUCTION

The President's Council on Sustainable Development, established in June 1993 by President Clinton, is a ground-breaking partnership of leaders from industry, government, and non-governmental organizations concerned with environmental quality, economic development, and social equity. The Council's mission, as determined by President Clinton, was to develop and help implement bold, new approaches to integrate economic, social, and environmental policies in ways that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In March 1996 the Council presented the President with its report, *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the Future*. That report contains the findings and policy recommendations resulting from the Council's first three years of work. The recommendations were comprehensive, addressing everything from economic and regulatory policy to natural resource management, from strengthening communities and education to international leadership. Crafted to move the nation toward sustainability, the recommendations were directed toward public and private sectors, as well as citizens.

Upon receiving *Sustainable America*, President Clinton asked for three things: 1) that the Council continue working and begin implementing some of its recommendations; 2) that White House offices and federal agencies support the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties in establishing a Joint Center on Sustainable Communities to implement recommendations in communities across the nation; and 3) that the Vice President lead the effort to implement recommendations with the Administration.

This report summarizes those implementation efforts undertaken since March. While it will take more than nine months to move recommendations to action, many sustainable development activities have been launched--both by the Council as well as hundreds of individuals outside the Council. The tremendous enthusiasm that has greeted *Sustainable America* is a hopeful sign for the future.

## Council Implementation Efforts

The Council created three task forces in order to get as much done as possible in a short time, and is enthusiastic about the results of the task force work. Each task force was asked to focus on implementing a set of recommendations contained in the report, *Sustainable America*. Chapters 1-3 are the reports of these individual task forces. They differ in the type of information and level of detail they present, reflecting different stages of development and charges of the individual task forces. Consistent with the design of this phase, the full Council did not formally act upon the specific recommendations that the task forces produced. It generally supports these recommendations. The full Council transmits the recommendations of the three task forces--as it



did in *Sustainable America*--to a variety of institutions--the federal government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and citizens.

***The Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches Task Force*** was asked to consider recommendations pertaining to community-driven strategic planning, collaborative regional planning, environmental economic development, community growth management, restoration of fisheries, community design, natural resources information, ecosystem integrity, and incentives for stewardship. The group worked on four initiatives: 1) Joint Center on Sustainable Communities, 2) Metropolitan Strategies, 3) Pacific Northwest Regional Council, and 4) Eco-Industrial Parks (with the National Task Force).

***The New National Opportunities Task Force*** was asked to consider recommendations pertaining to increased cost effectiveness of the existing regulatory system, **alternative performance-based regulatory systems**, extended product responsibility, and better science for improved decisionmaking. In addition, because of the Council's commitment to and the importance of collaboration, the task force was asked to examine collaborative processes. Thus, they worked on three initiatives: 1) Extended Product Responsibility, 2) Lessons Learned from Collaborative Processes, and 3) Eco-Industrial Parks (with the Local Task Force).

***The International Leadership Task Force*** was asked to consider recommendations pertaining to international leadership. The group worked on two initiatives: **1) Contact with other national councils and international entities on sustainable development** and 2) Plans for the Rio+5 meeting and discussion of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development meetings and other international meetings.

## **Federal Implementation Efforts**

In addition to the implementation work carried out by the Council, activities have also been underway within the Executive Branch. These activities fall into two distinct categories:

***Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development.*** Upon receiving the Council's report on March 7, 1996, President Clinton asked Vice President Gore to oversee implementation of the report's recommendations within the Administration. To accomplish this, **the Vice President asked Katie McGinty, chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and Laura Tyson, chair of the National Economic Council, to co-chair the Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development.** Every major federal department and agency with a domestic focus is represented on the working group. This group has conducted an extensive review of federal programs and activities related to the recommendations contained in *Sustainable America*. For the first time, the federal government has a rather comprehensive inventory of ongoing programs that contribute to sustainable development.

***Federal Interagency Pledges.*** Upon transmittal of *Sustainable America* to the President on March 7, 1996, the federal agencies that participated in the PCSD made a series of pledges concerning implementation of the Council's recommendations. Most of these pledges involved just one agency, but three pledges were interagency in nature. To fulfill these pledges, three federal interagency working groups were created: 1) Education for Sustainability; 2) Materials and Energy Flow; and 3) Sustainable Development Indicators. Reports from these working groups are presented in Chapter 4.

## **Recommendations**

As discussed above, each task force report contains recommended next steps specific to implementing those recommendations from *Sustainable America* pertaining to the task force's work. The final chapter, however, contains three overarching recommendations for continuing progress toward a sustainable America.

# CHAPTER 1

## Innovative Local, State, And Regional Approaches Task Force Report

### Introduction

Sustainable development is taking root in communities throughout the United States. In cities such as Sioux Falls, South Dakota which is cleaning up and revitalizing waterfronts with new parks, businesses, and community festivals and in rural towns such as the Upper Valley of New England which is setting regional goals for improving quality of life for the year 2001 and beyond, people are planting the seeds for a new spirit of civic engagement that is renewing their hopes for a strong economy, healthy environment, and increased equity for all.

The publication of *Sustainable America* has helped to spur further interest in sustainable development communities, counties, states, and regions. While articulating the importance of communities in implementing the Council's recommendations, the report also presented real-life examples of work in action. To take the report's messages one step further, the Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches Task Force was established to serve as a catalyst for furthering the progress of grassroots leaders who have emerged in places like St. Louis, Missouri, Cape Charles, Virginia, and San Luis Obispo County, California. The task force surveyed existing programs and established working groups to assist in the efforts of a few selected initiatives. Task force participants and staff also traveled throughout the country to meet and assist local leaders interested in taking sustainable development one step further.

The task force worked on four major initiatives: 1) to support the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities; 2) to promote the importance of multi-jurisdictional cooperation within metropolitan areas in resolving important place-based sustainable development issues; 3) to help interested regions create regional councils modeled on the PCSD; and 4) to promote the development of eco-industrial parks, in conjunction with the National Opportunities Task Force. It also conducted outreach to communities, states, and regions of the United States; and collected information on current initiatives that are implementing recommendations made in the chapters on education, strengthening communities, and natural resources in *Sustainable America*.

### Task Force Initiatives

#### Joint Center for Sustainable Communities (JCSC)

The JCSC was proposed by the National Association of Counties and U.S. Conference of Mayors and supported by the President upon his receipt of *Sustainable America*. While many people and institutions have the power to affect decisions made in America's cities and counties, local elected officials and local governments play a central role. Not only do mayors and county commissioners determine local policy, they also govern the use of state and federal funds and

help to spearhead local coalitions that are the foundation of many sustainable development initiatives. Many elected officials are eager to lead in developing a new kind of governance that will emphasize collaborative partnerships and leverage scarce public resources to address local economic, environmental, and social equity challenges.

To address the unique needs of local elected and appointed officials in promoting sustainable development, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), with assistance from the Council, have established the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities (JCSC). Initial funding has been provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Energy. To fully support the JCSC, federal funding will have to be followed by comparable support from the private sector and foundations.

The mission of the JCSC is to provide local elected officials with assistance in using the tools necessary to building sustainable communities. To that end, the JCSC will provide technical assistance, training, sustainable development literature and materials, and funding toward community visioning or collaborative planning. While the JCSC will not be a repository of all relevant information on sustainable development, it will act as a catalyst to help local government officials find solutions to problems facing their communities. The JCSC's work will be grounded in the understanding that many organizations, institutions, and government agencies are currently involved in sustainable development implementation. The JCSC will refine its agenda to ensure that its initiatives add value and are coordinated with existing programs.

To ensure the input and involvement of the private sector, community groups; local, state, and federal government; environmental organizations; and others, the JCSC will establish an Advisory Board made up of representatives from these groups. The Advisory Board will provide advice regarding the development and implementation of JCSC programs and activities.

The JCSC will provide local elected officials with advice, information, and financial support through the following types of programs.

### **Sustainable Community Initiatives**

- Sustainable community grants will be awarded to cities and counties for local efforts to develop community-based strategies rooted in a collaborative process that includes citizens, business, non-profits, and other community stakeholders.
- Metropolitan compacts will develop strategies between cities and counties to create multi-jurisdictional partnerships and break down state and federal barriers to cost-efficient delivery of services.
- Annual sustainable community awards will recognize communities and their elected officials who have exhibited the principles of sustainable development through the

successful implementation of one or more of the recommendations made in *Sustainable America*.

### **Technical Assistance**

- Leadership training will be provided to local elected officials that is creative, collaborative in nature, and embraces the principles and processes of citizen participation.
- A peer exchange program will be conducted to match experienced elected officials and professional staff who have proven solutions with jurisdictions that need to solve specific problems.
- A catalogue of tools for initiating, leading, and implementing sustainable development efforts will be assembled.
- An information clearinghouse will disseminate examples of self-reliant community initiatives collected under peer-matching and tool development to relevant county, city, state, federal, private sector, non-profit, and academic organizations.

### **Community Policy and Educational Forums**

- Policy analysis will be conducted through a series of public forums on both governmental and private sector policies that contribute to building healthy communities.
- Policy development will be based on information gathered from fora. **Policy alternatives will be developed that integrate economic development with the preservation of ecosystems and natural resources and increased social equity.** These policy choices will be made available to all relevant government, private sector, and non-profit interests.
- **Education will be conducted through a national advertising and educational campaign designed to help local elected officials and private citizens understand the importance of locally-based community action in implementing sustainable development.** This will include a national challenge program, conference workshops, public service announcements, media outreach, video and satellite networks, and other educational literature.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

In addition to moving forward on its plans, as mentioned above, the JCSC will work with the PCSD on many of its implementation activities. Some specific next steps that can be taken jointly by the JCSC and the PCSD are suggested throughout this report. (See Step 1, Action 3; and Step 2, Action 2)

### **Metropolitan Approaches Working Group**

Implementation of the recommendations made in *Sustainable America* will not only require the leadership of diverse key actors, it will also depend on a renewed understanding of the opportunities and necessity for federal/state/community partnerships. At the same time, local implementation of sustainable development can be achieved only if local jurisdictions work together cooperatively to address issues -- such as economic development, transportation, education, land use, public safety, and environmental protection -- that cross political boundaries.

