

# Protecting Our Environment and Public Health

President Clinton and Vice President Gore came into office committed to demonstrating that a strong economy and a clean environment go hand-in-hand. Over the past eight years, the Clinton-Gore Administration has proven it: we now have the strongest economy and the cleanest environment in a generation. This Administration has invested in a common sense and cost-effective approach of new technologies, tougher enforcement of environmental laws, strengthening public health standards, and protecting our irreplaceable national treasures. President Clinton's environmental strategy has given our nation the cleanest air and water in a generation and the strongest economy in our nation's history — proving that you can both protect the environment and grow the economy.

## Producing Cleaner, Healthier Communities

### **THEN: Communities faced toxic waste dumps, dirty air and poor water quality**

In 1992, America's communities faced serious environmental problems. Lethargic federal clean-up efforts left 88 percent of the worst 1,200 toxic waste sites and their communities polluted after 12 years of federal efforts. Nearly 40,000 urban industrial sites sat abandoned with no federal strategy to redevelop them. Sixty-two million people lived in areas with drinking water below federal standards; nearly 157 million people — 62 percent of the country — breathed air that failed to meet federal standards

### **NOW: More families live in cleaner, healthier communities**

President Clinton and Vice President Gore brought a renewed commitment to protecting and preserving the environment and today, more families live in cleaner, healthier communities.

- They strengthened the Safe Drinking Water Act, requiring America's 55,000 water utilities to provide regular reports to their customers on the quality of their drinking water.
- The Clinton-Gore Administration adopted the toughest standards ever on soot and smog, which could prevent up to 15,000 premature deaths each year. They have announced significant reductions in tailpipe emissions from cars, light trucks and SUVs as well as reducing the level of sulfur in gasoline by 90 percent. Over the coming decade, these measures will cut smog-causing pollution from new vehicles by 77 to 95 percent, preventing 4,300 premature deaths, 260,000 asthma attacks among children, and 173,000 cases of childhood respiratory illness each year.
- The Administration also launched a long-term effort to restore pristine skies

and unspoiled views at the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Acadia and the Great Smoky Mountains National Parks and other natural treasures that draw 290 million visitors a year. And they announced a strategy to reduce harmful emissions of smog-causing nitrogen oxides and particulate matter from heavy-duty trucks and diesel fuels by over 90 percent,

- The Clinton Administration accelerated the cleanup of the nation's worst toxic waste sites, freeing scores of communities from environmental threats and economic blight, completing clean-up of more than three times as many Superfund sites in the past eight years as were cleaned in the past eight. The President also launched initiatives to accelerate the cleanup of brownfields and remove barriers to their redevelopment.
- The Administration also expanded Americans' Right to Know about environmental hazards in their communities by doubling the number of chemicals that companies must report.

### Critical Leadership for Clean Air

*"Cleaning up big, dirty diesel trucks is critical to meet our nation's air quality goals and to protect the public health... We commend EPA Administrator Browner and President Clinton for proposing this forward-thinking effort."*

— **John M. Coruthers, Jr., President, American Lung Association** on the Administration proposal to clean up all heavy-duty trucks and buses and dramatically reduce sulfur in diesel fuel starting in the 2007 model year.

*"A lot can be done by nurses like myself to educate children and parents on how to live with asthma. It also takes strong leadership in government to reduce the pollution that has often been linked to asthma. [President Clinton is] a man who has used his high office to make cleaning the air and protecting children's health a priority."*

— **Gloria Hackman, School Nurse, Maury Elementary School, Alexandria, Virginia, Ms.** Hackman administers the Open Airways For Schools class — a program to teach asthmatic children how to cope with asthma — and spoke at an event with the President to announce the final standards of the Tier II/Low Sulfur Gasoline Rule, which will improve air quality by reducing pollution from vehicles by up to 95 percent by 2009.

