

- Good morning everyone. I'm Judith Enck, Regional Administrator for EPA Region 2, which includes New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and eight Indian Nations within the borders of New York State.
- EPA marked its 40th Anniversary this past December. You know how you commemorate your 10th anniversary with diamonds and your 25th with silver?
- I guess for EPA at 40, our keepsake could be mercury from power plants, or maybe lead from paint.
- But seriously, I want to thank all of you for joining us today to commemorate this important moment in EPA's history.
- I want to especially thank our partner in organizing today's conference – The Earth Institute at Columbia University. Special thanks goes to Earth Institute Director, Steve Cohen; Kathy Callahan, who spent much of her career at EPA; and Vilma Rivera-Gallagher and Jennifer Genrich.
- Particularly happy to welcome Joe Martens, the fantastic new Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
- I would also like to thank all of the EPA employees who have helped to organize today's conference. A few in particular have been crucial to today's success—a big thank you to Jennifer May, Jennifer Thatcher, Sophia Kelly, Nicole Wertzberger, Peter Brandt and Robert Buettner, Bonnie Bellow and Chief of Staff Lisa Plevin. I also want to acknowledge George Pavlou, our Deputy Regional Administrator, who provides invaluable guidance for our work.

- We are here today to look back on the environmental gains of the past 40 years, and to exchange ideas on how we can work together to protect people's health and the environment in the years ahead.
- EPA's mission is to serve the people of this nation by protecting public health and the extraordinary natural resources of this country.
- There couldn't be a more crucial time for us to remember that.
- Next week is the one-year anniversary of the BP Oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.
- A few days ago was the anniversary of the tragic death of 29 coal miners in the Upper Big Branch coal mine in West Virginia.
- And right now, we watch, in real time, the terrible nuclear crisis unfolding in Japan.
- All of this has happened in the span of one year. One single year.
- What will it take for us to finally get serious about energy efficiency and clean renewable energy?
- President Obama proposed eliminating over \$46 billion in tax subsidies for fossil fuel production in his 2012 Budget.
- And the White House recently released a Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future.
- But we are still here speaking in theoretical terms. It is time for us to take charge of our clean energy future. While not a federal energy agency, EPA plays a central role in this discussion.

- There has also been considerable debate lately about the role of EPA in our economy and our society. EPA policies, when fully enforced, protect human health and the environment in major ways.
- Just think about your typical day:
- You wake up in the morning make your coffee. Your tap water is safe because of EPA's enforcement of the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Hopefully, those coffee beans are organic. But if they're not, EPA standards ensure that there is not excess pesticide residue in your coffee.
- You take the dog for a walk—EPA regulates the use of pesticides on grass at the park, and in the flea collar that Fido is wearing.
- Get the kids out the door to school. EPA regulates diesel emissions from the school bus and is also working to ensure that the school is not sited on contaminated property.
- Remember, it's only 9am.
- You drive to work; EPA has improved fuel efficiency standards in cars, or if you take the bus, reduced diesel emissions. Thanks to a ban on lead in gasoline and controls on other pollutants from cars, trucks and buses, the air is cleaner than it was 40 years ago.
- You get to work. If you work in a new building, hopefully it is a LEED certified green building. If it's older, maybe you're worried about PCBs in lighting ballasts. EPA handles both of those issues.

- If you work in an office, you turn on your EnergyStar computer. And when it's obsolete, EPA will help you find places to dispose of that the electronic waste.
- If you work in a factory or on a construction site, EPA works with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to protect occupational health.
- Go out to lunch. Know that EPA expects you to avoid excess packaging and to recycle your soda can.
- I'm exhausted.
- I think I will stop at noon—you get the point.
- EPA's 40-year history has been defined by a myriad of issues that impact public health and the environment. It's not your grandmother's agency. We have some made gains, and now it's time to look ahead.
- Under the leadership of EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, we are looking at new ways to protect this country. Last year, Administrator Jackson articulated a list of seven priorities for EPA's work.
 - Taking action on climate change
 - Improving air quality
 - Assuring the safety of chemicals
 - Protecting our waterways
 - Building state and tribal partnerships
 - Cleaning up our communities
 - Expanding the environmental conversation and working for environmental justice.