In *Sustainable America*, the PCSD recommended that collaborative regional planning to "encourage communities in a region to work together to deal with issues that transcend jurisdictional and other boundaries." The Metropolitan Approaches Working Group was created to address the importance of multi-jurisdictional cooperation in resolving some of the most important place-based sustainable development issues. The working group surveyed existing local programs that bring together communities, counties, local businesses, citizens, and others within a metropolitan area to find solutions to their shared problems. Many of these programs address economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equity issues in an integrated fashion as they pursue a common agenda. The working group analyzed and summarized metropolitan-scale projects to draw lessons and provide guidance on how their efforts could be improved or emulated by others.

At the same time, the working group also collected information on federal agency programs that are creating incentives for adjoining communities and counties to work cooperatively. The working group used information collected by the Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development. It also worked with agency staff to compile additional, detailed information on specific programs.

The working group's review of sustainable development initiatives nationwide revealed a growing awareness of the need for metropolitan-scale approaches and that there is still much work to be done.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

***Step 1) Develop and adopt federal metropolitan-scale policy through an Interagency Metropolitan Sustainable Development Working Group*** Through such a working group, the Administration should create a metropolitan policy that recognizes the interdependence of cities and suburbs in our metropolitan areas and reflect the understanding that this interdependence extends to economic viability, environmental quality, and social equity. At a minimum, the following federal agencies should participate:

U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, Transportation, Treasury; U.S. Agency for International Development; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;

Corporation for National Service; General Services Administration; and Small Business Administration.

In addition to developing policy, **this interagency group should coordinate its activities with other relevant interagency groups such as the Community Empowerment Board (CEB) and the Interagency Brownfields Initiative.**

**One option for the creation of this Metropolitan Sustainable Development Working Group is to directly connect it to the CEB as one of its working groups or as a subgroup of the Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development.**

This interagency group should invite participation from the private sector, public interest and state and local government groups to achieve its goals. It should also create opportunities to engage others from those constituencies.

The group should also undertake the following specific actions:

**Action 1:** Establish a pilot demonstration program to encourage metropolitan cooperation and problem solving. The federal government should act as a catalyst and facilitator for selected metropolitan regions to pursue metropolitan-scale problem solving strategies by highlighting ongoing initiatives and successful models, coordinating the federal response, leveraging existing programs, using administrative flexibility, streamlining service delivery, and directing resources to more effectively support metropolitan sustainable development strategies.

These pilots can also serve as opportunities to measure better the benefits of metropolitan approaches, such as attainment of specific environmental, economic, or social equity goals.

Metropolitan regions should be chosen for their expressed desire to participate and should have ongoing, locally-generated initiatives with the following characteristics:

- embraces and integrates all three elements of sustainable development--economic, environmental, equity;
- represents a partnership of the multiple levels of government in metropolitan areas--city, town, suburb, county, metropolitan planning organization (MPO), state and special district; and
- represents a collaboration including the public sector, private sector and public interest/community sector.

The Interagency Metropolitan Sustainable Development Working Group should build on the report of the Interagency Working Group's *Inventory of Federal Government Agency Programs* by inventorying agency activities to promote sustainable development by place, so

that the pilot demonstrations can build more effectively on existing efforts, and that federal agencies can coordinate in places more effectively.

**Action 2:** Identify and change existing federal programs or policies which encourage or subsidize sprawl and urban disinvestment, reorienting them to revitalize existing communities, whether urban, suburban or small town. The working group should work across agencies to change program guidelines, and regulatory guidance to remove perverse government incentives that inadvertently promote sprawl.

**Action 3:** The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council should assist these federal efforts by demonstrating the value of multi-jurisdictional and regional approaches to community problem-solving.

*Step 2) Similar to the efforts with respect to metropolitan regions, convene a group to focus on implementing sustainable development in rural communities and regions*

**Action 1:** The PCSD should convene a group of rural citizens, business leaders, local elected officials, and federal agencies involved in rural development and resource stewardship to address the opportunities and challenges specific to rural communities. This group can examine and suggest actions to disseminate *Sustainable America* and to help rural communities implement relevant recommendations.

**Action 2:** The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities should tap into its vast grassroots network to determine the needs of rural communities and to begin identifying proven solutions to their sustainability issues.

**Step 3) Reorient federal incentives through legislation and administrative action to support multi-jurisdictional cooperation**

**Action 1:** The Administration should collaborate with other interested parties in promoting legislation that increases flexibility of federal incentives for metropolitan regions that integrate economic, environmental, and equity issues through collaboration across political jurisdictions (see characteristics in Step 1, Action 1 above). While the Local Flexibility and Empowerment Act introduced in the 104th Congress achieved some of these objectives, we urge the Administration to specifically support the ideas we have mentioned above.

**Action 2:** The Administration should support the reauthorization of the metropolitan planning provisions of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and seek to enhance those provisions by incorporating performance-oriented planning for sustainable transportation. The metropolitan planning and investment focus in ISTEA should be extended to other federal investment programs.



**Action 3:** Federal agencies should ensure, wherever possible, that their programs facilitate multi-jurisdictional cooperation. State and local entities should be encouraged to reach across jurisdictional boundaries to identify and execute solutions to problems. Federal programs encourage multi-jurisdictional cooperation, but the requirements are too inconsistent to really facilitate long-term cross-jurisdictional cooperation. Federal agencies should begin to address this by examining their own planning requirements and identifying those areas, such as geographic boundaries and time frames, that differ greatly from other federal government programs and, therefore, hamper federal programs from working together. To allow better integration of federal programs, unless prohibited by law, federal agencies should use similar time frames, geographic boundaries and regional forums. The Interagency Metropolitan Sustainable Development Working group could help facilitate this progress.

### **Pacific Northwest Regional Council**

The multi-stakeholder decisionmaking model of the PCSD can be applied at every level of government and society. The PCSD found much inspiration for their recommendations in examples of local partnerships that bring together diverse sectors and individuals to address issues in an integrated fashion. Regional councils are a way to work toward the principles set forth by the PCSD in its "We Believe Statement" which says "the nation must strengthen its communities and enhance their role in decisions about environment, equity, natural resources, and economic progress so that the individuals and institutions most immediately affected can join with others in the decision process." The spirit of the collaborative regional planning recommendation quoted above in the metropolitan approaches discussion also applies to regional councils as one potential mechanism for spurring increased cooperation.

To build on the interest of regions of the United States to develop sustainable development councils of their own, the PCSD established a working group to support these efforts. The first region to undertake such an effort was the Pacific Northwest, a region of the country that has experienced significant population growth, rapid change in its economic base, growing confrontation on issues of natural resource use, and emerging partnerships within the global economy by virtue of its close proximity to Canada and the Pacific Rim.

Pacific Northwest communities, metropolitan areas, tribal governments, states, and businesses have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in sustainable development. Its major cities are leaders in the field of sustainable development and are highly-sought-after locations for emerging industries and families in search of a high quality of life. The state of Oregon and communities throughout the region have led in the development of sustainable development indicators and benchmarks. Portland's metropolitan government implements some of the most visionary land use, anti-sprawl, transit-friendly policies of any in the nation. Businesses within the region also work to promote renewed commitment to stewardship. For example, PCSD award winner, Collins Pine, a forest products company based in Lake Oswego, Oregon, is independently and voluntarily certified as a "state of the art, well-managed forest." The company

integrates its manufacturing system with leading retailers, developers, and major furniture manufacturers who are also working to market environmental products. In another example, cattle ranchers in the eastern part of the region are experimenting with new methods that will diminish their impact on the environment.

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council's membership consists of 28 regional leaders from diverse constituencies throughout the region. They are working with federal agency staff based in the region to implement an action-oriented program that fosters cooperation among regional non-profit and community groups, state and local governments, businesses and national-level organizations such as the National Education Association and the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities. (See Appendix A for a list of regional council members.)

Using Sustainable America as the foundation for their work, the regional council is currently developing a workplan that incorporates the following four goals:

- 1) Conduct outreach in the Pacific Northwest region to promote better awareness and understanding of sustainable development concepts and of the recommendations made in *Sustainable America*.
- 2) Recognize and publicize existing regional programs that exemplify the goals, objectives, and recommendation presented in *Sustainable America*.
- 3) Support and facilitate coordination among local programs and organizations that are working to implement sustainable development in the region.
- 4) Implement the PCSD recommendations most critical to the Pacific Northwest region.

As one of its first activities, the regional council is conducting an inventory of organizations with programs on sustainable development to ensure coordination between these groups and the regional council. This information will be made available to local and national groups working with the regional council. In particular, the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities and the regional council will work together to promote their complementary missions within the Pacific Northwest.

Pacific Northwest community leaders formed this pilot regional council as a successful example of what could be adopted by other regions across the United States. The establishment of the regional council is generating considerable interest and enthusiasm throughout the region and beyond, which should encourage the expansion of this idea to other regions. As other regions exhibit interest in using the PCSD's model of multi-stakeholder participation to address the broad range of sustainable development issues, the PCSD will continue to assist these regional groups to make connections with federal agency representatives and other national groups.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

*Step 1) After broad grassroots interest has been expressed, the PCSD should help facilitate the creation of regional councils modeled after the PCSD's multi-stakeholder process, and coordinate efforts of multiple regional councils, as appropriate.*

**Action 1:** Regional councils should be created based on the grassroots interest and leadership from the communities within the region; they should be regionally-initiated and managed. Regional councils should enhance existing sustainable development initiatives in the region and foster collaboration among key actors and institutions.

Membership should reflect the diversity of each region and include representatives from different sectors and issue areas. Additionally, regional councils should work closely with and include representation from state government and regional offices of federal government agencies, where appropriate. One way to promote federal involvement is to establish federal interagency groups to work with each regional council.

Program areas should represent the breadth of sustainable development issues, including the integration of environment, economy, and social equity. Regional councils should utilize the recommendations of the PCSD as a basis for their work to further progress toward sustainability within the unique circumstances of their region.

**Action 2:** The Pacific Northwest Council and additional future regional councils should work to connect the critical issues of metropolitan and rural areas within the region to determine joint needs and collaborative solutions.

**Action 3:** Once more than one regional council has been established, the PCSD should coordinate their efforts and help them work together to promote and implement sustainable development policies and practices. Regional councils will be independent of the PCSD, led and managed from within the region, however, as appropriate, the PCSD will serve as a facilitator to bring regional councils together to share information and strategies for achieving their objectives.

### **Eco-Industrial Parks**

See New National Opportunities Task Force Chapter.