### Brownfields and Superfund Initiatives Revitalize America's Communities

*"This is what urban revitalization is all about. This very site, which used to be the scourge of Fairfield County, is now the region's most exciting new entertainment venue.... I'd be genuinely*

*surprised if there's a more dramatic example of success with brownfields reclamation than right here at our ball park."*

— **Mickey Herbert, majority owner, the Bridgeport Bluefish Baseball team, Bridgeport, Connecticut**, on the state of the art Harbor Yard sports complex — a former Brownfield.

*"This allows us to participate in a program that is national in scope and touches just about every state... There are going to be many, many more fields where kids can play on that wouldn't be there except for EPA working with the United States Soccer Foundation."*

— **Herb Giobbi, Executive Director, U.S. Soccer Foundation** on the EPA/USSF partnership to help communities build soccer fields on former Superfund sites.

### **Clinton-Gore Administration Empowers Communities by Expanding the Right-to-Know**

*"I have seen firsthand how important it is for communities to know what chemicals are being dumped into the environment. I applaud the Clinton Administration for working to make sure that all communities can know — after all, this affects our health, our children's health and our future."*

— **Lorraine Ross, Clean Water Community Activist, San Francisco, California**. Lorraine Ross, fearing for the health of her family, started a campaign 18 years ago that led to the discovery that toxic chemicals had leaked from underground tanks at a local corporation into a nearby drinking-water well.

*"The President has been such an extraordinary leader in fighting for the environment and protecting public health. Before "right to know," people didn't know what chemicals were being released into the environment. Now, times are changing, people and companies are more aware and our communities are better for it."*

— **Doris McGuigan, Environmental Activist, Baltimore, Maryland**.

### **Preserving America's Treasures for Future Generations**

#### **THEN: America's natural areas at risk**

In 1992, many of America's natural treasures were at risk of development. A massive gold mine proposed not far from Yellowstone National Park threatened the world's first national park with toxic runoff and other environmental harm. Many were calling for more oil drilling in sensitive coastal areas and in areas like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. More than half of the historic wetlands in the continental United States had been lost.

**NOW:** Preserved and protected millions of acres of parks, monuments and wilderness  
President Clinton and Vice President Gore have rededicated America to wise stewardship of our natural resources with the goal of ensuring that our generation will leave a better land for generations to come.

- From the Red Rock Canyons of Utah to the Florida Everglades, President Clinton and Vice President Gore have preserved millions of acres in national parks, national monuments and wilderness areas.
- The Clinton-Gore Administration has also launched major reforms to reverse the loss of precious wetlands, setting a goal of a net increase of 100,000 acres of wetlands a year by 2005.
- The President defended Yellowstone National Park from potential toxic runoff from a proposed gold mine near the Park's boundary, and acquired land near the Park to expand critical habitat for bison.
- The Administration has also strongly opposed efforts to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the President vetoed legislation that would have opened the Refuge to new exploration.
- President Clinton worked with Congress to provide dedicated and protected funding for conservation and preservation programs, including his Lands Legacy initiative. The agreement will nearly double our investment in these programs, making it the largest annual investment in protecting our green and open spaces since President Roosevelt set our nation on the path of conservation nearly a century ago.
- The Administration is now working to provide long-term protection for more than 40 million acres of roadless areas within national forests.
- In addition, President Clinton and Vice President Gore protected America's oceans and coasts by extending the moratorium on new oil leasing off most of the U.S. coast through 2012, and permanently barred new leasing in national marine sanctuaries. The U.S. was also the first nuclear power to advocate a global ban on ocean dumping of low-level radioactive waste.

#### **Leadership to Preserve National Treasures for Future Generations**

*"If my grandfather were here today, he would be overjoyed with what the Forest Service, the Department of Agriculture, and the President are about to do. Perhaps the greatest challenge in conservation in our generation is to develop the political will to set aside enough of nature to sustain the diversity of plants and animals we ultimately depend on."*

— **Peter Pinchot, Conservationist.** Peter Pinchot is the grandson of Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service under President Teddy Roosevelt and one of American history's most constructive land conservation leaders.

