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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT AS A  
CORNERSTONE TO A NEW GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

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Thank you Steve. I am delighted to be here. It is great to see so many of you from so many different parts of the world.

Our countries are quite different — different in size, culture, language, and pace of growth. But we share a common desire: To have a healthy environment, healthy people, as well as a healthy economy.

These things are often seen at odds — environmental protection pitted against economic growth. In the U.S., this was certainly the case a few decades ago. We needed strong laws to protect our water, land, and air.

Twenty five years ago, we actually had rivers catching fire in the U.S. That crisis prompted passage of the Clean Water Act. We found barrels of toxic chemicals buried under a community in New York — and that spurred passage of our nation's toxic waste cleanup law. When we found widespread contamination in one of our largest city's water supply we passed the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Under these laws, we have made great progress. By any measure, our rivers are safer, our skies cleaner, our land freer of toxic waste. But we all know our work is not done — not in the United States, not in any country in the world.

Today we face a new set of challenges.

I am talking about hard-to-control water pollution from urban and agricultural runoff — a big problem in the U.S. I am talking about air and water pollution that crosses the boundaries of countries. I am talking about one of the challenges all the world's nations face together and that is global warming.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore believe that we can meet all these challenges if we keep a few principles in mind: building strong partnerships, finding common-sense, cost-effective strategies, ensuring a healthy economy and a healthy environment — and providing tough enforcement of our nation's environmental laws.

These are the tenets of a new generation of environmental and public health protection, and they lie at the core of everything we do to safeguard the American people and to meet our international commitments on the environment.

This Administration has drawn from a variety of tools to get the job done:

First, we are building partnerships with industry to prevent pollution before it happens in the first place. As just one example, we have an agreement with the auto industry for cleaner cars — *70 percent cleaner cars*, which will be in showrooms around the country by end of next year.

We also have partnerships with 5,000 U.S. organizations and businesses — including some of the biggest companies in the country — to use energy more efficiently.

Just in 1997, these partnership programs together prevented the release of nearly *60 million tons of carbon dioxide*. At the same time, these measures saved businesses and consumers more than *\$1 billion*.

Second, we are encouraging companies to not just comply with the law, but to go beyond compliance, by preventing pollution and reducing use of toxic chemicals — ways that can also increase productivity and increase competitiveness.

Third, we are using market-based incentives — to spur industry to develop even better pollution-reducing strategies. Emissions trading is a great example. This is where we place a limit on overall toxic emissions and then pollution reductions are traded on the open market.

We have had great success with emissions trading in our acid rain program — where we are making significant reductions in the pollution that causes acid rain, and the costs of compliance are far lower than anyone had predicted. And we have recommended a similar program to 27 eastern and southern states and the District of Columbia as a way to reduce emissions of smog-forming nitrogen oxides and meet the public health clean air standards.

Fourth, we are offering unprecedented compliance assistance to small businesses — nine centers that help industries — transportation, painting and coatings, local governments, printing, and others — to understand and comply with environmental requirements as easily and cost-effectively as possible.

We have a new self-audit policy that says to companies — if you voluntarily identify, disclose and correct violations we will reduce or waive penalties — a great way to provide cost-effective incentives for companies to protect the air, water and land. Since 1996, more than 1600 facilities have voluntarily disclosed and corrected violations.

Indeed, this Administration, every step of the way, is committed to flexible, cost-effective, common-sense strategies that work for business, work for public health and work for the environment.

But we cannot continue our progress without tough, comprehensive enforcement of our nation's environmental laws. It is the foundation of all we do to protect our air, water, and land. Strong enforcement is a red light for would-be polluters. It provides incentive for companies to participate in our voluntary programs. It ensures that polluters are held accountable for jeopardizing public health and the environment.

I suspect most of you would agree. A recent case sums up exactly why we need strong enforcement hand in hand with flexibility and voluntary measures. Last month, we announced one of the largest enforcement cases in history — a settlement with the seven leading manufacturers of diesel engines.

The companies used illegal devices that allow the engines to pass EPA's emissions tests in the laboratory, but turn off pollution control equipment under normal driving conditions — and all to cut a few corners on costs.

These devices not only bypassed emissions controls, they jeopardized public health and the environment.

Our action addressed the entire industry together, rather than company by company — so that we could level the playing field. No company should have a competitive advantage over the others. We need strong, tough, comprehensive enforcement to ensure that every business, every company, every industry plays by the same rules.

What applies locally, also applies globally. We must level the international playing field. No country should have a competitive advantage over another through violation of its domestic and international commitments to environmental and public health protection.

Today, we can exchange information between countries with a simple click of a computer mouse. We exchange billions of dollars every day over phone lines and through computers. Unfortunately, we also exchange pollution.

That is why it has become ever more important for us to work together. Pollution doesn't stop at the border. Environmental crimes do not stop at the border. Neither should our efforts to protect citizens at home and abroad.

We have made great progress already. Together, with Mexico, we've stopped illegal shipments of hazardous waste over our borders. We have seized millions of pounds of ozone-depleting CFCs smuggled into the U.S. We are sharing with our citizens information about toxic releases and transfers of toxic materials between Mexico, Canada and the U.S. We have come up with creative solutions for our shared borders. As one example, we included in a settlement of an environmental violation a provision that the company pay for environmental improvements in a company on the other side of the border.

Together, we are making great progress, and all the while respecting each countries' sovereignty, each countries' independence.

But we can do more. We must continue to share information about environmental criminals, hazardous waste tracking, and companies that violate environmental laws. We must share our expertise, our skills — so that we can do an even better job of protecting our shared resources, and bringing polluters to justice. And we must work together to find innovative solutions to the difficult environmental and public health challenges we all face.

I congratulate you all for coming together to share your experiences and find ways that we can work together to protect the air we all breathe, the water we all drink and the land we all live upon. As we become ever more closely linked in this world of high-tech communications and growing pollution problems, we must move forward arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder, side by side. Our families and our children depend on it.

Thank you.