### **Non-Council Activities**

Task force participants contributed to a compilation of examples of ongoing initiatives that are implementing recommendations made in the *Sustainable America* chapters pertaining to information and education, strengthening communities, and natural resources stewardship.

Below, are summaries of a few examples of initiatives that demonstrate the breadth of activities underway throughout the country:

In St. Louis, the East-West/Gateway Coordinating Council, the metropolitan planning organization for the bi-state region (Missouri and Illinois) has been working to implement their new 20-year plan, Transportation Redefined. The plan established a framework for decisionmaking that links transportation investments more closely with economic, environmental, and community benefits. One of its seven focus areas is "access to opportunity", under which the transportation system's performance is measured, in part, by its ability to support mobility for low-income residents of the urban core who seek better access to employment, health care, and other social and economic opportunities. Since adopting the plan, the group has launched an array of projects including ones to improve employment opportunities and access to jobs for inner city job seekers, and to use sustainable development measures to assess and prioritize community development conditions and opportunities within the 18-mile corridor surrounding the Metrolink link rail line.

A broad array of non-profit organizations joined together to create the Sustainable Communities Network (SCN) which connects citizens nationwide with the resources they need to implement innovative processes and programs to restore the economic, environmental, and social health and vitality of their communities. The SCN consists of a web site, demonstration projects, and an education, training and public outreach program on a wide range of policy issues principally in five areas: Creating Community; Growing a Sustainable Economy; Smart Growth; Protecting Natural Resources; and, Governing Community. Additional resources include: case studies, publications libraries; and access to databases, related reading, organizations and web sites, and examples of relevant policies and programs.

In over 18 communities -- including both rural towns and urban centers -- developers, community groups, and local elected officials are working to spur a new generation of economic development activities through the concept of eco-industrial development. Over 100 people representing diverse interests came together to share ideas and information on examples in places as far-flung as Brownsville, Texas; Cape Charles, Virginia; and Burlington, Vermont.

In Racine, Wisconsin, a sustainable community forum has been created by leaders throughout the town. Initially organized by one of the community's largest businesses, SC Johnson & Son, Inc., the first meeting involved a diverse spectrum of citizens and sectors--over 400 in number. The forum will evolve with broad public input to address the priority issues within the community. As quoted in The Racine Journal Times, the city "may be poised to begin creating a future in which people will be happier, wealthier, and healthier."

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## Appendices

Appendix A: Task Force Membership

Appendix B: Pacific Northwest Regional Council Membership

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## **Appendix A: Task Force Membership**

### **Co-Chairs**

D. James Baker, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Scott Bernstein, Center for Neighborhood Technology

### **Members**

John Adams, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Bruce Babbitt, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Richard Barth, Ciba-Geigy  
Carol Browner, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Richard Clarke, Pacific Gas & Electric Company  
Henry Cisneros, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, Zero Population Growth  
Judith Espinosa, Alliance for Transportation Research  
Randall Franke, National Association of Counties  
Jay Hair, World Conservation Union  
Samuel Johnson, S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.  
Hazel O'Leary, U.S. Department of Energy  
Federico Pena, U.S. Department of Transportation  
Michele Perrault, Sierra Club  
Richard Rominger, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Susan Savage, City of Tulsa, OK  
John Sawhill, The Nature Conservancy  
Ted Strong, Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission

### **Additional Participants**

Gregory Anderegg, S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.  
Geoffrey Anderson, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Janet Anderson, U.S. Department of Energy  
Wendy Cleland-Hamnett, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Hank Dittmar, Surface Transportation Policy Project; Don Chen  
Christine Eustis, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce  
David Garrison, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Wendy Gerlitz, Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission

Don Gray, Environmental Energy Study Institute  
David Hales, U.S. Agency for International Development  
Jacqueline Hamilton, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Jeffrey Hunker, U.S. Department of Commerce  
J. Gary Lawrence, Center for Sustainable Communities, University of Washington, Seattle  
Linda Lawson, U.S. Department of Transportation  
Pat LeDonne, Contractor, U.S. Department of Energy  
Ronald Matzner, Small Business Administration  
Anne Hale Miglarese, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Rebecca Moser, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Kit Muller, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Angela Nugent, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Glenn Ruskin, Ciba-Geigy  
Harriet Tregoning, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Carole Wacey, U.S. Department of Education  
Carol Werner, Environmental Energy Study Institute  
Charlotte White, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

#### **Task Force Coordinator**

Angela Park

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## **Appendix B: Pacific Northwest Regional Council Membership**

#### **Co-Chairs**

Richard Barth, Ciba-Geigy  
Jay Hair, World Conservation Union  
Ted Strong, Columbia River Fish Tribal Commission

#### **Members**

Katherine Baril, Washington State University  
Edward Barnes, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Washington State  
Transportation Commission  
Mike Burton, Metro Regional Government  
Joan Dukes, Oregon State Senate  
Billy Frank, Jr., Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission  
Randall Franke, Marion County Commission  
J. Martin Goebel, Sustainable Northwest

Louise Gund, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund  
Thomas Imeson, PacifiCorps  
Gary Machlis, University of Idaho, U.S. National Park Police  
David Marquez, ARCO  
David Matheson, Coeur D'Alene Tribal Gaming Enterprise  
John McMahon, Weyerhaeuser  
Richard Meganck, Ecological Planning and Toxicology, Inc.  
Cheryl Perrin, Fred Meyer, Inc.  
Sarah Severn, Nike, Inc.  
Kevin Smith, State of Oregon, Economic Development Department  
India Simmons Tilton, Bob Royer Communications  
Jayme Smith de Vasconcellos, Centro LatinoAmericano  
Sara Vickerman, Defenders of Wildlife  
Martin Wistinsen, AgriNorthwest, Inc.  
Angela Wilson, The Skanner, Environmental Justice Action Group  
Rosita Worl, SeaAlaska Heritage Foundation

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **New National Opportunities Task Force Report**

#### **Introduction**

In *Sustainable America*, the PCSD recommended a set of actions that could help build a new framework to achieve our economic, environmental and social goals. As the report stated, "This means reforming the current system of environmental management and building a new and efficient framework..." The need for a new framework was based on the widely-held belief that the existing environmental regulatory system has served us well, but that a great deal more remains to be done.

The PCSD has worked collectively to plant the seeds of a new framework. Key features include performance standards, partnerships, collaboration, community involvement, flexibility with accountability and greater use of market forces. Now, it looks forward to nurturing the new framework as it begins to mature.

#### **Task Force Charge**

The Council asked the New National Opportunities Task Force to launch several initiatives to help implement and track the progress of the Council's recommendations, and to spread the word about the Council's report. Given this mandate, the task force could have focused on many topics. Given the available time, resources, and expertise of the task force members, the task force established three working groups: one working group undertook a study of the "lessons learned from collaborative approaches;" a second held a workshop to learn about progress implementing Extended Product Responsibility (EPR) and to encourage wider application of the concept; and a third conducted a workshop to learn about progress implementing eco-industrial parks, identify barriers to further implementation and create momentum for further progress.

### **Task Force Initiatives**

#### **Lessons Learned from Collaborative Approaches**

It is increasingly common for businesses, government, citizens and non-governmental organizations to find themselves participating in many collaborative efforts to solve environmental, social, and economic problems. They are doing so because collaborative approaches, it is commonly believed, lead to more comprehensive and acceptable outcomes at reduced cost than traditional regulatory and litigation-oriented approaches. Indeed, the PCSD, which is itself a collaborative process, recommended collaborative approaches to reform the environmental regulatory system, create an alternative regulatory path, and solve community- and ecosystem-based problems. The PCSD remains committed to collaborative strategies.



Yet, the majority of participants in formal collaborative processes know that with this great promise comes great challenges. Success depends on many factors--some common sense, others less obvious, and many not always practiced or universally understood. For this reason, the Task Force decided to examine some of the lessons that could be learned from a sampling of formal collaborative efforts now underway or recently completed. Specifically, the Task Force wanted to 1) document lessons learned from a diverse sample of collaborative processes; 2) identify when and under what circumstances collaborative approaches are useful and effective; 3) identify characteristics that are essential to successful collaborations and, conversely, the characteristics that cause collaborative processes to falter and fail; and 4) recommend next steps for evaluating collaborations.

The working group reviewed existing academic literature on collaborations, a variety of written project evaluations where they existed, and other published background materials for a number of high profile projects. The findings and recommendations presented below are based on these materials and the expertise of the PCSD working group.

**General Findings**

<b>Cases Studies Evaluated</b>
EPA's Common Sense Initiative (CSI)
EPA's Project XL (eXcellence and Leadership)
EPA's National Environmental Performance Partnership System
Great Printers Project
Pollution Prevention Pilot Project (4P)
PCSD I - Eco-Efficiency Auto Project
Regulatory Negotiation (compendium of 8 cases)
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration

***1. Stakeholders often realize significant benefits through collaboration.*** Although not every problem can be solved through collaboration, people and organizations collaborate because it 1) allows them to advance their own self-interests in ways consistent with others' self-interests, 2) may result in equal or better environmental and social outcomes at lower costs than traditional, more adversarial approaches, 3) creates multi-stakeholder ownership of the process, outcomes and measures of success which can spur positive changes in policy and practice, and 4) may

yield comprehensive geographic and sectoral solutions to complex societal problems by helping stakeholders understand each other's needs, recognize the needs of future generations and overcome institutional blind spots caused by narrow organizational missions, and traditional media-, pollutant-, or facility-specific approaches.

**2. Collaboration is a process that is helping us learn how to solve society's complex problems, and evaluation is a key to learning.** Learning can and should take place during and after a collaborative process. During collaboration the parties can learn in real-time, track short-term milestones, and take proactive steps to ensure the success of the project or program. After a collaboration, the participants or others can look back to learn whether the overall program or subparts of it met their objectives. Both forms of evaluation are important, although we need to recognize the difference between proactive, real-time learning and retroactive, after-the-fact learning. In either case, stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation. In some instances, it may be useful to engage an outside expert or organization to help guide, direct and implement the data collection and analysis. If the parties to collaboration have reached an impasse that causes a breakdown in the collaborative process, it may also be useful to seek the assistance of outside stakeholders to conduct the evaluation.

