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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Environmental and Business Leaders Agree Early Action Is Needed to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Present Principles for Early Action to Vice President Gore

Washington, DC -- Leaders of U.S. businesses, environmental and citizen organizations, and local and federal government today presented Vice President Al Gore with a statement of principles agreeing that the nation cannot delay greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

"As the evidence of global warming continues to mount, more and more Americans are recognizing that we must act now to protect future generations. I am pleased that this broad coalition of business, government and environmental leaders is calling for early, voluntary action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Vice President Gore. "Their statement underscores the importance -- for both our economy and our environment -- of tackling head-on the challenge of climate change. President Clinton and I will continue working with all parties to promote common-sense action to protect our environment and our economy from the effects of global warming."

The Climate Task Force of the President's Council on Sustainable Development reached agreement on a set of principles for the design of a voluntary program to reduce emissions before any binding requirements are in place. The group recommends an incentive-based early action program that encourages broad-based participation, learning, innovation, flexibility, and experimentation; grants formal credit for legitimate and verifiable measures to protect the climate; ensures accountability; is compatible with other climate protection strategies and environmental goals; and includes local, state, and federal government leadership.

The Climate Task Force is charged with advising President Clinton on domestic policy options and activities that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Task Force believes that the risk of climate change is of sufficient concern that timely and effective actions should be taken to reduce those risks.

"Credits for early action will produce earlier reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The sooner companies get on a gradual "glide path" towards reductions, the better," said Jonathan Lash, President of the World Resources Institute and co-chair of the President's Council.

"Even before any binding treaties or other requirements are in place, America's businesses, communities, government agencies and individuals need to get ready to tackle the challenge of climate change. With early action we can develop a program that encourages prosperity while contributing to significant emissions reductions," said Steve Percy, Chairman and CEO of British Petroleum and co-chair of the Climate Task Force of the President's Council.

Ray Anderson, Chief Executive Officer of the Interface Company, and Jonathan Lash are the Co-chairs of the President's Council. A federal advisory committee with 29 members representing

business, government, community, environmental and Native American groups, the President's Council on Sustainable Development was created by President Clinton in 1993 to advise him on sustainable development and economic, environmental, and equity issues.

Contact:

Martin Spitzer, PCSD 202/408-5331

Ken Blower, **British Petroleum, America**
212/451-8022

Marcia Aronoff, **Environmental Defense**
Fund 212/505-2100

Rebecca Moser, **NOAA** 202/482-3436