

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**STATEMENT OF  
GOVERNOR CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN  
ADMINISTRATOR  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**February 26, 2003**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here to discuss President Bush's Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 budget request for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The President's FY 2004 budget request of \$7.6 billion provides funding necessary for the Agency to carry out our mission efficiently and effectively—to protect human health and safeguard the natural environment. Given the competing priorities for Federal funding this year, namely the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security, I am pleased by the President's commitment to human health and environmental protection.

I would like to begin, Mr. Chairman, by emphasizing that the President's budget request for EPA reflects the Agency's commitment to cleaning, purifying, and protecting America's air, water, and land. The request promotes EPA's goals in a manner consistent with fiscal responsibility by strengthening our base environmental programs, fostering stronger partnerships, and enhancing strong science.

This Agency remains committed to working with states, tribes, and other entities to protect human health and the environment. Of the \$7.6 billion budget, \$3.1 billion would provide direct assistance to states, tribes, universities, local governments, and other partners. The President and I both believe that these partnerships are a vital part of effective environmental management and stewardship. Our budget request reflects that.

As EPA continues to carry out its mission, I look forward to building upon a strong base of environmental progress. This budget, Mr. Chairman, will enable us to carry out our principal objectives while allowing us to react and adapt to challenges as they arise.

## Cleaner Air

The budget requests \$617 million to fund our clean air programs, thereby helping to ensure that air in every American community will be clean and safe to breathe. This includes \$7.7 million more for modeling and analysis to strengthen the Agency's clean air programs. Furthermore, this budget supports the President's Clear Skies initiative, an aggressive plan to cut power plant emissions by 70 percent. Clear Skies legislation would slash emissions of three power plant pollutants--nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, and mercury—by 35 million tons over and above what would be obtained under current law. Such emissions cuts are an essential component of improving air quality and thus environmental and human health. The Clear Skies initiative would build upon the 1990 Clean Air Act's acid rain program by expanding this proven, innovative market-based approach to clean air. Many counties could be brought into attainment with new ozone and particulate matter air quality standards based solely on Clear Skies. Clear Skies would significantly improve air quality conditions even in counties that would require additional emission reductions. Such a program, coupled with appropriate measures to address local concerns, would provide significant health benefits even as energy supplies are increased to meet growing demand and electricity rates remain stable. I look forward to working with you, your fellow members of Congress, and the President on this landmark legislation.

The budget also includes \$16.5 million for air toxics monitoring grants to state, Tribal, and local entities, a \$7 million increase from last year, aimed at improving our understanding of air toxics exposures to help implement EPA's comprehensive air toxics strategy. The budget dedicates \$23.9 million, an increase of \$3 million, to the Agency's efforts combating children's asthma. The successful *Tools for Schools Program*, which helps schools assess and improve the quality of air students breathe, and other such efforts will benefit from the added funding.

## Purer Water

EPA's budget request places a strong emphasis on core water programs to improve our water management framework, program implementation, and information sharing. The President's request boosts resources to states, tribes, and various entities to provide technical assistance, guidance, training, and additional funding. Our core water programs will increase by \$55 million for a total of \$470 million. This includes \$20 million for Clean Water Section 106 Grants to help states improve implementation of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and \$12 million aimed at enhancing state and Tribal drinking water program capacity through Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) grants. Other efforts reflected in the budget to provide clean and safe water to the American public include:

- Additional Great Lakes Funding. This budget nearly doubles the Agency's Great Lakes commitment. EPA is requesting \$15 million in support of the Great Lakes Legacy Act to bolster contaminated sediment cleanup activities. In 2004 the Agency plans to begin cleanup on two to three new sites. Some of this funding will also be used for assessment and analysis, resulting in additional cleanups.
- Extending the Federal Commitment to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF). The President's budget is committed to funding the Clean Water SRF well above the

previous Administration's \$2 billion average annual revolving goal. It finances the Clean Water SRF at \$850 million through 2011 and increases the long-term revolving level by \$800 million to \$2.8 billion, a 40 percent increase over our previous goal. At present, there is \$42 billion on loan or available for loans to states and tribes. The expanded commitment is projected to make \$63 billion available over 20 years thus allowing states and tribes to finance an additional 15,000 projects over that period.