**3. Evaluations of collaborative efforts are rarely conducted either during or after a project.** When they have been conducted, they are not usually designed at the outset of the project, with adequate involvement of the diverse stakeholders who have an interest in the project's success or failure, or, as may be useful in some instances, with outside professional expertise to guide and assist participants in creating the evaluation. These shortcomings often lead to recommendations with little, if any, stakeholder buy-in. Because many of the collaborations reviewed are "works in progress" and the available evaluation materials were limited, it is not possible to determine whether the efforts had succeeded or failed. Despite these constraints, the existing evaluation materials are useful for identifying specific features of collaborations that can strengthen the process and results (See Finding 5).

**4. Collaborations are becoming more complex and evaluation processes must adjust accordingly.** In the past, a partnership was often viewed as a one-time collaboration such as a regulatory negotiation ("reg neg"), where a single party governed the process, many players participated, and the process had a discreet endpoint (e.g., writing a rule). Now references to collaborations often mean something different. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Project XL, Common Sense Initiative (CSI), and National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) are themselves long term collaborative efforts to create institutional frameworks that foster many simultaneous mini-collaborations and sequential negotiations or projects. For example, the EPA set up the XL framework to foster facility-specific agreements that would deliver more innovative and protective environmental solutions than would be expected under existing regulatory requirements. These new approaches indicate a fundamental change in how society solves its problems and requires evaluations at two levels--the overall framework and individual projects.

**5. Trust is essential and ownership of the process and outcomes fosters trust.** Stakeholders' trust in each other and in the "process" are the most important determinants of success for most projects. The most important determinant of trust is stakeholder ownership of the process, outcomes, and metrics of success. However, even when trust among stakeholders is difficult to obtain, collaboration can still be successful if the stakeholders trust the process. Although it is difficult to predict how much of an impact a particular problem will have on trust, it is certain that routine breakdowns in trust make it difficult to achieve the original goals of a project.

There are specific "characteristics" of a formal collaboration's objectives, process, and participants that will engender stakeholder trust and ownership. When present, they significantly increase the chances of success. A common theme underlying many of the characteristics is the importance of participants maintaining shared or equal power and influence. Not surprisingly, when collaborations first begin, influence and power are often unevenly distributed among the partners, with some partners having greater control over the process, resources and information. Success in collaboration seems closely linked to the ability of the participants to resolve or overcome these inequities.

## **Key Characteristics of Collaborative Processes**

### ***1. Characteristics of the Vision and Objectives***

Shared Vision and Objectives. Dedicating time and energy early in the process to define a shared vision and develop mutually agreeable objectives can be a powerful unifying and motivating force for project ownership. The case studies suggest that stakeholders should strive to be as specific as possible about their objectives early in the process, within their broadly agreed upon vision. When specificity is missing, stakeholders should be prepared to revisit the objectives later in the process.

Measurable Outcomes. The case studies indicate a general consensus that 1) projects should focus on quantifiable environmental and economic results, 2) agreed upon measures can strengthen ownership, and 3) a monitoring system should allow stakeholders to easily track results. Yet, in many of the case studies, performance measures do not exist. Despite the general lack of environmental and economic measures, all case studies examined (with the exception of the CSI and Project XL which cannot yet be fully evaluated) indicate a belief that they have had some successes.

### ***2. Characteristics of the Process***

Process is Equally Managed by Stakeholders. Shared management and decisionmaking authority is often critical to success. When one stakeholder or the convening party is viewed as having more control over the process or outcomes of a project than the others, difficulties sometimes arise.

## **Key Characteristics of Collaborative Approaches**

### *1. Characteristics of the Vision and Objectives*

- Shared Vision and Objectives
- Measurable Outcomes

### *2. Characteristics of the Process*

- Process is Equally Managed by Stakeholders
- Shared and Defined Decision making Process
- Up-Front Planning
- Conflict Resolution Clearly Defined
- Open Communications Among Participants

### *3. Characteristics of the Participants*

- Balanced and Inclusive Stakeholders
- Strong Leadership
- Create Stakeholders' Capacity to Participate
- Facilitators May Help and Should Apply Similar Tools

Shared and Defined Decisionmaking Process. Clearly defining both the decision rules and stakeholders' roles in decisionmaking early in the process is another critical feature for engendering ownership. When implemented correctly, a "consensus" decision rule is perhaps the most effective way to create ownership because it allows participants to present their views honestly while maintaining sufficient power to protect their interests. Whatever the decision rules, participants should have a role in developing them and share the power of decisionmaking. The more participants have at stake, the more critical it is to define clearly the decision-making processes.

Up-Front Planning. Organizations launching new collaborative efforts need advance plans for budgets and resources. Often, however, there is no such plan. The lack of planning, the reality that collaborative processes require more financial and human resources than many realize, and the routine delays in government procurement mean that it can take months or years to fund critical activities such as facilitation, research, travel, and consultants. Budget planning has also

affected the foundation community, as it has scrambled to keep up with requests from non-governmental organizations for resources to participate in collaborative efforts.

Conflict Resolution. Conflict resolution has two important features that should also be clearly defined at the beginning of the collaborative process. First, a facilitated process with a professional facilitator or co-management team of stakeholders can avoid or resolve most conflicts before they escalate. Second, because all conflicts cannot be avoided, clearly articulated and collectively developed conflict management ground rules should be established.

Open Communication Among Participants. Open and transparent formal and informal communication is critical for trust and ownership. Information that is withheld, or that is suspected of being withheld, threatens trust.

### *3. Characteristics of the Participants*

Balanced and Inclusive Stakeholder Participation. Balanced and inclusive stakeholder participation is critical and can be accomplished through a variety of techniques. "Balance" refers to the perspectives and interests that are brought to the collaboration. "Inclusivity" refers to the openness and reach of the invitation to participate. The objective, of course, is to find the "right" stakeholders--those that have a substantial interest in the issue and/or a role in its resolution.

Strong Leadership. Strong leadership is also a key to a successful collaborative process. For an organization such as the EPA that launches a new framework for cleaner, cheaper and smarter environmental protection such as the Common Sense Initiative, it is important to designate a leader or champion who provides strategic direction and moral support, secures or helps others secure financial support, and is willing to take risks to resolve an impasse in negotiations quickly and definitively. In other situations, a leader or leaders emerge during the process.

Capacity for Stakeholders to Understand Information. Because not all stakeholders come to a collaborative effort with the same knowledge or experience, it is typical for some stakeholders to feel left out of the process. This issue most often arises for citizens, public interest organizations and small businesses. It is important for all stakeholders who need them to have access to adequate information and financial and human resources to help them fully participate.

Facilitators May Help and Should Apply Similar Tools. In situations where stakeholders have significantly different perspectives, and do not begin a collaboration trusting one another or the process, a "third party" facilitator without a stake in the issue or debate can make a significant contribution to helping parties communicate and build trust. The key to a facilitator's success is independence and objectivity. Beyond independence and objectivity, successful facilitation involves helping participants establish a common vision and objectives, and develop clear decisionmaking rules and conflict resolution processes at the beginning of the process.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

***Step 1. Create a guidebook based on the "Key Characteristics" identified in this summary report as well as other materials publicly available.*** Experience and the literature both strongly suggest that the single greatest determinant of success for a collaborative process is the extent to which it has engendered ownership and trust.

***Step 2. Existing and future collaborative projects should establish ongoing processes for multi-stakeholder evaluations. The processes should include opportunities to make mid-course corrections and evaluate a project at its completion.*** The PCSD's search of the literature suggests that there is a shortage of comprehensive evaluations of specific collaborative processes conducted either during or after the collaboration. Even when they do exist, they have generally not been designed at the outset of the collaboration with input from all the stakeholders; nor have they clearly articulated interim milestones, final objectives, or feedback mechanisms to improve the process as it moves forward.

## **Extended Product Responsibility**

In *Sustainable America*, the PCSD endorsed the principle of Extended Product Responsibility as a means for industry, government and the environmental community to "identify strategic opportunities for pollution prevention and resource conservation" throughout the life cycle of a product (p. 38). The recommendation was based on two premises: that significant change is required for the United States to become more sustainable; and that change would only be incremental as long as all stages of economic activity are viewed separately--raw material supply, distribution, and product design, manufacture, use and disposal. Under an innovative system of Extended Product Responsibility (EPR), all participants in the product life cycle--designers, suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, users and/or disposers--share responsibility for the environmental effects of products and waste streams. "The greatest responsibility for EPR rests with those throughout the chain of commerce. . .that are in the best position to practice resource conservation and pollution prevention at lower cost" (p. 40).

EPR is a principle which can be applied by industry voluntarily, or by government as a regulatory requirement. A variety of tools can be used to implement EPR. As the PCSD report stated, "the tools used for a particular product category should be designed to achieve the desired change at the most appropriate links in the [product] chain, and where possible, by voluntary action" (p.42).

Some businesses in the United States are already implementing EPR. They are creatively and strategically doing so for a variety of reasons, including responding to mandates abroad, forestalling similar mandates in the United States, meeting corporate goals to "green" their products, and recognizing that products can be valuable assets even at the end of their useful life.

To showcase voluntary business initiatives, the New National Opportunities Task Force decided to sponsor a workshop on EPR.

### **Description of the EPR Workshop**

The workshop was co-sponsored by the EPA, and it brought together representatives from numerous businesses, trade associations, environmental groups, universities and state and federal governments. The major goals of the workshop were to: 1) enhance understanding of the principles of EPR; 2) demonstrate the various models, actors and industry sectors implementing EPR through presentation of case studies; 3) determine how best to educate the business community, government, environmental organizations and other non-governmental organizations about the benefits and challenges of EPR; and 4) encourage greater implementation of EPR.

### **Findings**

EPR is actively being implemented in the United States, and is bringing about significant changes in products and their associated environmental impacts upstream from and during manufacturing, during product use, and at the end of the product's "useful life." Though EPR is not yet a standard way of doing business in the United States, the participants agreed that the idea must spread to more products and players in this country.

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<b>EPR Workshop Case Studies</b>	
<u>Company</u>	<u>Project</u>
DuPont Films	PET Regeneration Technology
Ford Motor Co.	Bumper Take-Back and Recycling
Georgia-Pacific Corp	Recycled Urban Wood
Interface Flooring Systems, Inc.	Evergreen Program
S.C. Johnson Wax Co.	America Recycles Aerosols
Nortel	Product Life Cycle Management
Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corp.	Charge Up to Recycle
Rochester Midland Corp.	Office Building Cleaning
Safety-Kleen Corp.	Solvent Take-Back
U.S. CAR	Vehicle Recycling Partnership
Xerox Corp.	Asset Recycle Management

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**When government institutions decide that it is necessary to set environmental goals or mandates affecting a particular industry or product, government should, when possible, set performance**

standards, ensure appropriate public accountability for the performance standards, and leave implementation of the objective to the creative forces of the market system. This essentially takes the "control" out of the phrase, "command and control." EPR is a process that can be used to meet such government objectives or to address a problem before government becomes involved.