*"To save these last, vast pieces of wild country from haphazard development means that my sons' children will have room as we do, to get lost or find their bearings, to meet in themselves some long forgotten ancestor's resourcefulness and grit, to take heart...Mr. President thank you for protecting this magnificent place for our future generations."*

— **Ann Walka, Conservationist, Flagstaff, Arizona,** on the proclamation of the Grand Canyon  
— Parashant National Monument.

### **Managing and Using the Oceans Wisely**

*"If we are to protect, manage and use the oceans wisely, we must understand how they work. We are pleased to see that research is an important component of the Administration's agenda and applaud their efforts."*

— **Robert B. Gagosian, Director, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.**

## **Protecting the Environment and Growing the Economy**

**THEN: Environmental opponents force choices between clean environment and strong economy.**

In 1992, special interests and polluters defeated progress by saying that America could not protect the environment and grow the economy. The false choice between the economy and the environment resulted in weak standards and lax enforcement that failed to hold polluters responsible. Meanwhile, the country had just begun to take steps to reward conservation and tap the economic potential of environmental technology and business. Little was being done in this country to address climate change. Opponents were seriously challenging the science, and businesses opposed any climate action. Many questioned whether economies could grow and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**NOW: Strongest economy in a generation and a cleaner environment.**

President Clinton and Vice President Gore were determined to prove that a strong economy and a clean environment go hand-in-hand. They worked to grow green businesses by encouraging and rewarding new environmental technologies and

significantly increased efforts to hold polluters accountable. Sound, common-sense approaches to climate change are putting the United States and other nations on the path to a clean energy future, ensuring a healthier environment while creating new opportunities for strong, sustainable growth. These efforts are expanding markets for renewable technologies, reducing air pollution, and serving as a powerful example to American businesses and consumers who can reap substantial benefits from clean energy.

- The Clinton Administration launched the Climate Change Technology Initiative to spur the development of clean energy technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that lead to global warming while saving money and creating jobs.
- The Administration also launched the National Environmental Technology Strategy to strengthen partnerships with the environmental business community and expand the federal government's role in spurring innovation and growth in the industry. The Administration has also worked to promote the export of U.S. technology and expertise overseas. Since 1993, exports based on environmental technology and industry have more than doubled.
- The Administration has secured more than \$13 billion over the past eight years for scientific research to ensure that our strategy for climate change is founded on the best possible science.
- The Administration has launched more than 50 major initiatives to improve energy efficiency and develop clean, renewable energy sources — steps that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions while saving money and creating jobs. Over the past three years, the President has secured more than \$3 billion — a 50% increase in annual funding — to research and develop clean energy technologies.
- The Administration has forged thousands of new partnerships with major industries to promote voluntary, cost-effective efforts that can achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. These include the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles (PNGV), the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH), Energy Star, Climate Wise, and Industries of the Future.
- President Clinton has made the Federal government a cleaner, more efficient energy consumer — contributing to a 21 percent energy reduction since 1985 and a 24 percent reduction in carbon emissions relative to 1990 levels. In 1999 alone, the Federal government reduced its annual energy bill by \$800 million. By 2010, the resulting energy savings will reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equal to taking 1.7 million cars off the road - and save taxpayers over \$750 million a year.