- These priorities are, obviously, my priorities as well.
- But in order to look ahead, we need to honestly examine the issues that have not been settled.
- One continuing challenge, which informs all of our work at EPA, is our commitment to Environmental Justice.
- EPA believes that environmental laws should all be equally enforced, regardless of the race, color, national origin, or income level of a community.
- But, we have clearly not made enough progress in alleviating the disproportionate environmental burden that low-income and minority communities have been forced to bear.
- We don't have to look far to see that reality—just crosstown from this very room, the childhood asthma rate in East Harlem is 1 in 4. Compare that to nationwide rate of 1 in 20. And residents of many low income communities do not have easy access to affordable health care – making this situation even more dire.
- Our work on environmental justice needs to ensure that minority communities are not disproportionately impacted by pollution, and advance new policies that create jobs in these very communities.
- We do that with a new commitment to sustainability.
- Not the once a year, “Madison Avenue advertising based approach to sustainability,” which we only hear about on Earth Day, but a commitment that looks at the fundamental ways in which we have approached environmental protection and how we can do better.

- So, how do we move forward? What does a sustainable future look like for New York?
- On the most basic level, a sustainable future requires us to finally get serious about waste reduction and recycling. And my goodness, to even utter the words....wait for it... zero waste.
- Solid waste junkies, of which I am one, have an old saying: “if you’re not for zero waste, how much are you for?”
- It’s very Zen. But for financially strapped local governments that pay the cost of dealing with excess packaging, or for our bruised and battered oceans that are dealing with gigantic new plastic patches that swirl around the marine environment – this is a very basic question.
 - Average American produces 4.5 pounds of trash per day. Think about what that means—per day.
 - Close to 14% of our waste is actually food waste. 33 million tons of food waste is thrown away per year in this country. We need to do to feed people, not landfills.
 - New policies need to focus on reduction: products with less packaging that are reusable. Europe is reducing packaging. Why not America? Why not New York?
 - What’s next on the recycling front: most people know about cans and bottles, but don’t think about what happens to our electronic devices once the newest Ipad or better Smartphone comes on the market.
 - Electronic devices such as computers and cell phones often end up in other countries where improper disposal can

threaten local people, almost always poor people, and the environment.

- o In reality, only 1-2% of computer parts are not recyclable. New York's impressive new e-waste law, coupled with private sector investments, such as the recently opened electronics recycling facility in nearby Westchester County, will get us on a more sustainable path.
- Cities are sustainable; but we also need to make them more livable and really work to improve air quality and water quality.
 - o Community gardens provide a chance to enjoy rare green space, as well as grow our own food. We need to safeguard them from development.
 - o Community supported agriculture, or CSAs, have also allowed many urbanites access to farm-fresh food at affordable prices. We need to encourage this and allow them to expand to encompass neighborhoods that may have been left out, like the South Bronx or Southeastern Queens.
 - o And we need to continue to reduce our dependence on cars. Approximately 54% of households in New York don't own a car—which is so impressive.
 - o However, over the past few years, mass transit has suffered at the hand of budget cuts and rising fares. Our most effective tool in addressing climate change is a well-functioning and well-funded MTA.
- Clean Air must remain a focus for us in the future:
 - o What's the point of living in a walkable urban community if the air is polluted?