The case studies prompted discussion of the PCSD definition of EPR, contrasting it with the terminology and approaches taken abroad. Whereas the PCSD definition of "extended product responsibility" stresses shared responsibility of many players for the entire life cycle environmental impacts of products, the approach taken abroad--known often as Aextended producer responsibility@--typically places responsibility solely on producers or manufacturers, and only for the end-of-life disposition of the products. During the workshop, some participants suggested that the PCSD definition of EPR should be narrower and that not all of the projects presented at the workshop would qualify as EPR under a narrower definition. Others suggested that, in principle, it may be best to keep a broad definition. Nevertheless, there was general agreement among the participants that EPR is about sharing responsibility and reducing environmental impacts in all stages of a product's life cycle, not just reducing and recovering waste. In addition, participants agreed that a "one size fits all" approach to EPR will not work; by necessity, EPR approaches vary by product, market conditions, and the efforts of participants. Finally, many participants believed that rather than re-debating the definition of EPR, it is more constructive to focus on key features of EPR domestically and abroad that others can build upon or adapt.

Among the key features of EPR identified at the workshop are:

- companies taking on responsibility and addressing the environmental impacts of their products where they have not done so before;
- new ways of thinking of product delivery, such as recasting products as services or functions;
- rearranging institutional relationships throughout the chain of commerce to minimize wastes and the unnecessary consumption of raw materials;
- creating a feed-back loop with customers to drive environmentally sound redesign of products;
- closing the product loop and conserving resources by handling waste products as assets; and
- evaluating and reducing the life cycle impacts of products.

In discussions, participants identified key drivers and barriers. Many of the most common ones are listed below:



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### Common Drivers

- Increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Maintaining or improving competitive advantage
- Increasing efficiency of resource use
- Saving money and/or increasing profits
- Responding to actual or threatened regulatory requirements in the U.S. or abroad
- Advancing company's own goals for sustainability

### Common Barriers

- Lack of understanding of the concept
- Regulatory obstacles
- Insufficient analytical tools
- Customer acceptance
- Technical barriers
- "Free Riders" in voluntary systems
- Occasional lack of infrastructure for handling, reusing, and reprocessing of impaired assets (e.g. waste)
- Organizational barriers that create inertia

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Participants also generally agreed that there is a clear role for government in helping to overcome some of these obstacles, particularly spreading the word on EPR, removing regulatory barriers, creating appropriate regulatory signals, and providing encouragement and recognition.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

The workshop participants agreed that we should maintain the positive momentum on EPR that was demonstrated at captured in this workshop. Specific recommendations follow:

***Step 1) Create and maintain a focal point for promotion of EPR.*** Participants agreed that maintaining EPR's momentum requires a focal point. This focal point could be a Presidentially-appointed multi-stakeholder Aproduct responsibility@ panel, as recommended in the Sustainable America. Or, it could be a more informal steering committee of volunteers representing multiple stakeholders. Regardless of the final structure, it should have some stability and an adequate staff and budget to fulfill its mission.

**Step 2) Continue PCSD involvement.** Many participants felt that PCSD should continue its involvement, regardless of how the focal point is established. White House-level commitment to this issue will help to ensure that it spreads farther and faster to participants and sectors that are not yet engaged in EPR.

**Step 3) Promote further evaluation of case studies and demonstration projects.** There seemed to be agreement that the PCSD's recommendation to develop "models of shared responsibility" was accomplished, in many ways, by showcasing the case studies at the workshop. EPR could be promoted further by evaluating the potential for expanding individual cases to entire industries, and/or soliciting demonstration project proposals. Demonstration projects could attract the attention of private companies and other parties who are interested in recognition for adopting environmentally-sound practices and for creating partnerships. Such projects create opportunities to troubleshoot barriers, including regulatory barriers, and demonstrate solutions. PCSD involvement in some way would be critical to draw in proposals.

**Step 4) Maintain a role for government in EPR.** There was general agreement that government has a role in providing incentives for and removing obstacles to broader implementation of EPR. There are several specific possible roles for government:

Facilitate, educate, and disseminate. Disseminate information and provide education on EPR; bring parties together to explore opportunities for EPR; provide recognition for companies and others implementing EPR; and collect further examples of EPR (consistent with PCSD's definition). Though not agreed on, several participants pointed to the importance of government procurement to overcome customer acceptance obstacles.

Encourage the use of EPR as an efficient framework to solve environmental problems. When governments legislate, regulate or agree by consensus to establish or mandate an environmental objective, they should try to 1) set performance standards whenever possible, and 2) leave implementation to the creative forces of the market system, (which could be a voluntary EPR framework).

Overall, the workshop provided valuable insights into current EPR practices, and provided a forum for discussing key features of EPR, obstacles to its implementation and ideas for next steps. The enthusiasm of the participants illustrates that EPR has an important role to play in moving the United States toward sustainability.

## **Eco-Industrial Parks**

In *Sustainable America*, PCSD recommended that "Federal and state agencies assist communities that want to create eco-industrial parks... [as] new models of industrial efficiency, cooperation and environmental responsibility" (p. 104). Broadly defined, an eco-industrial park (EIP) is a community of businesses that cooperate with each other and with the local community

to efficiently share resources (information, materials, water, energy, infrastructure and natural habitat), leading to economic gains, improved environmental quality, and equitable enhancement of human resources for business and local community.

This new approach to economic development provides a unique opportunity for communities to create jobs and protect the environment in a way that respects basic community values. Although the PCSD's recommendation grows out of its support of four demonstration projects, many other communities around the country are also working on eco-industrial development. Because all the communities face significant challenges to move EIPs from theory into practice, the New National Opportunities Task Force, in conjunction with the Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches Task Force, convened a workshop of practitioners working on EIPs.

### **Description of the Workshop**

Co-sponsored by the PCSD, the Town of Cape Charles and Northampton County, Virginia, the workshop brought together representatives from 15 communities, businesses, resource organizations and federal, state and local governments (See community list inset). The workshop was held in conjunction with the groundbreaking for the Port of Cape Charles Sustainable Technologies Industrial Park. The purposes of the workshop were to 1) summarize and provide a status report on eco-industrial projects around the country, 2) increase support and the potential for success for all EIP efforts, 3) identify key issues and how communities are addressing them, and 4) discuss strategies for marshaling the necessary resources, expertise, and investment to move forward.

### **Case Studies Presented**

Baltimore, MD  
Brownsville, TX  
Burlington, VT  
Burnside, Nova Scotia  
Cape Charles, VA  
Tucson, AZ  
Chattanooga, TN  
East Shore EIP, CA  
Minneapolis, MN  
Plattsburgh, NY  
Raymond, WA  
Skagit County, WA  
Shadyside, MD  
London Derry, NH  
Trenton, NJ

### **Findings**

Eco-industrial development is a new model of economic development only recently being tested in communities around the nation. From the experiences of communities represented at the workshop, it is clear that long term progress will require the steadfast leadership, commitment and resources of governments, communities, and businesses (including the financial community). In addition, progress will require demonstrable benefits to business, quantifiable environmental results, as well as education, partnerships and community involvement. While it will take years, if not decades, to know whether society is making real progress in changing to this more sustainable model of economic development, it also is important to track short run progress to maintain momentum.

Workshop participants offered many excellent observations and suggestions for advancing eco-industrial development, which will be detailed in a subsequent proceedings document. Key findings and recommendations are summarized here:

***PCSD interest and leadership have legitimized a new way of looking at economic development that balances a community's economic, environmental and equity needs.*** According to workshop participants, PCSD has begun to meet its goal of building bridges among competing interests but has not yet completed the task.

***There are different models of eco-industrial development.*** Examples from the workshop varied widely: 1) a zero-emissions eco-industrial park, where businesses locate at the same site, 2) a virtual eco-industrial park, where businesses form a loose affiliation or network of related regional companies, and 3) eco-development, where nonindustrial establishments apply industrial ecology principles. The examples also show that eco-industrial development may be driven by a community, a local government, a nonprofit organization or by business. Whatever the model or driver, participants generally agreed that eco-industrial development requires broad support and will benefit from collaborative strategies.

***The role of the community has been important in nearly every case study.*** Public involvement has been central for most communities in developing a vision and plan, although in several communities local government, businesses and/or consultants have played a more central role. Those projects that have involved citizens early in the process have been able to rally the community around a common objective -- creating jobs, protecting the environment and preserving community social values. In general, however, communities lack the technical expertise or resources needed to develop their site's industrial ecology, design their baseline study, attract businesses and successfully manage an EIP. For this reason, they have looked to federal, state, and local resources to help launch their projects. In doing so, they have welcomed federal support, but would prefer that federal and/or state resource were consolidated to reduce transaction costs. Participants also suggest that political and community support has been needed to provide visibility and credibility to their planning and fundraising efforts.

***EIPs need to attract a variety of tenants.*** Workshop participants recognize that EIPs will need to attract and nurture small businesses, incubator companies, local enterprises and environmental technology firms, in addition to any large corporate tenants they can attract.

## **Key Steps for Every Eco-Industrial Park**

Forming an Industrial Ecosystem. An EIP must develop, at a minimum, an industrial ecosystem that reflects the linkage among the community's natural resources, existing and potential businesses, the transportation infrastructure, and material flows through the local and regional economy.

Attracting Tenants. An EIP needs to attract businesses that are compatible with the goals of the EIP and community, as well as create incentives for existing businesses to remain.

Management Structure. Managing a site involves many steps and can be approached in a variety of ways.

Financing. Private financing is critical to move projects beyond start up and for EIPs to become a common approach for economic development.

Performance Standards. Performance standards need to be developed and agreed upon during the design of the park.

***Private financing has been difficult to obtain because financial institutions are not familiar with the potential for EIPs to lower risk and increase rates of return.*** Institutionalizing EIPs as a new paradigm for economic development will require 1) financing that can be provided by private sector financial markets, 2) development that can be done by firms now viewed as conventional developers, and 3) business profits that are comparable to, if not greater than, traditional business investments. Since this will take some time to accomplish, in the short term, governments, communities, and progressive businesses have an important role in helping launch, pilot and nurture eco-industrial development so it can eventually be financed and managed through market mechanisms.

