

the direction. I am confident that we can. There are also maybe some things we can do administratively. And you have the people here who want to hear from you about that, and we want to go forward with that.

And finally let me say I think we ought to set up an ongoing relationship so that you can continue to work with us, get input, and help us to work through some of the difficult decisions that are always required when you move from the level of speaking to doing. And so we'd like very much to have, Mayor, some sort of ongoing mechanism that this administration can relate to from the membership of this group.

Lastly, let me say that I'm grateful for the participation here not just of the mayors but of the several police chiefs. It's good to see all of you here. I think we can do something.

I think the American people are tired of hurting and tired of feeling insecure and tired of the violence, and it makes such a huge gap between what we say and what we do and how we want to live and how we are forced to live. And it's affected now so many more people beyond the immediate victims of crime. It's changing everyone's life in ways that are quite destructive. We have to move. And I think we're prepared to move. And I think with this document, you've given us a good basis to begin.

I thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Indian Treaty Room of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jerry Abramson of Louisville, KY, president, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX.

Remarks on the Federal Fleet Conversion to Alternative Fuel Vehicles *December 9, 1993*

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President and Secretary O'Leary and my longtime friend Garry Mauro.

I want to thank this task force for a job well done. I'd be remiss if I didn't ask the members of the task force who are here just to stand so we can be recognized. If you served on the task force, please stand up. *[Applause]* Thank you.

I also know that we had about 250 others, many of whom are in this room, who worked on the various subgroups of this task force. And I thank all of you. I thank Garry Mauro, the Texas land commissioner who has been my friend for more than 20 years, for his back-breaking work on this. I also want to thank the staff director, Tom Henderson, who is over here, who worked so hard on it. Thank you, Tom, for your work. Stand up. *[Applause]* Thank you. I thank Susan Tierney. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Hazel O'Leary for the statement she just made. One of my better predecessors, Harry Truman, once said that his job consisted largely of trying to talk people into doing what they ought to do without his having to ask them in the first place. *[Laughter]* So I didn't even have to ask her to comply.

She has removed a major part of my job. But I thank her for that.

Today I am directing the White House Office on Environmental Policy, headed by Katie McGinty, to cooperate with the Department of Energy in their ongoing programs to put these recommendations into action. These recommendations point the way to using the purchasing power of our National Government to promote vehicles that run on clean, domestic fuels, including natural gas, ethanol, methanol, propane, and electric power. The Federal Government is one of the Nation's leading purchasers of cars and vans and trucks and other vehicles. We buy tens of thousands of them each year, and even with the Vice President's reinventing Government report, we'll have to keep buying a few. Your recommendations show how we can make the best use of that purchasing power by buying alternative fuel vehicles in cities where air pollution is most severe, where Federal fleets are largest, where alternative fuels are available, where our efforts will be reinforced by State and local governments and private companies also committed to these goals.

The task force has identified cities where the

Federal investment will produce the biggest markets when linked with State, local, and private efforts. Some of these cities are already converting their fleets, their buses, their service vehicles, their regular cars. By linking with these local efforts, a modest Federal investment can help jumpstart locally and regionally significant programs.

Americans don't want Federal bureaucrats deciding what's best on the local levels. And in this case, especially, one size does not necessarily fit all. But our efforts do serve three very important goals. First, we protect the environment. Second, we create new jobs by promoting the use of fuels that are produced in the United States and by encouraging American companies to build vehicles that use those fuels. Third, we reduce our reliance on foreign oil. Americans want a clean environment, secure jobs, and a more independent country, and these alternative fuels help us to achieve those objectives.

We build on the successful experience at State and national levels in government and in business. Garry Mauro has already converted the Texas State government's fleet of vehicles to clean domestic fuels. And you just heard Secretary O'Leary manifest her commitment to doing the same with the Federal fleet. Many members of this task force have started to convert their companies' fleets of vehicles. Very often I preach to the converted; today, I'm preaching to the converters, I think. *[Laughter]* I can't believe I said that. It's been a long week. *[Laughter]*

I do want to say, seriously, that this effort is very important to me and has been from the beginning because it manifests two things that I believe very deeply and I believe all

Americans must come to believe if we're going to really take this country where we have to go.

The first is that protecting the environment goes hand in hand with economic growth as we move toward the 21st century. If you look at what's happening in this country and around the world, at the crying need to increase the rate of growth and at the same time to protect this planet, it is apparent that the future will be what we desire only if we can achieve both great levels of environmental protection and higher rates of growth. If we fail at either one, and if we fail to reconcile the two, we do so at our peril and at the peril for the whole planet.

The second is that in a complicated, fast-changing world, Government can best lead by example, not by bureaucratic fiat. I believe that very strongly. We have to try to create environments, incentives, conditions in which the objectives we desire will be more likely to occur. And the recommendations of this task force achieve that objective very, very well.

So for all of that, I thank you all, those of you who contributed to this report. The best I can do is to do my very best to implement the recommendations of the task force. And I pledge to you that the Vice President and I and the Office of the White House, with the Office of Environmental Policy and with the Chief of Staff's well-known historic bias for natural gas, somehow we will find the way to make these task force recommendations come alive in the Federal Government and in the lives of the American people. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree

December 9, 1993

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to begin my remarks by asking that we recognize the years of devotion that Joe Riley has given to this Pageant of Peace. Let's give him a big hand. *[Applause]*

This has been a wonderful night for Hillary and for Chelsea and for me. I thank Sandy

Duncan for doing such a wonderful job in her tennis shoes; I think she looked sort of graceful limping out there. The DC Choral Kaleidoscope was wonderful. And I think Willard Scott is a perfect Santa Claus. You know, he will take any excuse to wear hair. *[Laughter]* But he looked beautiful. I'm especially glad to see my friends