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**Record Group/Collection:** George H.W. Bush Presidential Records  
**Collection/Office of Origin:** Speechwriting, White House Office of  
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**Folder Title:**  
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at 20 n.d. [OA 6027]

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Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
<b>G</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

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EPA At 20

By President George Bush

On New Year's Day 1970, President Nixon launched the "Year of the Environment" by signing into law the National Environmental Policy Act. This pioneering law reflected the growing determination of the American people to protect and preserve our nation's environment. In the spring and summer of that year, while Americans observed the first Earth Day and organized to fight pollution, government officials set out to fashion a new Environmental Protection Agency by stitching together bits and pieces of Federal agencies from all over the government. EPA opened for business in December, two months after Congress passed a ground-breaking Clean Air Act. Ever since, EPA has been at the forefront of our country's significant environmental accomplishments.

Now, 20 years later, it's common to hear people refer to the 1990s as the "Decade of the Environment." Concern for environmental protection and stewardship has grown, solidified, and deepened over the last two decades. It is in keeping with this continued commitment of the American people to a clean, healthy environment that I've made the vigorous enforcement and strengthening of our nation's environmental laws one of my Administration's top domestic priorities. And it is in keeping with this continued commitment that I have recommended that EPA be elevated to Cabinet status.

EPA has come a long way, accomplished a great deal, in 20 years. The issues that dominated the early years of the Agency

were fairly obvious and straightforward: DDT and the bald eagle, flames on the Cuyahoga River in Ohio, pollution so thick you could almost touch it in Pittsburgh and Los Angeles. Today's issues are much more subtle, more complex, and harder to deal with. Toxic chemicals show up in food and water, but often in doses so small only experts can detect them. Just how dangerous are these "trace" amounts? No one knows for sure. Yet the health of the public and the environment must be protected, and this must be done without unnecessarily hampering the nation's economic growth.

So it is clear that EPA has its work cut out for it in the 1990s. And I am very pleased that under Bill Reilly's leadership, EPA has been developing a variety of creative and innovative new approaches to environmental protection that will enable us to build on the environmental progress the nation made in the 1970s and 1980s.

Congress has just passed, for example, my proposed strengthening of the Clean Air Act. Our goals are to protect the American people from urban smog and toxic air pollution and to protect vulnerable ecosystems from the adverse effects of acid rain. Many of these clean air proposals are based on new, market-based concepts -- such as emissions trading in our plan to curb acid rain -- that will substantially reduce the cost and increase the flexibility of pollution controls and thus make a greater amount of environmental protection possible in the long-run.

The Clean Air Act is just the most visible element of the environmental agenda we've set out. We have stepped up Superfund enforcement; expanded our national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges; funded a much more aggressive effort to clean up pollution at Federal facilities, agreed to a complete phaseout of CFC's; and proposed a healthy increase for EPA's operating budget -- the heart and soul of the Agency.

As we turn to the future, an important thrust must be pollution prevention. Preventing pollution is everybody's job, from the biggest industrial complex to families and individuals. Environmental programs that focus on the end of the pipe or the top of the stack, on cleaning up after the damage is done, are no longer adequate. We need new policies and technologies and processes that prevent or minimize pollution -- that stop it from being created in the first place.

To do this, everyone must pitch in. Business leaders, workers, environmental groups, consumers -- everyone needs to work together, as partners instead of adversaries. Governments at levels have a role to play and at the family level, we all can learn to shop more carefully, to waste less, and to recycle more.

Another step every American can take to help protect the environment is to plant a tree -- plant a lot of trees! Our "America the Beautiful" initiative calls for planting one billion trees a year for the next ten to 15 years. Not only will planting trees help beautify America, it will improve air and

soil quality, provide wildlife habitat, and aid in shading our homes, offices, and public buildings.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt called the nation's governors together to discuss, for the first time as a group, the conservation and development -- the wise use -- of the nation's threatened natural resources. "One distinguishing characteristic of really civilized men," President Roosevelt told the governors, "is foresight. We should exercise foresight in conserving and wisely using the property which contains the assurance of well-being for himself and his children."

I find it encouraging that so many people today are starting to recognize the wisdom of Teddy Roosevelt's advice; to acknowledge that economic well-being and environmental prudence go hand-in-hand. In a modern industrial society like ours, we can't have one without the other.

I hope that 20 or 30 years from now, we'll be able to look back on EPA's 20th birthday and conclude that it was around 1990 when the Agency, and the country, began to chart a new course: when we began to exercise foresight in a truly meaningful way. The 1990s must be the decade when we focus our attention on finding the most cost-effective, most efficient ways to prevent pollution, to reduce risks to human health and the environment, and to achieve environmentally sound, sustainable economic growth.

It can be a new era of environmental stewardship, creating a safer, cleaner, more productive world for ourselves and our

children. I know EPA will be there to help bring us into that new era adding another proud chapter to its already proud history.

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*must be*  
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*Insert A*

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Another important thrust is pollution prevention.

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To do this, everyone must pitch in. Business leaders, workers, environmental groups, consumers -- everyone needs to work together, as partners instead of adversaries. ~~And~~ governments at all levels have a role to play. ~~Within the Federal government, all our agencies have to recognize that environmental protection is a basic, essential aspect of their missions. Environmental protection isn't just a job for EPA; it's a job for all of government.~~ And at the family level, we all can learn to shop more carefully, to waste less, and to recycle more.

Another step every American can take to help protect the environment is to plant a tree -- plant a lot of trees! Our "America the Beautiful" initiative calls for planting one billion trees a year for the next ten to 15 years. Not only will planting trees help beautify America, it will improve air and soil quality, provide wildlife habitat, and aid in shading our homes, offices, and public buildings.

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*It can be*  
~~The sooner we move into a new era of environmental~~

~~stewardship, the sooner we will feel right about the kind of~~  
~~world we are creating~~ *a safer, cleaner, more productive world* ~~for ourselves and our children. I wish EPA~~  
~~every success in helping to bring us into that new era~~ *will be there* ~~adding~~ *know*

*###*  
*Another proud chapter to its already proud history*

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