***Some environmental regulations discourage businesses from co-locating or partnering.*** Removing barriers to waste exchanges and allowing air emissions bubbling and trading at a particular site or within a region were two issues specifically identified by participants.

***Although not yet proven in practice, workshop participants strongly believe business can improve performance and save money (i.e., eco-efficiency) by participating in eco-industrial parks.*** The belief is based on the promise of synergies, economies of scale, and potential reductions in risk and liability offered by EIPs.

*Communication among practitioners should occur regularly and the exchange of information made easy.* Participants agreed that sharing challenges, strategies and successes is critical to further progress.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

Workshop participants identified many ideas for continuing development of EIPs. The list of recommendations is not exhaustive, but distills some important next steps and issues.

***Step 1) PCSD should maintain a leadership role.*** Participants believe that PCSD serves a unique role that no other current organization can easily fill, namely, the ability to bring all stakeholders to the table as equal partners.

***Step 2) A clearinghouse for information on eco-industrial development should be established.*** The clearinghouse could be a central location for literature and a World Wide Web site. PCSD would be important to helping it get started, but would not itself need to host the clearinghouse.

***Step 3) Formalize the network of people working on eco-industrial development.*** Create an EIP association to continue building networks of current and potential EIP communities, provide technical support, and develop outreach to businesses and the financial community.

***Step 4)*** The financial services industry, in partnership with business, government and others, should develop a toolkit of financing strategies for use by communities.

***Step 5) Easy community access to government-provided information and startup capital is critical.*** Attendees strongly recommend that the federal government coordinate with state and local governments and provide a one-stop resource center that more efficiently meets community needs. Funds for the one-stop center could be drawn from a variety of supporting agencies.

***Step 6) The PCSD should involve its own business members and other business representatives in creating support for EIPs.*** Businesses should be involved in 1) helping the financial community ensure that loans are available for all stages in the development of EIPs, including design, startup and strategic planning; 2) developing a dialogue with the financial services community about the safety and benefits of EIPs, brownfields and sustainable communities as investment opportunities, and 3) providing data from existing pollution prevention and waste exchange efforts to estimate cost savings of an industrial ecosystem approach versus a traditional development approach.

***Step 7) EPA, with support of PCSD, should identify and overcome regulatory barriers to hazardous waste exchanges.*** This could be done by creating a demonstration project for needed regulatory flexibility under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act or Clean Air Act. The

demonstration could be part of an existing brownfield, enterprise zone, or Community XL project.

*Step 8) A strong applied research program is needed to support EIPs and industrial ecology generally.*

*Step 9) Eco-industrial parks should be an important component of brownfields redevelopment strategies and future legislation.*

*Step 10) The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities, in cooperation with PCSD, should educate local and state political leaders about the opportunities provided by the eco-industrial development paradigm.*

*Step 11) Hold another workshop on eco-industrial parks in the spring of 1997 to continue the process begun at Cape Charles.* Work with Brownsville, Texas to hold a follow up conference in March 1997. Brownsville is planning to hold a workshop for businesses that can either locate or support their eco-industrial development. PCSD should support this effort.

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# CHAPTER 3

## International Leadership Task Force Report

### Introduction

Calendar of International Activities for 1997

Jan. 27 – Feb. 7	UNEP Governing Council Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya
March 13-19	Rio +5 Conference, Rio de Janeiro
April 8-25	UNCSD Meeting, New York
April 26-28	APEC Sustainable Development Ministerial Meeting, Toronto, Canada
May	G-7 Environmental Ministerial Meeting, USA
Late May	OECD Ministerial Meeting, Paris, France
June	North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation Ministerial, USA
June 23-27	UN General Assembly review of progress since the Rio Earth Summit, NY
June 20-22	G-7 Summit, Denver
December	Third Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto, Japan

Chapter 7, on "International Leadership", of *Sustainable America* addressed the inextricable links between America's security, prosperity and environment with that of the global community. Global scale economic, demographic and environmental trends increasingly demonstrate the interdependent nature of the world as we enter the 21st century. In turn, the size of the U.S. economy and the scope of U.S. influence around the world underscore the need for U.S. leadership in promoting sustainable development.

In working toward the recommendations in *Sustainable America*, however, PCSD members recognized their responsibility first and foremost to outline a domestic agenda for moving toward sustainable development. Therefore, the bulk of the PCSD's initial work was aimed primarily at sustainable development challenges at home. However, the report did strongly emphasize the need for U.S. leadership in encouraging worldwide efforts on behalf of prosperity, opportunity and a healthy environment. Prior to the completion of the report, an international working group

developed broad recommendations for international leadership. Chapter 7 opens with the following statement, expressing the rationale for U.S. international leadership in sustainable development:

The United States has both reason and responsibility to develop and carry out global policies that support sustainable development. Because of its history and power, the United States is inevitably a leader and needs to be an active participant in cooperative international efforts to encourage democracy, support scientific research, and enhance economic development that preserves the environment and protects human health. (*Sustainable America*, p. 155)

### **Task Force Initiatives**

The International Task force adopted a workplan focused on the continuing promotion of multi-stakeholder dialogues on sustainable development internationally, including efforts to prompt an exchange of information and experiences between and among national councils on sustainable development.

The Task Force:

- Surveyed PCSD members to determine whether they had occasion to speak about PCSD's work to international audiences;
- Developed options for member and/or PCSD participation in Rio+5 and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) meeting in April 1997;
- Discussed possible targeted interactions with other national councils; and,
- Recommended next steps for the Council beginning in 1997.

Task Force members also stressed the need to pursue substantive issues such as trade and the environment and ways to involve the private sector in Rio+5 and future PCSD initiatives. Finally, members recommended that each relevant federal agency be asked to assess and comment on its activities that pertain to the Chapter 7 recommendations on international leadership in *Sustainable America*. Members recommended that this survey be conducted at the earliest possible date.

### **A Propitious Time for U.S. Leadership: International Meetings in 1997**

The Earth Council, a Costa Rican based non-governmental organization under the chairmanship of Maurice Strong, the former Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), will host a meeting in Rio de Janeiro during March 13-19, referred to as "Rio+5". During these sessions, 450 non-governmental participants representing environmental, academic, business and other sectors will assess the progress of governments in achieving the objectives established by Agenda 21, the action plan agreed upon at UNCED. Participants will also assess the effectiveness of the current set of international institutional arrangements and recommend changes to the UNCSD. Rio+5 participants will also

discuss tools and techniques to spur sustainable development. It is hoped that new action alliances will emerge from this meeting.

The organizers of Rio+5 have invited the PCSD Co-Chairs to chair a round table discussion among up to 120 representatives of national councils, which are appropriate counterparts to the PCSD. The Co-Chairs have accepted this invitation. The International Task Force helped draft the agenda that the Co-Chairs will use to form the basis of this session, during which national councils will review their experiences in creating support for sustainable development.

This agenda was also used to conduct a joint meeting of the three North American national councils on sustainable development. PCSD Co-chair Jonathan Lash, and PCSD member Dianne Dillon-Ridgley attended this meeting held in Montreal, Quebec, on November 22. The meeting was convened by Canada's National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) at the request of the Earth Council, and hosted by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), established under the environmental side agreement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Also participating were representatives of Mexico's National Consultative Council on Sustainable Development (NCCSD).

Participants shared experiences about their own national councils and discussed efforts to operationalize sustainable development in their own countries. They identified barriers to the implementation of policies and activities in support of sustainable development as well as critical characteristics that allow national councils to endure and be most effective. Participants also identified suggestions for joint projects among the three national councils, including the development of indicators of sustainable development progress, and economic instruments such as tradeable permits and tax policy. Finally, participants discussed recommendations for Rio+5. Delegates to Rio+5 should: 1) ensure that decision-makers from all sectors are present; 2) avoid politicization and work to establish collaboration between the sectors; 3) establish a framework to formalize public participation; and, 4) highlight characteristics that make national councils long-lived and effective.

Finally, in 1997, two important meetings will be held under the auspices and direction of the United Nations. Agenda 21 called for the creation of the UNCSD to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED and examine implementation progress on Agenda 21. A fifth meeting of UNCSD is scheduled for April; following this, a Special Session of the UN General Assembly will be held in June. These meetings will provide additional occasions for the PCSD to share views on the value of the multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral dialogue in moving toward sustainable development.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

Given the PCSD's predominant domestic focus during its first phase, some procedural and many substantive international issues remain to be defined. Substantive issues raised but not explored

in Chapter 7 of *Sustainable America* include such international or transboundary issues as: deforestation, climate change, biodiversity, as well as trade and the environment. These issues will need further elaboration, under a continued PCSD. Most importantly, these issues should be addressed within a common framework that features two overriding principles emphasized in *Sustainable America*: 1) the development of public-private partnerships that collaboratively bring together all stakeholders to solve problems strategically through consensus-building within an appropriate regulatory context; and 2) the integration of policies that promote economic prosperity with policies that preserve and enhance environmental quality and encourage social equity.

***Step 1) The federal government and other appropriate sectors should address the issues and action items in Chapter 7 of Sustainable America during an extended implementation phase.*** The PCSD should monitor, respond to or further advise on policy regarding these issues and outstanding international issues originally stated in Chapter 7 of *Sustainable America* as follows:

**Action 1:** The federal government, assisted by nongovernmental organizations and private industry, should maintain scientific research and data collection related to global environmental challenges. Credible, complete, and peer-reviewed research and data are central to guiding U.S. policy and international deliberations.

**Action 2:** The federal government should cooperate in key international agreements-- from ratifying the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity to taking the lead in achieving full implementation of specific commitments made in international environmental agreements to which the United States is a party.

**Action 3:** The federal government should increase support for effective and efficient bilateral and multilateral institutions as a means to achieve national sustainable development goals.

**Action 4:** The federal government should ensure open access for, and participation of, nongovernmental organizations and private industry in international agreements and decision-making processes.

**Action 5:** The private sector should continue to move toward voluntarily adopting consistent goals that are protective of human health and the environment in its operations around the world.

**Action 6:** All sectors can promote voluntary actions to build commitments and incentives for resource efficiency, stewardship, information sharing, and collaborative decision making.