- Extending the Federal Commitment to the Drinking Water SRF. EPA also proposes to fund the Drinking Water SRF at \$850 million through 2018 so it can revolve at \$1.2 billion per year, an increase of 140% above and beyond our prior goal of \$500 million.
- Protecting Wetlands. Due to a 2001 Supreme Court decision, tens of thousands of acres of isolated waters and wetlands may be subject to development that no longer requires a permit under the CWA. EPA's budget provides a \$5 million increase for state and Tribal wetland protection grants to help them protect these waters and move the U.S. closer to no net loss of wetlands.
- Helping States Address Nonpoint Source Pollution. The President's budget allows EPA to work closely with state water quality agencies, USDA, conservation districts, and others to accelerate national efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution. In light of significant increases in Farm Bill resources, EPA will shift the program's emphasis in agricultural watersheds from implementation of pollution reduction projects to planning, monitoring, and assisting in the coordination and implementation of watershed-based plans in impaired and threatened waters.
- Safer Drinking Water in Puerto Rico. To ensure public health protection, the Agency requests \$8 million to design necessary infrastructure improvements to Metropolitan, Puerto Rico. When these infrastructure improvements are completed, EPA estimates that about 1.4 million more people will have access to safer and cleaner drinking water.

### **Better Protected Land**

To immediately reduce potential human health and environmental threats, this budget continues our long-standing commitment to clean up contaminated sites. Superfund, funded at \$1.39 billion, includes a \$150 million dollar increase over the President's FY 2003 budget request to start an additional 10-15 construction projects at Superfund sites nationwide. By strengthening Superfund, one of our base programs, this budget will continue the progress we have made in completing cleanups at more than 800 National Priority List (NPL) sites. Cleanup has either begun or been completed at over 93% of Superfund NPL sites.

EPA is committed to building and enhancing effective partnerships that allow us to safeguard and restore land across America. To do so, this budget provides \$210.7 million, \$10 million above last year's funding request, for the Brownfields program, one of the Administration's top environmental priorities. The Brownfields program will draw on these additional resources to enhance state and Tribal response programs that restore and reclaim contaminated sites. By protecting land and revitalizing contaminated sites throughout the United

States, EPA continues to expand efforts to foster healthy and economically sustainable communities and attract new investments to rejuvenated areas.

### **Homeland Security**

EPA plays a vital role in preparing for and responding to terrorist or other intentional incidents because of our unique expertise and experience in emergency preparedness and response to hazardous material releases. To meet our obligation to protect America's homeland we are asking for \$123 million and 142 FTEs. This request would allow the Agency to continue providing leadership and guidance for the protection of the nation's critical water infrastructure while upgrading and enhancing our emergency response capabilities.

The President's budget reflects EPA's role in protecting public health and critical water infrastructure in the event of terrorist or other intentional acts. To ensure the safety and integrity of America's water infrastructure, resources would be dedicated to working with states, tribes, drinking water and wastewater utilities, and other entities to assess the security of these water facilities and develop emergency response plans where appropriate.

Incorporated in this request are targeted investments to strengthen the Agency's readiness and response capabilities, including the establishment of a "decontamination team," state-of-the-art equipment, and highly specialized training for On Scene Coordinators (OCSs). Meanwhile, EPA will conduct research and provide guidance and technical support for Federal, state, and local governments, and other institutions in the areas of building contamination (chemical and biological) prevention, treatment and cleanup activities, water security, and rapid risk assessment.

This budget would also expand our radiological contamination detection ability across the country and enhance our capacity to provide near real-time biosurveillance information should a biological incident occur. In addition, this request provides resources for Antimicrobials Scientific Assessments, Acute Exposure Guideline Levels, IT management for vulnerability assessments, environmental crimes expertise, as well as resources to enhance the Agency's physical infrastructure security.

### **Enhancing Strong Science**

Sound science is a fundamental component of EPA's work. The Agency has long relied upon science and technology to help discern and evaluate potential threats to human health and the natural environment. Much of our decision-making, policy, and regulatory successes stem from reliance on quality scientific research aimed at achieving our environmental goals. The budget request supports EPA's efforts to further strengthen the role of science in decision-making by using the best available sound scientific information and analyses to help direct policy and establish priorities. We have requested \$607 million to develop and apply strong science to address both current and future environmental challenges. Our budget supports a balanced research and development program designed to address Administration and Agency priorities and meet the challenges of the Clean Air Act (CAA), Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), and other environmental statutes.