- New energy-efficiency standards, implemented by this Administration, for heating and cooling equipment, water heaters, lighting, refrigerators, clothes washers and dryers, and cooking equipment will cut the average appliance's energy use by 30 percent. By 2010, these energy conservation measures will have saved consumers almost \$50 billion and avoided cumulative greenhouse gas emissions of more than 225 million metric tons.
- In 1997, with critical leadership from Vice President Gore, representatives of more than 160 nations agreed on the basic architecture of an international strategy to combat global warming. This historic agreement — the Kyoto Protocol — sets strong, realistic targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from industrialized countries, establishes flexible, market-based mechanisms to achieve them as cost-effectively as possible, with binding legal consequences if countries fail to meet them. The Kyoto Protocol remains a work in progress. Through ongoing negotiations, the Administration has worked with other nations to turn the treaty's broad concepts into working realities so this important treaty can be ratified. The Administration has promoted broader engagement in 55 developing countries in this global effort, with impressive results in key countries such as China, India, Argentina, Bolivia and Kazakhstan.
- President Clinton and Vice President Gore have significantly increased enforcement of environmental laws. Last year, EPA assessed a total of \$228.3 million in civil and criminal penalties, the most ever assessed and \$87 million more than in 1992. In addition, the EPA referred 241 criminal cases to the Justice Department, 322 defendants were charged and 2,500 total months of sentences were handed down, more than doubling enforcement activity in each category over 1992 levels.

**Climate Change Technology Task Force is Moving America Toward Reducing Green House Gases While Growing the Economy**

*"The Clinton Administration deserves credit for seeing energy efficiency for what it is - an energy source that is essential for the economic health of our nation. The Climate Change Technology Initiative in particular is spurring new clean energy technologies that are paying off like a gusher for the American people. The important choices on energy and climate must be made with a clear eye on the contribution to the environment, the economy, national security, and international competitiveness delivered in the past and promised for the future by energy-efficiency."*

**— David M. Nemtzw, President, Alliance to Save Energy**

## Protecting the Environment and Improving Public Health

- **More Americans Have Safe Drinking Water:** The number of Americans with safe drinking water has increased by 23.2 million since 1993. In 1993, 79 percent of Americans lived in areas with tap water that meets all federal standards. Today, more than 90 percent live in areas served by systems that meet all federal standards.
- **More Americans Breathe Clean Air:** The number of Americans living in communities meeting clean air standards has increased by 44 million since 1992. New strong standards on smog and soot could prevent up to 15,000 premature deaths a year, and improve the lives of millions of Americans who suffer from respiratory illnesses
- **More Than Three Times as Many Toxic Waste Sites Cleaned:** Since 1993, the Administration has completed more than 620 cleanups of Superfund sites — more than three times as many as were completed in the previous 12 years. Cleanup is completed or underway at 92 percent of all Superfund sites.
- **Redeveloping Brownfields Sites:** The Clinton-Gore Administration has leveraged more than \$2.3 billion in private sector investment, and generated 6,400 jobs through the brownfields redevelopment initiative.
- **Protected More Land than Any Administration in History:** The Clinton-Gore Administration has protected more land as national monuments in the lower 48 states — more than 4.6 million acres — than any Administration. President Clinton has created 11 national monuments — including Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah; Grand Canyon-Parashant in Arizona; Agua Fria in Arizona; Giant Sequoia in California; and the California Coastal monument — and has expanded two others.
- **Doubled the Number of Chemicals Reported:** President Clinton has doubled the number of chemicals subject to reporting in the nation's Toxic Release Inventory. The number of facilities subject to reporting has increased by 10 percent. Since 1992, emissions of the toxic chemicals from manufacturers have decreased by more than 20 percent.
- **New Jobs in the Environmental Industry:** Since 1993, 130,000 new jobs have been created in environmental industries such as recycling, renewable energy, waste management and environmental clean-ups.



- **More Than Doubled Exports Based on Environmental Technology:** Since 1993, exports based on environmental technology and industry have more than doubled, increasing from \$9.4 million in 1993 to \$20 million in 1999.
- **Record Penalties for Polluters:** Record civil and criminal penalties were assessed against polluters by the EPA last year. In FY 1992, the EPA referred 107 criminal cases to the Department of Justice, 150 defendants were charged and a total of 1,135 months of criminal sentences were handed down. In FY 1999, the EPA referred 241 criminal cases to the Justice Department, 322 defendants were charged and 2,500 total months of sentences were handed down. In addition, \$228.3 million worth of civil penalties were assessed in FY 1999, the highest amount ever. In FY 1992, combined civil and criminal penalties totaled just \$141.4 million.