**Action 7:** The federal government should continue its efforts to ensure that international trade agreements do not threaten the validity of scientifically supported domestic health, safety, or environmental standards; and that they encourage the parties to improve their environmental and labor standards in fostering trade and in attracting foreign investment.

**Action 8:** Government at all levels should work with industry to increase U.S. exports of environmental technologies, with the aim of supporting and creating new (high-paying) U.S. jobs and contributing to the development of technologies to clean up or prevent pollution and monitor the environment for better warning of natural disasters and climate change.

**Action 9:** The United States should support the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development as a forum for nations to report on their progress in moving toward sustainability.

*Step 2) The PCSD should make recommendations to the government and other stakeholders as appropriate based on the priorities for action described in Chapter 7 of Sustainable America. Opportunities should be sought in all sectors to raise these issues in appropriate international fora and through up coming international activities.*

*Step 3) The PCSD should take advantage of the array of international events in 1997 to stimulate interest by other countries to explore establishment of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on sustainable development issues or to share experiences with other established national councils.*

*Step 4) Linkages should be established with other national (or regional) councils for sustainable development to identify appropriate cooperative activities. U.S. PCSD policy deliberations and implementation activities could be enriched by entering into an initiative of mutual interest to PCSD and another national council. Examples of two possible interactions that were discussed by the Task Force are highlighted below.*

- **Japan:** The Government of Japan has formed a Council for Sustainable Development (JCSD), with representatives from government, industry and NGOs. In September, the JCSD approved a work plan that is consistent with many of the PCSD's recommendations. Together, the U.S. and Japanese councils could initiate a dialogue exploring lessons learned through the multi-stakeholder process, as well as key issues mutually agreed upon. Of particular interest might be issues associated with the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). Chapter 7 (Action Item 2) notes the importance of U.S. support for key international agreements. Similarly, the JCSD is considering preparations for the third conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention to be held next year. Given the far-reaching nature of the climate change

issue and the important negotiations that will be conducted in Kyoto, a broad-based discussion between the two councils is promising.

- **China:** Given its enormous population and rapid economic growth, China's engagement in sustainable development is a critical, long-term issue. The Chinese government has developed an ambitious domestic "Agenda 21" plan to encourage sustainable development. In view of the need for all sectors in the two countries to explore common interests and parallel experiences, a targeted interaction with Chinese representatives would be a promising option for future PCSD work. This effort could be aimed at utilizing and augmenting existing inter-business, governmental and NGO relationships to promote shared understandings and enhanced communications about sustainable development. This targeted interaction would serve to highlight key "lessons learned" in joint activities with Chinese government agencies, local authorities and small industries. In addition, networks could be developed to link U.S. technical expertise and technology with relevant industry sectors in China. These illustrative examples could serve to facilitate a broad set of interactions between relevant government entities and industry sectors.

*Step 5) The PCSD should help forge a consensus among domestic stakeholders regarding U.S. actions on important and difficult sustainable development issues having an international dimension, e.g., biodiversity (ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity), climate change, trade and the environment, support for the United Nations and other international institutions working on sustainable development, environmental stewardship by private industry, etc.* Such a consensus could also help ensure that international commitments made by the United States are made part of U.S. national action on sustainable development issues.

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## CHAPTER 4

### Interagency Working Group Reports

Three interagency working groups were also formed to implement recommendations found in *Sustainable America*. Status reports of these working groups follow.

#### EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Education is a primary vehicle to help individuals and decision makers make informed choices that advance sustainability. In an effort to implement the PCSD education policy recommendations, initiatives have been identified and are described in *Education for Sustainability: An Agenda for Action*. The *Agenda for Action* is the result of a two-year collaborative effort among hundreds of leaders across the nation representing government, business, nongovernmental organizations, and educational communities.

It is designed to serve as a model for projects, programs and opportunities that will encourage education for sustainability as a critical part of a lifelong learning process.

The Education Working Group (EWG) was established to support partnerships among the education and extension networks, government, and the private sector. The EWG will provide leadership which supports:

- collaborative partnerships;
- interagency cooperation;
- federal policies;
- the development of an Executive Order on education for sustainability;
- coordinating and implementing education for sustainability programs; and
- a mechanism for providing input to the Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators.

As a complement to the EWG, the Office of Education for Sustainability (OES) is providing national and international leadership in education for sustainability. This newly-established office will facilitate implementation of the education policies of the PCSD. More specifically, OES will report on the status and future of education for sustainability, provide technical assistance to education leaders, manage federal interagency working groups, promote linkages with PCSD task forces and working groups, and coordinate outreach efforts. This office will promote a consistent message which supports education for sustainability; fosters partnerships between the public and private sectors; and advances the

Administration's commitment to a healthy environment; world-class education and a prosperous economy.

## **Working Group Initiatives**

### **Business Forum for Sustainable Development**

The business community has an expressed interest in our nation's educational system because the students of today are the workforce of tomorrow. Business brings a number of resources to the table, from financial support to technical skills to research.

Business can support education for sustainability through mentoring programs, internships, school-to-work opportunities, bring professionals into classrooms as guest teachers and students into the business environment to observe how employees tackle real-world problems. A business forum can advance education for sustainability by bringing together diverse businesses to train employees, shift production processes, educate communities about sustainable business practices and participate in curriculum development with professional societies and graduate schools. A national business forum will be modeled after a regional effort led by Herman Miller Furniture in Western Michigan. Herman Miller created a regional business forum comprising thirty diverse companies to focus on sustainable business practices, from process through production. This is one example of the positive role businesses can play in promoting sustainability.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

*Step 1) Convene a national forum on how to build regional business collaboratives.*

*Step 2) Identify model sustainable businesses.*

*Step 3) Provide leadership to implement the Agenda for Action or newly-identified initiatives.*

### **National Sustainable Development Extension Network**

A national Sustainable Development Extension Network (SDEN) will build on existing federal extension services, such as the Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension System, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, the Department of Commerce Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Space Grant Program, and the Small Business Administration Small Business Development Centers. A national sustainable development extension network will utilize existing infrastructure, coordinate national policy and programs, and respond to community needs related to sustainability. This network will help achieve the education, training, information, and technology transfer objectives needed to assist communities, states, or regions in planning a sustainable course of action designed to address local needs and concerns.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

*Step 1) Host federal strategy meetings.*

*Step 2) **Convene regional focus groups with local representatives of each network partner.***

*Step 3) **Create a Memorandum of Understanding between USDA, NOAA, MEP, NASA and SBDCs.***

*Step 4) Identify existing collaborations among extension services to serve as models.*

*Step 5) Identify one to three place-based initiatives to pilot a user-driven process for the extension network to provide assistance.*

## **School Construction Initiative**

The proposed **School Construction Initiative** provides for \$5 billion in federal subsidies for new school construction and renovation bonds over the next four years. With extensive renovation and new construction being undertaken across the country, there is an opportunity to promote energy efficiency and pollution reduction in our schools with an estimated 25% projected savings of the current energy budget. We will continue to work with EPA to determine if Project XLC could be used to help provide a regulatory streamlining incentive for schools to provide superior environmental performance. EPA could also consider granting emission reduction credits for community initiatives in land use planning which could be traded. We are also working with DOE to determine how their Aconservation protocol@ which sets a performance-based standard for energy efficiency in public buildings could be used to leverage financing. This program also provides an opportunity for a comprehensive education program associated with this initiative building upon building design, pollution reduction, waste stream management, and community decisionmaking, and utilizing a multi-disciplinary curriculum on sustainability will give local, relevant importance to complex issues faced by individuals, organizations, and communities.



## **Recommended Next Steps**

*Step 1) Work with Department of Education to integrate energy efficiency and pollution reduction methods into the School Construction Initiative.*

*Step 2) Ensure that the School Construction Clearinghouse has comprehensive resources on energy efficiency and pollution reduction.*

*Step 3) **Identify models of green school design which can be shared with schools around the country.***

## **State Capacity Building**

The process of building state capacity to integrate concepts of sustainability into existing formal and nonformal education programs and lifelong learning opportunities is essential to developing national literacy in education for sustainability. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), have supported a public-private education partnership. This

partnership has created capacity among fifty state teams and continues to develop new and innovative ways to provide resources and expertise to states for capacity building, curriculum enhancement, public/private partnerships, and professional development will be sought. Federal agencies will work collaboratively with state teams organized through this initiative and private sector partners such as the National Environmental Education Advancement Project.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

*Step 1) Host a national round table to discuss approaches to coordinated state action plans and share replicable models.*

*Step 2) Produce a national video conference which provides state teams with access to leading expertise and concepts of sustainability. This will provide state teams with methods of integrating education for sustainability into educational programs consistent with Goals 2000 and subject area content guidelines.*

### **International Program**

As a follow-up to US leadership during the UNCSD (April 1996), the Office of Education for Sustainability and the State Department will work with UNESCO to develop the Work program that was requested by the UNCSD. The State Department is leading an effort to develop and maintain an Internet-based international database of education for sustainability resources and programs.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

*Step 1) **Actively work with UNESCO to design the Work programme for the UNCSD.***

*Step 2) Identify US and international resources which support education for sustainability.*

*Step 3) Create and maintain an electronic network of international resources.*

*Step 4) Plan workshops and presentations for the UNCSD conference in New York (April 1997).*



## **THE INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS (SDI GROUP)**

Since the PCSD report recommendation that **"the federal government should continue and intensify the current interagency effort to develop national indicators of progress toward sustainable development"** and the White House pledge on March 7, 1996, to **"Formalize an Interagency Group on Sustainable Development Indicators"** with the support of all the federal agencies participating on the PCSD, @ the SDI Group has made considerable progress.

The PCSD recommendation and the Administration response suggest that indicator work is central to efforts to move toward sustainability. Many constituencies in the United States with widely diverse interests are beginning to consider how to shift their actions toward a more sustainable course. Information on how their economic, environmental and social concerns interact and indicators of trends will be highly useful to decision-makers in government, firms, organizations and households.

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Energy, Interior, Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, State, Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA and others are participating in a collaborative effort to create a framework for indicators of sustainable development and an initial set of indicators for a report due in early 1997. The work has included meetings with young people (October 1), major corporations (October 9), non-governmental organizations (October 10) and community organizations (November 22 and 23) to solicit comments and ideas from each of these interests. This outreach was recommended by the Council.

The annual process of selecting and reporting sustainable development indicators centers around a comprehensive framework designed to make clear what is meant by sustainable development and why it is important. The framework has three basic elements: endowments, processes and current output and results.