This budget supports increases to funding for research of sensitive populations such as children and the elderly, our new Aging Initiative, programs such as Computational Toxicology research, which integrates modern computing with advances in genomics to help develop alternatives to traditional animal testing approaches, and the Agency's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS). We propose to nearly quadruple our funding for the modernization and expansion of IRIS—an EPA database of Agency consensus human health information on environmental contaminants.

Additionally, the Agency is taking steps to ensure a high quality scientific workforce. To do so, we are requesting resources for the Science Advisory Board (SAB), the newly established Science Advisor, and the STAR Fellowship program. EPA will expand its support for the SAB, an independent council to Congress and the Administrator on scientific, engineering, and economic issues that underpin EPA policies. Like the SAB, the Science Advisor will be responsible for ensuring the availability and use of the best science to support Agency policies and decisions and advise the Administrator. To help us educate new environmental scientists we have requested \$5 million for the STAR Fellowship program. This grant program has funded some of the country's best scientists and engineers. In addition, we have asked to expand our post-doc initiative which has encouraged environmental scientists and engineers to join EPA.

### **Enforcement**

Since EPA's inception nearly thirty years ago, many environmental improvements in our country can be attributed to a strong set of environmental laws and our efforts to ensure enforcement of those laws. State, Tribal, and local governments bear much of that responsibility. EPA partners with those governments and other Federal agencies to promote environmental protection and restoration. This budget requests \$503 million, the largest amount ever and a \$21 million increase over last year's request, for EPA's environmental enforcement program. These additional funds, coupled with our proposed 100 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enlargement of the Federal enforcement workforce, would help the Agency maximize compliance and achieve environmental results through an integrated program of assistance and compliance assurance.

### **Quality Environmental Information**

Information gathering, processing, and delivering are fundamental to EPA's work because of our reliance on scientific and analytical data and our close collaboration with external partners. Our goal is to provide the right information, at the right time, in the right format, to the right people. To achieve this goal, improve the Agency's information infrastructure, ensure that the American public has easy access to environmental information, and expand E-Government in support of the President's Management Agenda (PMA), we have proposed an additional \$30.5 million investment for a total investment of \$202 million in EPA's Environmental Information office.

We will continue development of the National Environmental Information Exchange Network. The Exchange Network is an electronic method of sharing environmental data using secure points of exchange. The primary components of the Exchange Network are the National Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program and the Central Data Exchange

(CDX). The grant program assists states and tribes in evaluating their readiness to participate in the Exchange Network, enhances their efforts to complete necessary changes to their information management systems to facilitate Network participation, and supports state information integration efforts. The CDX is the focal point for securely receiving, translating, and forwarding data to EPA's systems—the electronic reporting gateway to the Agency's information network. This year the CDX will service 46 states and at least 2,000 private and local government entities.

### **Ensuring Safe Food**

The President's request includes \$119.0 million to help ensure that all Americans will continue to enjoy one of the safest and most affordable food supplies in the world. To do so, EPA will continue implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) which focuses on new science-driven policies for pesticides review, seeks to encourage the development of reduced risk pesticides that provide alternatives to older versions, and develop and deliver information on alternative pesticides/techniques and the best pest control practices to pesticide users. The Agency is also working to help farmers transition, without disrupting production, to safer pesticide substitutes and alternative farming practices. We will reassess existing tolerances to ensure food safety, especially for infants and children, and ensure that all registered pesticides meet current health standards.

### **A Commitment to Reform and Results**

The President's proposed EPA budget for FY 2004 fully supports the Agency's work. The request demonstrates EPA's commitment to our principal objectives—safeguarding and restoring America's air, water, and land resources—by strengthening and refining our base environmental programs, fostering stronger partnerships, and enhancing strong science. As we look to the future, I am confident that this funding will ensure the Agency's fulfillment of our responsibilities to the American public.

With that, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my prepared statement is concluded. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.