- o As I mentioned earlier, EPA has played a crucial role in improving fuel emissions and in reducing diesel exhaust, but the work to improve our air has only just begun.
- o Just last month, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson proposed the first ever national Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants. These standards are intended to build on the success we've had with the Clean Air Act.
- o There are currently **no national standards** limiting these emissions from America's power plants – which are the source of half of the mercury emissions, half of the acid gases, and 25 percent of all toxic metal pollution in our air.
- o 'Clean air' doesn't just mean the air we breathe outdoors—but indoors as well.
- o That is why EPA has been very active in addressing the issue of airborne PCBs inside our schools. We believe that our children should not be exposed to PCBs in their classrooms. That's a fair assumption. Right? You send your kids to school and you don't expect them to be exposed to PCBs.
- o We are working hard to get the City of New York, and soon other cities, to switch out old lighting ballasts that contain PCBs. This will not only protect the health of children and teachers, but will also reduce the use of electricity and create scores of new jobs.

Pollution Prevention: As with health care, prevention saves money.

- Finally, we must address climate change. It is one of the most serious environmental and economic issues facing us.
 - This past year, we continually broke temperature records, and that radical fringe organization... NASA announced that 2010 tied for the hottest year on record.
 - In the short term, this has dire consequences – heat related deaths, particularly among the elderly and those who can't afford air conditioning; damage to New York's agriculture; and more violent storms, often causing damage and flooding.
 - Sea level is rising, and that can mean devastating impacts for coastal communities such as: New York City and Long Island, and the Great Lakes.
 - If we don't address climate change this year, it will be much harder to tackle next year, and the following and the following.
 - That is why New York's continued leadership in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the only cap and trade program in the nation, is so important.
- There is not a silver bullet solution, but a fundamental shift in policies that embraces sustainability; acknowledges environmental injustice and puts resources into pollution prevention, rather than just regulating pollution after the fact – can give us a healthier future.
- So how can we do this? How can the environmental lessons of our past our past, shape our future?

- I think we can look north and learn from the history of the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park is an exquisite example of sustainability. It mixes public and private land and there is no shortage of fighting about how to manage that land.
- The Adirondack Park was established 126 years ago.
- New Yorkers went to the polls, like we do today. Appalled by the impacts of clear cutting forests and the damage to watersheds, New Yorkers voted for state constitutional amendments to protect the land in the Adirondacks for future generations. They did this without the benefit of polling data or a cost benefit analysis. They did it with an eye toward the future. A future they could not predict, but they knew that clear cutting should not be a part of it.
- Similarly, we can't predict the future. But we can shape policies around what we know to be vital—protecting human health and our growingly fragile environment, which cannot endure many more oil spills or coal mine collapses or uncontrolled nuclear releases.
- The body count from these past practices, and yes I intended to use the term body count, is all around us. We see it in our families, in our schools, our churches and our communities.
 - According to the American Cancer Society, 1 in 3 women will be diagnosed with cancer in her lifetime, 1 in 2 men will be inflicted with this disease.
 - 1 in 15 Americans suffer from Asthma and 11 die *every day*.
 - Almost 10% of children under 18 have some form of learning disability.

- This has to change.
- EPA's 40th Anniversary is a time to reflect on how environmental policy can tackle the challenges of today while accelerating a new green economy – an economy that protects public health and the environment while creating jobs.
- It is also a time to think about what New York will be like 40 years from now.
 - Will we finally achieve the original goal of the Clean Water Act of fishable and swimmable waters?
 - Will New York City meet the public health standards embodied in the Clean Air Act.
 - Will there be a public park or community garden within ten minutes walking distance of every urban home?
 - Will mass transit be free?
 - Will bike lanes be not such a big deal?
 - Will solar and wind and fuel cells be the dominant fuel source?
- I think, in the years ahead, all of the answers to these questions can be a resounding yes.
- Let's use today to identify the specific ways we can build a sustainable future for the New York.
- As the author, ecologist and our amazing keynote speaker, Dr. Sandra Steingraber wrote: "It is a good day for the beginning of journeys."
- Today is a good day for the beginning of our collective journey into the next era of environmental protection.

- Thank you.