### **What are the products of the Working Group?**

- **An information access system** which facilitates easy, low-cost, user-friendly electronic access to federal data and information relevant to indicators for sustainable development.
- **Coordination of federal agency development and analysis of national indicators for sustainable development** and, as resources allow, facilitation of efforts to develop regional and local indicators. The initial set of indicators will be included in the January 1997 report.
- **Regular reports** providing information on progress in the development of sustainable development indicators, which can contribute to U.S. reports to international organizations on sustainable development.
- **Recommendation of a long-term strategy** through which all levels of government, NGO's and industry can contribute to the development of indicators of progress towards sustainability.

### **Why is this a good idea?**

- **Decision-makers and the public can use sustainable development indicators to support their decision-making and integrative management of economic, social and environmental concerns.**

- It is inexpensive, drawing on existing programs and capabilities for the next few years.

## **MATERIAL AND ENERGY FLOWS WORKGROUP**

The report by the President's Council on Sustainable Development resulted in the establishment of an Interagency Workgroup on Materials Flows in March, 1996. At that time, the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Science and Technology Policy agreed to set up and jointly chair a workgroup which would focus more government attention on issues surrounding material and energy flows as an important element of industrial ecology.

### **PURPOSE**

Stewardship of natural resources, efficiency of economic production, and quality of the environment are all affected by the flow of materials and energy through our economy. Until recently, little attention was paid to total materials consumption and how to make it more efficient and less polluting, while leaving sufficient resources for future generations. Industrial ecology is an emerging science which provides the conceptual tools to analyze and optimize the flow of energy and materials in our production systems.

The workgroup provides a forum for collaboration between agencies of the federal government on information about the materials and energy used in the United States. It also provides a point-of-contact for industry, academia, NGO's, and state and local governments who are interested in collaborating with the federal government on these topics. The information and case studies being gathered by the group can better inform decisions about policy and purchasing by governments, corporations, and individuals.

### **PROJECTS**

A report will be prepared in the spring of 1997 to discuss the program of work and progress-to-date in detail. The workgroup is presently working in four different areas:

#### **1) Materials Flow Report**

The group plans to publish a report which will include a presentation of the total materials use in the United States with information provided by all participating agencies.

#### **2) Industrial Ecology and Energy and Materials Case Studies**

To complement the report, a number of case studies are being developed. These will contain examples of local or sectoral improvements in materials flow whether in improved

efficiency, reduction of emissions, increased recycling or all of them combined. Possible case studies include the recycling of building materials from construction and demolition sites, capturing sulfur from flue gas to recycle into gypsum for wallboard and the flow of materials and energy at an eco-industrial park.

### **3) Federal Inventory of Material Flow Data**

A comprehensive inventory of federal databases on material and energy flows is being developed. Databases will contain information on topics such as mineral resources, Internet sources, and waste data. A central web site is being planned to point to data.

### **4) Outreach and Education**

Information on the importance of materials in our daily lives is being developed to illustrate how consumer choices and consumption patterns impact material flows and waste streams. The goal is to produce a number of non-technical articles in the popular press as part of a process of public education. The first article, on materials use in toothpaste, is in draft. In addition, a web site will be developed to provide easy access to data, reports, and research of the workgroup. Outreach includes links to national labs and academic institutions in the United States and Europe.

### **Agencies participating in the Interagency Group:**

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce

Department of the Interior

Department of Energy

Environmental Protection Agency

Department of Housing and Urban Development

## CHAPTER 5

### Outreach

The importance of reaching out to share the work of the Council with others cannot be overstated. In *Sustainable America*, the Council stated that "Our most important finding is the potential power of and growing desire for decision processes that promote direct and meaningful interaction involving people in decisions that affect them." Through outreach, we enhance the opportunities for people to become involved in those decisions by promoting a better understanding of the concepts of sustainable development and building a larger, stronger constituency for pursuing sustainability.

Myriad efforts have been undertaken to get the word out. Generally, they fall within four categories:

#### **Speeches, Presentations, and Papers**

Council members, liaisons, and staff have delivered countless speeches and presentations on the work of the Council at conferences, workshops, and meetings around the world. Audiences for these presentations run the entire spectrum--citizens, business professionals, government officials, scientists, students, and beyond. Many of these briefings have been at the highest levels, such as Habitat II, other national Council meetings, meetings of the UNCSO, and meetings of the G-7 Environment Ministers.

#### **Special Events**

In addition to participating in events organized by others, the Council has held several notable events of its own. For example, a recent day-long event to release the **Sustainable Communities Task Force report** brought together over 250 participants. The event featured presentations from key leaders of the task force and offered opportunities for all to further discuss the issues presented in the report. Connections were made with the recently concluded United Nations conference on sustainable communities, Habitat II, through a panel discussion co-sponsored by the U.S. Network for Habitat II. The panel presented the outcomes of the conference and made suggestions for next steps that should be taken domestically. Representatives of organizations and federal agencies that are serving as resources for communities interested in sustainable development were also given opportunities to highlight their work.

The Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches Task Force sponsored "Information for Sustainable Communities," a session for non-federal government organizations that provide information and technical assistance on creating more sustainable communities. The purpose of the session was to build knowledge among these groups on their current and



future projects, constituency base, and information-sharing mechanisms to identify potential areas for collaboration and for filling gaps in currently existing information. This meeting also introduced the work of the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities and provided an opportunity to discuss how the JCSC could add value to existing efforts.

**The Office of Education for Sustainability, along with the Smithsonian Institution, hosted an all-day release event and round table discussion about Education for Sustainability: An Agenda for Action.** The report serves as the implementation plan for education recommendations in *Sustainable America, Bridge to a Sustainable Future*, and the National Forum on Education About the Environment. The event gathered national leaders to discuss implementation strategies.

Finally, Global Environmental Options held a follow-up meeting to "Information for Sustainable Communities" by bringing together leaders who are using the Internet to disseminate information on sustainable development. Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. EPA, the two-day event was co-sponsored by the local task force; it engaged a diverse group of practitioners in discussions about the potential and pitfalls of using the Internet, the need for ongoing mechanisms to coordinate web sites, and additional issues about use of these emerging technologies to promote sustainable development.

### **Internet Website**

**The Council also maintains its own website on the Internet, as part of the White House home page.** The site contains information on the work of the Council, its members, and its reports-- Sustainable America and several task force reports. Maintaining this presence allows the Council to disseminate its work worldwide and also tap into the vast supply of ideas through a feedback mechanism.

### **Distribution of *Sustainable America***

To date, nearly 20,000 copies of the report have been distributed world wide and distribution continues through targeted mailings, the Internet, and a toll-free phone ordering system. The report will be translated into Spanish, Japanese, and Portuguese. A paraphrased summary of the report has been translated into German.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

In addition to continuing the outreach efforts described above, the following are recommended:

*Convene information providers.*

**Action 1:** The PCSD should continue to convene diverse, multi-stakeholder, multi-sector constituencies to discuss key opportunities and barriers to implementation of sustainable development at the local, state, and regional levels. As part of these efforts, the PCSD should continue to convene round table discussions among information providers to facilitate information exchange and to promote collaboration and the identification of gaps in available information.

Where appropriate, the PCSD should work with the JCSC to convene a wide array of experts to discuss sustainable community issues and begin to formulate strategies for local government.

**Action 2:** As a next step to the interagency review of Sustainable America, the PCSD should convene a meeting among federal agencies to share information on federal programs to promote sustainable communities.

***Coordinate and cooperate with the proposed Congressional Sustainable Development Caucus.***

**Action 1:** Should a sustainable development caucus be developed in Congress, the PCSD should offer to assist, coordinate, and work with the caucus to promote sustainable development including keeping Congress informed of federal agency programs, local initiatives, and other information helpful in promoting its work.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Overarching Recommendations**

In looking toward the future, the process of pursuing sustainable development will have many paths and contain many obstacles. All of us can make major contributions in our homes, in our work, and in our communities. But lasting success will not be achieved by government, or businesses, or the non-profit sector, or individual citizens working alone. It will take all of us working together.

Despite the countless examples of locally-driven activities, there is still a great need for concerted action and leadership at the national level. As illustrated in our report, the federal government has a unique role to play in fostering sustainable development across America and around the world. It is also our firmly held belief that the Council itself can continue to play a critical role in this effort as it has with its work on Collaborative Approaches, Metropolitan Strategies, and Rio+5.

Specific recommendations of ways in which the Council and the federal government can help move the nation toward sustainability are contained throughout this document as well as the original report. These range in scale and scope from actions related to specific projects to significant shifts in federal policy. Each is valuable and merits serious consideration. Overarching those many recommendations are three major steps that will move our nation in the right direction.

**1) Fully Integrate Sustainable Development into Your Second Term Agenda.** With the Council's recommendations and the inventory of existing Administration programs and activities commissioned by the Vice President, you have the raw material needed to ensure that the goals and principles of sustainable development are integrated into your Administration's second term agenda. We encourage you to assign clear responsibility for sustainable development to an entity within the White House which would have the authority to coordinate and integrate economic, social, and environmental policy throughout the Executive Branch.

**2) Fully Participate in International Sustainable Development Activities in 1997.** Next year's observance of the fifth anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio will provide several opportunities for the United States to demonstrate continued international leadership on sustainable development. We encourage you to ensure that the U.S. government fully participates in these fora. In addition, the United States could host a national meeting on sustainable development strategies in advance of the June 1997 G-7 Summit in Denver.

**3) Extend the Life of the President's Council on Sustainable Development.** The Council serves many unique and important roles. We encourage you to extend the life of the Council to perform four important functions:

A) *Forging Consensus on Policy.* The Council is an open and inclusive process in which policy ideas are exchanged, debated, and ultimately forged into a consensus. There are economic, environmental, and social policy issues that merit further consideration by the Council;

B) *Demonstrating Implementation of Policy.* The Council provides a multi-stakeholder forum in which diverse interests can work together in a collaborative fashion on projects that demonstrate the implementation of sustainable development in the real world;

C) *Getting The Word Out.* Sustainable development must be realized largely through many decentralized efforts; nevertheless, the Council can serve a critical role in gathering and disseminating information that inspires the adoption of sustainable practices across America; and

D) *Evaluating and Reporting on Progress.* The Council is uniquely qualified to track, evaluate, and report on our nation's progress in building a Sustainable America.

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